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A table of contents for the *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_cbrfj.php

CONTENTS

The Cost of Construction *Sosthenes* 1

Topic of the Issue

LITURGY

Introduction: All Things Decently and in
Order *J. M. Somerville-Meikle* 2

Liturgy without Prayerbook *David J. A. Clines* 6

Recent Liturgical Tendencies Among the
Exclusive Brethren *G. F. Tripp* 19

Worship in India: a Short Description *W. J. Pethybridge* 21

Thinking among Baptists: The Renewal of
Liturgy in a Local Church *S. F. Winward* 23

Towards an Available Mount *P. H. Stunt* 30

From the Monitors

The Humanist for January 1967 *C. G. Martin* 51

THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION

Reactions to CBRF continue to come in from many different countries. Not a few are enthusiastic to an extent we hardly deserve: and we are more than grateful for the encouragement received from those who seem to understand so readily what we try to do.

There are a few, however, who react differently: in most cases because they fear that our work is destructive in nature. With another issue that might arouse this reaction if it is read only defensively, we owe it to such of our friends to commence with a restatement of our objects.

We live in a world which presents continuous challenges to the whole tradition which lies behind our faith—not to our 'Brethren' traditions only, but to the very faith itself. There are two responses to this situation. We can retreat even more into the comfort of our own beliefs, and try by every means to shut out from ourselves and those for whom we have any responsibility everything which might disturb the foundations of our security. Or we can realise that the surest armament against defeat is to know ourselves and to know our opponents. CBRF stands firmly for the second alternative. So, we believe, do all our critics.

But we deceive ourselves if we imagine that this process can be accomplished without pain to ourselves. If we are to rely upon our sword in the battle, that sword must be tested and tried. The light of fact must be turned upon the weakest parts of our equipment. This is not disloyalty: it is common sense. Yet, because we live in constant contact with those who prefer the first alternative, we shall find that this course will subject us to misunderstanding and opposition. Was it not always so?

It suffices to add that those who approach this issue with the willingness to learn, will not only find unpleasant challenges to their own convictions. They will find much that could transform their own worship—and that even within the forms to which they are accustomed. That is the genuine constructiveness for which we struggle: but constructiveness can only lie in the reaction of the reader.

If any are still distressed, we can only ask them to understand that that which is disturbing to one man is stimulating and highly constructive to another. If they will remember that we receive very many more thanks than complaints, it might help them to understand that God may well have His way through us, despite their fears!

SOSTHENES

1967 ANNUAL MEETING : 28th OCTOBER, 1967

INTRODUCTION —

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

Someone once asked Dean Inge if he was interested in liturgiology. 'No', replied that worthy churchman, 'and I don't collect postage stamps either'. Some members of the Fellowship may have a similar feeling of mild puzzlement on discovering that this latest issue of their *Journal* has been devoted to the subject of liturgy.

Is it just the sound of the word that makes us think of mournful dirges and clerical droning that is as uninspiring as it is uninspired? Certainly most of those brought up in orthodox Brethren ways will react instinctively against it. But we trust that what follows will prove enlightening and constructive. There is no doubt that it will to those who have learnt that many of the classic either-or's of Christian controversy are to be set aside in favour of both-and's, which tend both to mutual love and respect amongst Christians and to the glory of the many-sided grace of God. How often the saying of William Temple is found true: 'Men are right when they assert and wrong when they deny'.

'No man is an island entire by itself'. If we wish to describe ourselves fully and accurately, we cannot exclude elements from the past (heredity) and the present (environment), however external they may seem to be. The principle of interdependence* is one that is seen throughout God's world. If an inanimate object is at rest, it is because of equal and opposing forces acting upon it. If a society is stable, it is because it is experiencing the achievement of justice through the equilibria of power. There is in these situations an underlying tension, but a balance of power is not in itself conflict, nor is it essentially evil.

So too on the human level, a choice or act of ours made under the apparent constraint of external factors is in a more real sense our own than a purely capricious or random one would be. The freedom to be ourselves is only enjoyed within a framework of discipline, and behaviour that is predictable and that conforms to some set pattern can nonetheless be the product of a free will. Equally in Christian worship, if it is to be a truly personal expression of our response to the word of God, we shall seek neither to disclaim the heritage of the past nor to ignore the requirements of the present.

The highest achievements in the arts have been made within a framework of what would seem to us strange limitations, but are to the artist the essential conditions of his work. The Athenian dramatists using only three actors, the sculptors of the Parthenon fitting their work into the triangular pediments at each end, Beethoven writing his most expressive

* Cp. J. A. T. Robinson, *On Being the Church in the World*, 47f.

work in sonatas for solo piano or string quartets (not quintets, sextets, etc.), and all those who have chosen the discipline of verse rather than the apparent freedom of prose—in all these, form is seen not as a hindrance, but as a channelling of the artist's gift.

