

SOUNDBOARD

A Newsletter for Church Musicians



Number 18

May 2009

Editorial Comment

A small *SOUNDBOARD* this time, and three months later than it should have been — an Editor cannot publish material that isn't there!. Maybe next time will bring some more offerings from readers? Perhaps more articles for the 'Church Music in' series (only seven churches have been featured to date; there are 60+ churches in the united diocese) and if you would like to contribute to that series, the Editor can supply guidelines about writing. Anything for the 'Great Hymns and their Writers' series? (The *Companion to the Church Hymnal* is a great source of background material.) What about a review of some new music (choral or organ) that you have recently come across, or of a musical book that you have read? And if you have any ideas of how to recruit and hold on to choir members, do spread the word; all *SOUNDBOARD* readers will certainly be interested! Played any new or interesting organs recently? Let us hear about them. Any musical events in your parish in which others might be interested? Are there any musical matters you want to air? A letter to the Editor is a way of doing so. There's really no end of material that would be of interest to others!

Do let us have something for a September issue of *SOUNDBOARD*! If you don't feel confident about your writing, let us have a draft — the Editor can 'clean it up' if necessary. We live in hope.

NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Archdeacon Edgar Swann retired as Committee Chairman at the end of December 2009, coincident with retiring from the parochial ministry. Edgar was chairman for almost sixteen years and helped guide the Church Music Committee through a significant development phase. The Committee thank him for his constant support and encouragement and were delighted to host him to dinner at a central Dublin restaurant in February.



In Edgar's place, we warmly welcome **Ricky Rountree** who also succeeds him as Archdeacon of Glendalough. Archdeacon Rountree hails from Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan but has spent most of his ministry to date in the Dublin & Glendalough dioceses. He has been rector of Powerscourt with Kilbride (Bray) since 1997.

Powerscourt Church was the first in the united dioceses to host regular worship led by a Gospel Choir. Ricky has a particular interest in liturgical development and was Secretary of the Liturgical Advisory Committee for eight years. He is a former Central Liturgical Officer of the Church of Ireland and more recently Diocesan Director of Lay Ministry. He sees his role as chairperson of the Church Committee as continuing to build on the committee's significant record of encouraging the music ministry in the united dioceses and beyond.

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The Church Music Committee supports and resources music and musicians in the local church. The Committee is appointed by the Church of Ireland Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough.

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SOUNDBOARD is published by the Church Music Committee. Views expressed in signed articles and letters are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.

Annual Subscription: €15 / £11

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Singing the Psalms

The Revd Peter Thompson

Hymns of praise, penitence, prayer, lamentation, petition, thanksgiving and much, much more are to be found with the book of the Psalms. 150 very different texts, written at different times and by different people, encompassing the whole range of human emotions and experiences. I would go so far as to say that there is not an event in life that is not reflected in the psalms.

The psalms have often been described as the hymnbook of the Second Temple, or even more simply as Jesus' hymnbook. After the Last Supper when Our Lord and his disciples "sang a hymn", it was most probably (part of) psalms 113-118. As Our Lord hung on the cross, he meditated on psalm 22; in his dying agony the words of psalm 31 were on his lips. These were no mere formulae learned by rote, they were the building blocks of his prayer, as for any devout Jew.

For me personally the psalms have been a treasury of prayer and devotion since my teenage years. In the darkest days of my life I turned to them, and found comfort in them. They allow me to vocalise prayer when words fail me. They have taken me from "Out of the depths" where I "have cried to you, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice", to the point where I can "lift up my eyes to the hills" and "let everything that has breath praise the Lord".

I am fortunate to have grown up in parishes where traditional Anglican worship was faithfully offered week by week, and where the psalms played an integral part in this. As a parish director of music in Donegal I was able to teach a choir the glories of Anglican chant (from scratch), and for years we sang the psalm each week. As a regular attender of choral evensong in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (while I was a student in the RIAM), and as the organ scholar in Belfast Cathedral, I was exposed to a great range of psalmody (much greater than in an average parish church), and the words of so many of those texts are embedded in my mind and come readily to my lips.

I say all of this by way of introduction to the 'Singing Psalms' series of books. These books were born out of a realisation that this wonderful treasure has almost been lost to the current generation of Anglican worshippers. The psalm has all but disappeared in many parishes, despite the rubrics of the BCP.

In many places where the psalm was traditionally sung, if included at all, it is merely read. Again, what a loss. These were songs, and songs are to be sung — as St Augustine famously said, "to sing is to pray twice". How true are his words — when we sing words, how much more quickly do they become emblazoned on our memory? I grew up at a time when memorising things in school was quickly going out of fashion, although we were still made to by certain teachers — and with everything, from Shakespeare to the Catechism, I found that if set to any sort of melody at all, suddenly the words became much more memorable.

A third consideration behind the book is that many people 'claim' that Anglican chant is 'too difficult'. Personally, I disagree with that; Anglican chant is a wonderful vehicle for psalmody, and if approached in the correct manner (e.g. a limited repertoire of chants, a strong unison lead from the choir rather than 4-part harmony, a solid lead from the organ rather than an accompaniment), is approachable by the 'average' congregation, if they are only willing to try (could this be the real problem?).

I came to my present parishes (St Michael's, Castlecaulfield, and St Patrick's, Donaghmore) in 2006. In St Michael's there was a choir who sang hymns and canticles each week, but who had given up on psalm singing perhaps two decades earlier. They struggled with Anglican chant, and so I introduced them to the responsorial model of psalmody - a metrical response for the congregation, with simple chanted verses for the choir. My hope was to give the congregation a definite place in what so often becomes the exclusive domain of the choir. What I didn't expect was that the congregation would even attempt the verses - but they did, and joined in with great gusto (and no encouragement needed). It was a revelation to me. The only problem was that there were no settings of the BCP 2004 translations of the psalms (that I was aware of at that time), and so I turned to composing my own, something which had begun many years earlier when I was in Theological College.

As the collection grew, I made a decision to limit the number of chants for the verses. Had they been sung by the choir alone I may have increased the number, but given that the congregation was joining in, I tried to keep just enough variety to stop it becoming stale, but not enough to discourage the congregation. The end result was a

collection of just nine simple chants — based on the style of Anglican chant, but with fewer notes in the melody. They were written with only a basic harmony in the inner parts, because they are intended for unison congregational singing. In preparing for the launches of "Singing Psalms" in 2008 we tried them in different formats, and at the Belfast launch we sang the chants in 4-part harmony, which seemed to work well.

The key to these settings is versatility — the refrain should always 'belong' to the congregation, but the verses can be sung by a single cantor, a small group (perhaps alternating the men and ladies in the choir), the full choir, the congregation — or even on occasion just read, to a soft musical accompaniment. The use of melody instruments can strengthen the refrain. They can be accompanied on piano or organ. No matter what resources are at hand, it should be possible to adapt these settings for the local church.

Ultimately our aim in 'Singing Psalms' is enabling the worshipping community to take the text of the psalms (particularly the verse chosen as the response), and to put it on their lips in a way that is easily memorable, so that it becomes a resource in their personal devotion.

I would like to finish with a request to the readers of soundboard — please let us have some feedback from your experience of using "Singing Psalms", be it good, bad or indifferent, don't be afraid to offer constructive criticism or observations, and don't be afraid to ask questions — this isn't a finished piece of art, it is a work in progress! I can be contacted by email at: revpeter@gmail.com or by phone on: 048 87761214. ■

PUBLICATIONS YOU MUST HAVE
(and send the bill to the Parish Treasurer)

Singing Psalms: Responsorial Psalms set to Simple Chant. Music by Alison Cadden and Peter Thompson. (The Columba Press). Psalms for Year B are already available; Year C psalms will be published later this year.

Companion to Church Hymnal, Darling and Davison. (The Columba Press, 2005)

'SINGING PSALMS'

A review by Ann Keary



The Revd Peter Thompson and Alison Cadden, composers of the music in 'Singing Psalms'

On Saturday 22 November at Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, a much welcomed publication called *Singing Psalms* was launched. Bishop Richard Clarke gave a short but succinct account of the history of the psalms and their huge importance in the life of the Christian. He referred to them as the *DNA of Christian worship!* As is pointed out in the foreword of the book, psalm-singing is an integral part of our self understanding. Unlike much of our hymnody, whose emotional content is more limited, the psalms express all aspects of human emotion: fear, despair, anger, doubt, frustration, joy, delight, love, etc.. They are an essential tool with which we can honestly communicate with God.

Bishop Clarke reminded us of how the psalms continue to be sung in the Daily Office and of how, up to quite recently, it was also the norm for all churchgoers in the Church of Ireland and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion to be familiar with singing them. They were an integral part of worship.

However, in recent times, for a number of reasons, singing the psalms at Sunday worship has become an issue to contend with! Many, if not most, members of congregation no longer attend church on a weekly basis. It may often be on a fortnightly or even monthly basis. The absence of a four-part choir in many churches reduces the confidence of the congregation to sing. Also, many families come to church from mixed confessional backgrounds, and may not be at all familiar with singing the psalms, particularly with Anglican chant.