It is in service, or bondage, to Christ that we find perfect freedom, and this liberty/slavery paradox lies close to the question of liturgy. On the one hand, Paul could write to the Galatians, who were busy subjecting themselves to various rules and regulations, and urge them to enjoy the liberty which Christ had won for them. On the other hand, he had to write to Corinth and tell the 'do-it-yourself' enthusiasts there that God is a God not of confusion but of peace, and that all things must be done decently and in order.

The first Jewish Christians continued to take part in Temple and synagogue worship, which itself was a judicious blend of the fixed and the free, and its abandonment by the early Christians can hardly be put down to any fundamental discontent with this pattern of worship, but rather to circumstances. When we come to the mixed Jewish-Gentile churches, the evidence of the letters of Paul is of a small, but definite and growing number of liturgical expressions* which Paul could expect his readers to be familiar with. The epistles of the mid-fifties presuppose in such sections as Rom. 8: 14-17, 1 Cor. 16: 22, and 2 Cor. 1: 18-22 the use and understanding of the Semitic words 'Abba',† 'Amen', and 'Marana tha'. The next decade, as reflected in the Pastoral Epistles, sees the extension of liturgical forms from corporate prayer to credal statements, 'faithful sayings' enshrining 'the pattern of sound words'. Finally we come to that blaze of liturgical colour, the Revelation, proof, if ever one was needed, that 'repetitions' need not be 'vain'.

We should therefore neither fear forms or set patterns in worship, nor think them unbiblical. Rather let us fear that which is without form and void. Here we might touch on the perils attached to extempore forms of worship (which are often extempore in more senses than one!). George Whitfield said of a certain preacher 'He prayed me into a good frame of mind, and if he had stopped there, it would have been very well; but he prayed me out of it by keeping on'. Spurgeon quotes this in the *Lecture to my Students* entitled 'Public Prayer', and adds: 'The abundant long-suffering of God has been exemplified in his sparing some preachers, who have been great sinners in this direction!' At the time of a proposed visit to Scotland in 1769, Dr. Johnson observed to Boswell: 'And, Sir, the

*Of course the liturgical enthusiast will find in the NT many more traces of liturgical expression than can safely be agreed upon. C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament*, 69ff., gives a restrained survey of the evidence, more so than in O. Cullman's *Early Christian Worship* or R. P. Martin's *Worship in the Early Church*.

†Since in both Rom. 8.15 and Gal. 4.6 Paul supplies the translation of 'Abba' ('Father'), it is difficult to know why he should quote the word in Aramaic at all, unless as an allusion to the Lord's Prayer in its Lucan form.

Presbyterians have no form of prayer in which they know they are to join. They go to hear a man pray, and are to judge whether they will join with him'. Another Scottish traveller, Charles Simeon said: 'I have on my return to the use of our Liturgy felt it an inestimable privilege that we possess a form of sound words, so adapted in every respect to the wants and desires of all who would worship God in spirit and truth. If *all* men could pray at *all* times as *some* men can *sometimes*, then indeed we might prefer extempore to pre-composed prayers' (H. C. G. Moule's biography, p. 124).

Further, as Mr. Clines shows in his article, it is useless to pretend that we do not have a liturgy of our own. It is too late to ask 'Should we use a liturgy?': rather the question must be 'What sort of liturgy meets the requirements both of scriptural principles of worship and of twentieth-century life?'

David Clines was the Secretary of the CBRF group in Cambridge while he was studying at Tyndale House, and is now a Lecturer in the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield. He is concerned to show us the self-contained liturgical world that most Brethren live in: you may not always think the cap fits, but it is worth giving it a serious trial for size! There is also much here that is constructive, although this has been basically Mr. Stunt's area.

Next in our *Journal* we take a look over the garden fence. Dr. G. F. Tripp, who is in general practice in Dartford, and was a fourth generation Exclusive Brother until 1960, describes recent liturgical tendencies in that movement. He has asked us to mention his debt to Mr. Douglas Malpas of Bournemouth in the preparation of the article, and it is only fair to add that it was written in 1965, and therefore does not purport to cover any developments since that date.

The description of 'an attempt to be a true Indian expression of New Testament practices' was sent to us soon after his arrival in India by Mr. W. J. Pethybridge of the Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade.

Some current thinking among Baptists is represented by Mr. Winward's article. This was originally presented as a paper to a Baptist seminary in North America, and is reproduced by kind permission of the editor of the collected papers, *Worship and Renewal*, John E. Skoglund, Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Stephen Winward will be well-known for his writings in conjunction with Godfrey Robinson, and draws upon over 25 years' experience as Minister of Highams Park Baptist Church in this article. This is itself a much condensed version of his 1963 W. T. Whitley Lectures, *The Reformation of our Worship* (Carey Kingsgate Press), which we warmly commend.