We were then introduced to Alison Cadden and The Revd Peter Thompson, the composers of the chants found in the collection. They stressed that their priority was to make psalm singing as accessible as possible to everyone. As mentioned in the foreword, *'this is a real labour of love by both of them'*. Alison spoke

of the many efforts over the years by every denomination to find appropriate and accessible ways of singing the psalms: metrical settings, plainsong, psalm songs, paraphrases and responsorial psalms.

One big advantage of the responsorial format is that it includes congregational participation. The responses are tuneful and, because they are repeated between the verses, are easily remembered, while the verses may be sung by a choir or cantor. The poetry of the verses and their beauty have been maintained so that when sung their natural flow can be felt. The translation is that in the Book of Common Prayer 2004.

We were led in singing by members of the choir from St Brigid's of Stillorgan with their very able director, Hilary Dickinson Guter accompanying.

We were first introduced to Psalm 80 for Advent 1 which was composed by Alison. Hilary played the response through, followed by the choir, and then we, the congregation, imitated: *Turn us again, O Lord of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.* The choir continued with the verses, which were punctuated by the response.

We then had the opportunity to sing a psalm written by Peter: Psalm 126 for Advent 3 of the current Church year. Alison's response, *Those who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy*, is very lovely and easily remembered. The composers differ slightly in their approach to the pointing of the verses: whereas Alison's are indicated with an underline for a note change, Peter uses the more traditional form of the bar line. Both systems work equally well.

We sampled a number of other psalms such as Psalm 47, *God has gone up with a merry noise, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.* This is very aptly written in the style of a trumpet call. A lovely setting of Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24, was written by Alison with the option of a descant with the response.

In my opinion, this publication is a most welcome addition to our music for worship. I, for one, will certainly put it to use time and time again. ■

Ann Keary is organist and choir director at Kiltiernan Parish Church and lectures in the department of Academic Studies and Keyboard at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.
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Synopsis of Bishop Richard Clarke's address when he launched 'Singing Psalms'

First of all, we can't emphasise enough that, if within the Anglican Communion we lose the psalms, we have lost something that is fundamental to our DNA. The two groups within Western Christianity for whom the psalms are absolutely fundamental would tend to be the Roman Catholic religious order, where the psalms are said in routine day by day; and inherited from them from medieval times, the Church of England. The Anglican Communion always intended that the psalms would be part, not simply of the corporate life of the Church, but also part of the spirituality of individual members of the Church. In the old Book of Common Prayer, you went right through the psalms in the course of a month. Thirty five years after ordination when I should know the psalms pretty well, I still find that a phrase will come at me as if I have never seen it before in that context. There is always newness and richness because in the psalms there is always poetry and the poetry of the psalms is part of what it is to be as thinking reflective Christians. So never, never, let us lose the psalms

Now going to the matter of singing the psalms, and one of the reasons why I truly welcome a book such as this, is that there may be the danger that we will only ever think of saying the psalms — and that's a perfectly good way to get to know them — but the psalms were made to be sung, and in our tradition we of course think instinctively of Anglican chant. I hope it won't sound offensive to anyone, but I often think psalms sung to Anglican chant remind me of my attitude to violinists — if they are not wonderful, they are absolutely awful! Because we have got so used to hearing recordings of psalms sung superbly in a way that really lifts one, one's standards become extraordinarily high.

Yes, if you have a good choir, you can sing the music that is in this new book, but an enormous advantage of it is that if you have only one or two singers, you can start with these singing the verses and eventually get the congregation singing. So this is a resource that we must treasure, that we must use because we must not lose the psalms. So in commending Alison Cadden and Peter Thompson, may I commend this book to all and indeed say that with great pleasure, I now officially launch *Singing Psalms: Responsorial Psalms set to Simple Chants.* ■

Music is the Universal Language of Mankind

The Very Revd Dr Philip Knowles, Dean of Cashel

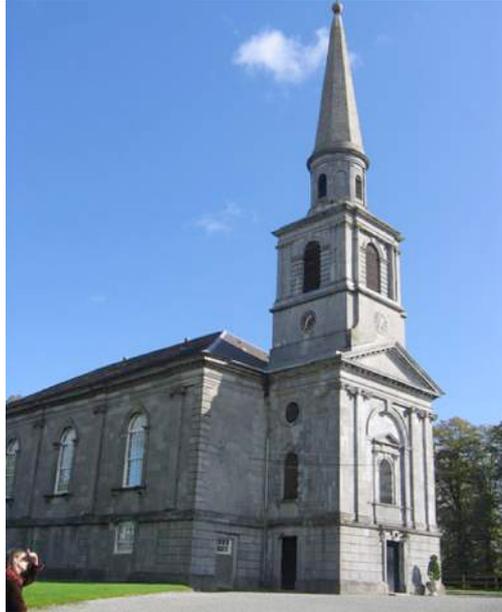
In 1995 I became Dean of Cashel Cathedral and Rector of four parish churches. My first experience of the Cathedral choir was to hear them lead the liturgical music and hymnody at my institution. I remember on the occasion two aspects of the sermon preached by the late Bishop of Cashel & Ossory, the Rt Revd Noel Willoughby, who said 'Your new dean doesn't quench a fire with petrol' and 'he will lead you and if you don't sing he will make you sing'.

Well, I am in a happy cathedral where people pull together and I am fortunate to have a team ministry of the Dean, the Hon. Vicar Choral, three retired rectors, and four diocesan lay readers. This means I can concentrate on being in my cathedral church and in my four parish churches on a rotation basis.

In the Cathedral, the choir robe only for special occasions, such as Harvest Thanksgiving, the annual Civic Service, Christmas Day, Easter, and for greater ceremonies such as the Enthronement of a Bishop. We feel we like the regular Sunday service to be less formal and also to cater for the congregation. In fact we would call it the parish family worship, but on the grander occasions we have full procession with the Dean, his verger, clergy, lay readers, robed choir — and it looks the part in our cathedral which was built in the Georgian architectural style and opened in the year 1784. A year later the Samuel Green organ was built and Handel's *Messiah* was performed.

The year 2009 is the bicentenary of the death of Archbishop Charles Agar, and Cashel town will be 'pulling out all the stops' to make the weekend of 10 to 21 July memorable. The weekend will include a recital by the Tipperary Singers, with the Cathedral Choir and other artists. The Cathedral will be filled with flowers and photographs of the Rock of Cashel, the Cathedral through the ages, and deans and families associated with the Cathedral.

Cashel Cathedral has a scholarly music and liturgical tradition. Indeed there was a choir of eight originally (the Vicar's Choral) as shown on the Seal of the Cathedral, which displays an organ, organist and eight singers. They were paid to sing the daily services and had to keep strict rules; there was a sense



of collegiality. However, the story is different today. We have a choir of twelve (7S, 2A, 1T, 2B). We do our best and people are complimentary about the sound we make. We cannot afford to be too ambitious so we tend to keep things simple. We sing Anglican chant in parts, and the psalms in unison, leaving harmony to the hymns, motets and simple anthems. A hymn that is rarely sung by the congregation is sometimes used as an anthem. We have recently adopted *Singing Psalms*, which allows for greater flexibility and congregational involvement.

The rota of services in the Cathedral is: 1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist (sung Gloria, Sanctus, Psalm, Agnus Dei); 2nd Sunday: Morning Prayer; 3rd Sunday: Informal Service based on the Liturgy and led by the school choir (the choir sit in the congregation). 4th Sunday: Traditional Matins. There is an early (said) Holy Communion.

Music in the parish churches depend on congregational singing. **Dundrum Church** has the modern recorded music — which is popular, as has also **Tipperary Church** (however, this scribe plays the lovely Telford organ when he is on duty in Tipperary). **Clonbeg Church** in the Glen of Aherlow has a fine harmonium and a good and faithful organist — Doris Pearson. **Magorban Church** has a fine harmonium but it is only played when the Dean takes the service; however, the congregational singing in Magorban is always robust.

Basically we do our best, value our music, and praise God. ■

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How Well Do You Know Your Hymns?

What is the first line of each of the well-known hymns that contain these lines?

1. And in the dusty city, where busy crowds pass by
2. Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea
3. Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away
4. First the blade and then the ear
5. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night
6. Great things he has taught us, great things he has done
7. He made their glowing colours, he made their tiny wings
8. He only could unlock the gate of heaven, and let us in
9. His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form
10. Hymns of praise then let us sing
11. I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder
12. Lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss
13. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
14. Lord, how thy wonders are displayed
15. O enter then his gates with praise
16. Saviour breathe forgiveness o'er us
17. See from his head, his hands, his feet
18. Summer and winter, and spring-time and harvest
19. Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise
20. Unresting, unceasing, and silent as night
21. With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today
22. With the cross of Jesus going on before
23. Ye blessed souls at rest, who ran this earthly race
24. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale

Got them all? If so, you're well versed and have an excellent memory! If you missed one or two, you'll find the solutions on page 7 ■

LIVING WORSHIP

The Church Music Committee's 2009 Music in the Liturgy Course

Margaret Scarlett reports

The 2009 *Living Worship* Course was held on four Saturday mornings in January and February, in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. The four sessions turned out to be very informative and rewarding. They were attended by singers, organists and choir directors — indeed, collectively by people interested in the 'what and why' of Christian worship and of music of the liturgy. In particular, the aim was to show musicians how their work as organists, singers and cantors relates to worship as a whole. Each session included a break for coffee and people enjoyed having the opportunity to chat.

The first session started off with a very interesting talk by **Geoff Weaver**, who got everybody singing various hymns and songs, both accompanied and unaccompanied. Geoff demonstrated the process of teaching hymns and songs to a congregation by teaching new material to the participants. We then commented on the process. The result was a very informative and enjoyable session for all concerned. The question 'What are we asking the music to do?' was posed which led to much discussion about styles of music, likes and dislikes, the effect certain hymns have on individuals — in all, a very stimulating morning.

The second session was led by Fr **Paul Kenny**, who aims to develop music in the Mass in his church by introducing more hymns and songs. He outlined the historical view of worship in the Roman Catholic tradition and explained that one of the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) had been a requirement for new music. During this session the participants were directed to a wealth of liturgical music which is readily available. Fr Paul has met many of the composers and writers of this music and was able to tell us a little about their lives. He gave us many

pointers for worship, for example, *Don't say 'Alleluia', sing it!* This session was very practical and punctuated by much singing.

The third session was led by Dr **Gerard Gillen** who stressed the importance of the organ in worship - a force to be reckoned with - though he also stressed it is important not to distract from worship itself. Also, it is vital to have co-operation between clergy and organists when preparing for church services. The session was interspersed with humorous anecdotes and was full of useful advice for those who accompany singing in church. Gerard stressed the value of good preparation and the value of playing within one's capabilities rather than 'having a go' at something difficult. He discussed the unique role the organ has, being powerful enough to accompany singing of many people in a large building. This session was an inspiring one for all present.

The final session was led by the Revd **Tom Gordon** on the topic of *Why Christians worship?* Tom reminded us that, essentially, Christian worship is humankind's response to Revelation — what God has done for us through Christ Jesus. Good liturgy enables participation — the priesthood of all believers; community — builds and encourages; celebration — bringing the past into the present to equip us for the future. The use of music in the context of our worship was an underlying thread in this session and gave us a clear basis for planning for services.

Thanks are due to the Church Music Committee and in particular to David McConnell, the course co-ordinator. Planning has already started for the next course and we can look forward to hearing the Revd **Peter Moger**, Worship Development Officer of the Church of England lead a session on **Saturday 30 January 2010**. ■

LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES!

Peter O'Callaghan

When reading Derek Verso's *Life is full of surprises* in the last issue (*SOUNDBOARD* 17) I was reminded of a number of similar embarrassing hymn related incidents that have happened to me. Whilst they happened to me as conductor of the 1st Company Boys' Brigade Band, they still should strike fear into the heart of any organist who plays somewhere other than his/her own church. The first incident occurred when playing at a *Songs of Praise* in a Methodist Church. We played four hymns and I thought at the time that the singing was rather weak considering that they were well-known hymns sung to well-known tunes. At the end of the service the Minister thanked us for taking part and also for teaching his congregation four new tunes! I quickly bought a Methodist hymn book and have added a Presbyterian hymn book to my collection.

The second occasion was when, once again, we took part in a *Songs of Praise*. This particular church was using an overhead projector for the words. Before each hymn I checked the screen for the number of verses. The screen was situated behind me which turned out to be a big mistake. We accompanied the three verses of the hymn *Amazing Grace* and stopped. The congregation didn't. I turned around and found a fourth verse on the screen. We caught up and stopped. Another verses appeared on the screen and we played catch up. Not to be caught out again, we played a fifth verse. The congregation didn't join in. A look at the screen saw it blank. Since then I have made absolutely sure that I have a service sheet before a service begins!

The morale of this tale is to quote the Boy Scouts motto, 'be prepared' but I also think that we should remember that 'The best laid schemes of mice and men etc....' ■

Peter O'Callaghan is musician at St John's Church, Clondalkin. bandpoc@yahoo.ie.

HINTS AND TIPS

When did you last praise your choir? When did you last thank them for their efforts? A brief text or email of thanks after a major event or festival is always appreciated. And don't overlook the social aspect of the group. Mulled wine and mince pies after the carol service in your (or someone else's) home always go down well — people like seeing the inside of others' houses — and can show that there is an ordinary, human side to you! Some choirs have a night out in a restaurant once a year. Try it — and be sure to get a contribution from the parish treasurer — it's the least the Select Vestry can do for a group that works so hard and regularly. ■

Don't trash your *SOUNDBOARD* when you have read it. **Re-cycle it** by passing to your choir or simply leave it the choir seats. Extra copies can be supplied for a small charge. ■

Keep the **Hints & Tips** coming; there's always little spaces to be filled!

Christians or only Consumers of Religion?

Mark Gretason

This article is reprinted, with permission, from the July 2008 issue of the *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland*

The historian Prof. H Koenigsberger was wont to remind his students that not all our forefathers were fools nor are all our contemporaries wise.

In a challenging article *'The First and Great Commandment: How are we doing?'* (Hymn Society) The Revd Christopher Idle, a noted hymn writer, picks up a shift in attitude towards what it is that the Christian offers God whether individually or corporately. He seems to feel that a balance needs to be kept rather than a via media. Thus the changing moods of the Church's seasons have always been accommodated. Very few hymns chosen for Lent really fit the mood of Trinity, far less Easter. The Church has rightly picked up the psychological need of Christians to inhabit differing phases of mind in its corporate remembering which is at the heart of Christian worship. The long out-of-print *Church Hymnal for the Christian Year* attempted to plan both for seasons and moods around the central act of remembrance, the Anamnesis, itself. Perhaps this book was a little over organised; however, times have changed very considerably.

So what is missing from *Mission Praise* or wrong with it and its kind?

First, there is the well known shift towards the use of the first person in, for example, *Mission Praise*, which occupies a sort of points position between the branch line of tradition represented by *The English Hymnal* and that represented by the many descendants of *Golden Bells*.

Second, comes the modernisation of hymns (a thorny subject indeed!) into the second person when addressing Almighty God. Modern hymns tend strongly towards this form.

Third, there is a much vaunted saying that in order to appeal to the young and the unchurched one must meet them where they are. Thus, a large and successful church in the Diocese of Norwich has two types of service described as 'Quiet' and 'Family'. This church does not appear to use the 1662 Prayer Book at all. The 'Quiet' service is liturgical according to the loose forms allowed by *Common Worship* and one cannot set forth the changing structure of a family service.

Fourth, the type of section entitled 'Chiefly for private devotion' seems not longer to be found in modern hymnbooks.

What does all this mean? It is easy to become bogged down by the exceptions to general rules, to give up a line of argument because general rules are general. The generalities which follow have some value as such.

Those who wish to sell hymn books and the like are necessarily in the market place. What is sold is justified as an aid to worship 'understood of the people' (Anglicans will be referring to Article XXIV) will assist numerical or spiritual growth. This is equally true of traditional and of house churches.

Second only to the sweet sound of one's own name comes 'I' and its concomitants. For instance 'Mine! Mine! Mine! I know thou art mine!' has a subtext, Me! Me! Me! I'm thinking of ME! This is not a quotation from a recent hymn, but it lacks a corporate dimension. If the body of Christ be rather more than a group of unconnected people who happen to be travelling in the train towards the same destination one would not think it so from some of the 'I' school of hymns.

And this is where an important distinction needs to be made and is so often missed. As individuals we may be justified through faith but we remain 'false and full of sin' as Charles Wesley puts it. It is the Church that is the Bride of Christ and only in that standing can she hope in *figura Christi* to address the Father.

Luther points out that all our good works are only sins forgiven. But there is a lack on penitential material in *Mission Praise* and suchlike.

The aspect of modernisation of hymns by changing 'Thee' to 'You' is another formative of Christian culture. Both T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis were chary of modernising the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. Whilst a hymn writer or editor may have both a great personal reverence for God and adopt the You form, it is undoubtedly true that our democratic and egalitarian tendencies sit uncomfortably with human worship. Appellations such as 'Most Noble', 'Right Honourable' and 'Right Reverend' seem quaint if not faintly ridiculous. A lack of respect for human authority issues

in a kind of theological republicanism. The Queen no longer has subjects but there are citizens of the EU. Thus Jesus is a kind of elected (and thus sackable) God so that congregations can glibly sing 'Jesus we enthrone you' without any awareness of what they have done in rendering the Incarnate Word into merely 'The Man for others.' One is reminded of Psalm 106:20.

In Mark 10: 17-22 we learn that faith is a response rather than something which can be purchased. Yet there appears to be a decline in the theological rigour of what is sung when it is considered that if the Roman Catholic Church is excluded from consideration, in many towns it is the house churches which attract the largest number of worshippers so that more choruses or songs are now sung than hymns. One can only wonder at the contrast between the Biblically rich, doctrinally secure, often beautifully crafted hymns of Charles Wesley as sung by the uneducated and what is sung by the relatively well-educated congregations of today. How are Christians forming these days?

Traditional hymnbooks, and this is a very rough and subjective estimate, contain just under a third of hymns attributable to Praise and Celebration, Devotion and Intimacy, and Discipleship and a little on Human Suffering and Doubt. However, the song genre is much lower on Discipleship and Doubt is almost banished. There are worthy exceptions of course but if God himself has been democratised so that, in the words of a former Headmaster of Bloxham 'He likes a jolly loud Hello! From his co-equals here below' He now delivers a form of unrealistic comfort food that would have been unknown to Cowper, Newton, Newman and Faber (to name but some), all of whom express self-doubt and find grace in Christ.

Catholic, Calvinist and Protestant know that grace is only ever free, never cheap. Should consumerism replace Christ in the Church, where will He be found? ■

Mark Gretason is rector of St Jude's Free Church of England, London and Senior Lecturer in Laws at London Metropolitan University, Barrister-at-Law, and Chaplain to the Central School of Religion.

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Notes and News

ORGANISTS ON THE MOVE

John Morris has moved from Greystones to Christ Church Bray. (Do keep us informed of new appointments, etc.)

DEPUTY ORGANIST LIST

Ten new names have been added to this in recent months — which is a healthy sign. There is some evidence that the list is fairly widely consulted. It is on the website and also in the annual Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Directory. It is important that it keeps up to date. **Please** — if your contact details change, if you wish your name to be removed, let us know, preferably by email.

DÚN LAOGHAIRE SUMMER RECITALS

The 2009 series of Summer organ concerts in St Michael's Church,

Dún Laoghaire, starts on Sunday 7 June at 8 p.m. with a concert by the choir of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Visiting recitalists include Serge Schoonbroodt (Belgium), Caius College Choir Cambridge, Renée Anne Louprette (New York) and Guttorm Guleng (Norway). Full details will be found on dunlaoghaireorganconcerts.ie.

DAN AND THE MAGIC MUSICIAN

This is an initiative of the Royal College of Organists to try to spread the word, particularly amongst young people, about what the organ is, what it consists of and how it is played. It is presented in the form of a story, incorporating basic facts about organ mechanics and the story is illustrated with real organ music. You'll find it on www.danmagic.org. Have a look at it, play the video, and decide how successful it is likely to be.

WHO WANTS?

A Yamaha electronic organ needs a good home. Two 4-octave manuals and 12-note pedalboard. Contact Rachel Brew, The Rectory, Howth, 01-8323019.

MUSIC IS WORSHIP

"Musicians are as much leaders of worship as are Clergy, Readers, Local Preachers and Authorised Lay Ministers. There is a dangerous assumption around in some quarters that music is a 'bolt-on module' to the rest of the liturgy. (I'm sure many will have witnessed the minister or organist producing a list with the words 'here are the hymns!') Music is an integral component of worship, and planning which fails to take account of this is woefully lacking. As churches we must all recover the understanding that music is neither an adjunct to the words and actions of worship nor merely a vehicle to enable words to be sung or heard. Martin Luther wrote: 'I place music next to preaching and give it highest praise.' For him, music was in itself a means of making God known in worship. Music, perhaps more than anything, is able to help that two-way dynamic of worship: of lifting the concerns of earth to heaven and of bringing down heaven to earth."

Extract from an article by the Revd Peter Moger in 'Church Music Quarterly, June 2006. Peter will be in Dublin at the end of January 2010, speaking and preaching. (See page 6.)

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT?

DECIDING WHAT TO TAKE TO CHURCH AND WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

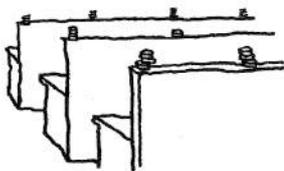
TAKE IT



UMBRELLA: THIS SHOULD BE LEFT IN THE PORCH AFTER THE SERVICE



BIG COAT: YOU CAN FOLD IT UP TO STOP PEOPLE SITTING NEXT TO YOU



MONEY: PLEASE LEAVE A TIP ON YOUR PEW—SERVICE NOT INCLUDED



TISSUES: CHURCH CAN MAKE YOU CRY

LEAVE IT



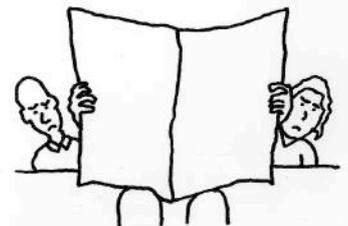
CATS: THEY WILL NOT CONCENTRATE PROPERLY



POPCORN: EVERYONE WILL WANT SOME



SCORE CARDS: PEOPLE WILL LOOK AT YOU ODDLY



A NEWSPAPER: IRRITATING FOR THE PEOPLE BEHIND

Reproduced from 'The Dave Walker Guide to the Church 2009 Calendar, with permission from the publishers Canterbury Press, www.scm-canterburypress.co.uk. The calendar contains, for each month of the year, an entertaining church cartoon of local church life. The 2010 calendar is in preparation.

FROM DAILY MAIL, 6 MAY 2009

They have stood the test of time and it seems that today, despite all the changes to church services, men still prefer to sing 'proper macho hymns'. Nearly 60 per cent of those who took part in a survey said they enjoyed singing — but added comments showing they preferred anthemic songs and 'proclamational' hymns as opposed to more emotional love songs.

Sixty per cent said they did not like flowers and embroidered banners in church, while 52 per cent did not like dancing in church. Comments gathered from the online survey of 400 UK readers of the men's magazine *Sorted* also showed many did not like hugging, holding hands or sitting in circles discussing their feelings in church. Most were churchgoers.

The magazine suggested a top ten of 'male-friendly' hymns:

- Onward, Christian Soldiers
- And Can It Be?
- Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer
- All People That On Earth Do Dwell
- Be Thou My Vision
- How Great Thou Art
- Amazing Grace
- Eternal Father, Strong To Save
- Our God Reigns
- Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind

Most of the readers were churchgoers with the majority filling in a survey form online between January and April. Nearly three quarters said their favourite part of a service was the talk or sermon.

Sorted managing editor and publisher Steve Legg said: 'Jesus recruited a bunch of 12 ordinary blokes before He began his ministry proper. They spent three years together doing stuff. He sat down and ate with them and built relationships'.

'The comments at the end of the survey showed that what appeals to men is doing stuff together — sports teams, fishing, pub quizzes, paint-balling, DIY projects, curry nights, bowling, clay pigeon shooting and going out for a beer.' The findings of the survey will be discussed at a seminar on men and the church at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) in Sandown Park, Esher, on Friday May 15.

Mr Legg added that too many churches were decorated like 'Laura Ashley showrooms'. He said: 'I often walk into churches and they are like Laura Ashley showrooms with all these flowers and banners and tissues. Men just don't feel comfortable with that.'

'Certainly, with the singing, I am fed up with singing these sentimental lovey dovey songs. 'On the football terraces we are very passionate, chanting and cheering, and we want more songs like that. We want fewer girly songs.'

Here's some of the readers' comments so far.

But will the churches take any notice? I doubt it! One thing is odd though — the majority of the "Jesus my lover" type modern songs are written by men. Then we wonder why most men don't want to go to church and sing them!

Does all that stuff go on in church nowadays? Love songs, dancing and discussing emotions can't be anyone's cup of tea let alone men. No wonder attendance is low even amongst believers.

Funny, as a woman, I find myself hating the same things that the men do, therefore I am not sure that it is black and white as feminine vs macho. Perhaps, we all prefer a more robust, less touchy-feely approach to our worship. I think that is the British way, is it not?

As a woman I totally agree with the men ... most of the modern songs sang in churches today are overly sentimental, wordy & are set to music that does not entice you to raise your voice to God. I much prefer the older hymns that a congregation can really sing out. You feel much closer to God when you sing those hymns.

I gave up going to church years ago. I now only go for weddings funerals and christenings but try to avoid them if I can. I was shocked the last time I went. Not only had the order of service changed beyond all recognition but the vicar did a good impression of a Harry Potter film sitting in a large chair surrounded in incense smoke that almost choked us. This was a christening – pity help the babies. As if the service didn't drag on and on there was a weird part where people all turned and shook hands with each other. I found the whole experience very odd, unsettling and uncomfortable. I much preferred the plain no nonsense services of old with the traditional type of services. Little wonder if this sort of change is going on that so many churches are empty. I know we have to move with the times but this happy clappy smoke filled weird experience is a turn off for me. I won't be going again. ■

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR HYMNS? — ANSWERS

(Hymn numbers refer to the Church Hymnal (5th Ed.)

1. We thank you, God our Father (Hymn 36)
2. Holy, holy, holy! (321)
3. Abide with me (62)
4. Come, ye thankful people, come (37)
5. For the beauty of the earth (350)
6. To God be the glory! (373)
7. All things bright and beautiful (25)
8. There is a green hill far away (244)
9. O worship the King (34)
10. Jesus Christ is risen today (271)
11. O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder (32)
12. Stand up, stand up for Jesus (488)
13. Thine be the glory (288)
14. I sing the almighty power of God (28)
15. All people that on earth do dwell (683)
16. Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us (652)
17. When I survey the wondrous cross (247)
18. Great is thy faithfulness (80)
19. Love divine, all loves excelling (634)
20. Immortal, invisible, God only wise (6)
21. Now thank we all our God, (361)
22. Onward, Christian soldiers, (659)
23. Ye holy angels bright (376)
24. The Lord's my shepherd (21)