Finally, Mr. Stunt points a way ahead. We are grateful to him for producing this at a time when in addition to his work as a lawyer he is coping admirably with the CBRF Secretaryship, ironing out the deficiencies bequeathed by me, and raising it to a state of rare efficiency. Philip

Handley Stunt comes from a family, members of which have for several generations been committed to brethren principle. Educated at an Anglican school, and now living in a rural area which is rapidly being developed without provision for new churches, he finds that practice of the biblical doctrine of the church in his neighbourhood clearly means playing a full part in the life of the parish church, where he is a member of the P.C.C. He is glad to record that there are many Brethren and quite a number of Assemblies (in the London area and Home Counties at least) who take no exception to his ministry on that account. As leader of an ecumenical house-group in Chelmsford last year, he was encouraged by the high proportion of CBRF membership from local Assemblies who took part.

What follows, therefore, is based not on speculation or even ignorance, but on first-hand experience and observation. It may be that some of what is suggested here has already been tried: comments from such experience would be gladly received by the Editor, whether encouraging or discouraging!

But is all this important, a top priority? Is the general revival of interest in liturgy a hankering, as sociologist Bryan Wilson suggests (*Religion in Secular Society*, ch. 8), after a special area of professional competence by men who have seen their previous rôles as social workers and counsellors taken over by others more qualified? Are we turning in on ourselves and consoling ourselves for a failure in evangelism? Are we giving too much weight to something that may stop a little inter-church drifting, but which will not bring the outsiders rushing in? Are we being offered the thin end of a clerical wedge in the new importance given to the 'liturgical draftsman'?

I hope that what follows will allay these suspicions. We shall see that liturgy is 'the work of the people', the form of our response to God as redeemed human beings, not professional holy men. But in this we need to recognise gift. At present we recognise the gift of the hymn-writer and tune-composer. Now we are being asked to foster gift at present dormant, not to suppress it in any way. Finally we can realise that there is no need to fight a battle over the priorities of worship and evangelism. The convert must become a member of a worshipping community, and that worship must lead to witness in life and work, 'till work itself be worship, and our every thought be to thy praise'.

J. M. SOMERVILLE-MEIKLE

The communion of saints means sharing in a tradition, in that flowing life of the People of God from one generation to another, in that sharing and handing down of God's gifts to the Church. This means the Bible of course, and the great literature of devotion (hymns, prayers and liturgies, and lives of godly men and women)—an enormous fund of real wisdom, an unending set of Mrs. Beeton's and Bradshaws and Wisdens.

Gordon Rupp, *Last Things First*, p.19

LITURGY WITHOUT PRAYERBOOK

David J. A. Clines

A liturgy is a set form determining the content, order, and phraseology of a service of worship. In comparison with the printed liturgies of other Christian churches, Brethren forms of service would seem at first sight to be entirely non-liturgical; but closer acquaintance with Brethren practice reveals that the content, order, and (to a certain extent) phraseology is in fact determined, by custom reinforced by theological explanation. One may thus speak of Brethren unwritten 'liturgy',¹ or rather, 'liturgies', for there are minor regional differences and some churches which do not conform at all. There are of course separate liturgies for the various services of the church, but attention will be concentrated here on the 'morning meeting'.

It will be suggested in this article that Brethren liturgy, partly because it is unwritten, and partly because of peculiarly Brethren theological concepts, shares in large measure the weaknesses of the liturgical form while lacking many of its strengths.

I. Content

A distinguishing feature of a new member of a Brethren assembly is his ignorance of what is and what is not suitable at a 'morning meeting'. It is not always possible to discover precisely what is suitable, both because practice varies somewhat from assembly to assembly, and because the content of this service is thought by many to be a matter of 'spiritual apprehension' and so not amenable to rational enquiry. But the ruling principle is that it is a meeting for worship, understood as adoration. In worship we are concerned not with others, ourselves, or our blessings, but with the Lord alone.

'Worship is not prayer. The suppliant is not a worshipper. When I unite with others in prayer and intercession, we are before God as those who are seeking special blessing; but when we worship, *we give rather than receive*; we are before Him asking nothing, but with full hearts overflowing in adoration at His feet Thanksgiving is the consequence of blessing received But in worship—considered in and by itself—we lose sight of ourselves and our blessings, and are occupied with what God is in Himself Led by the Holy Spirit, we rise above ourselves, and contemplate the Lord in all His varied attributes and glories'.²

When this principle of worship as adoration is most strictly interpreted the conclusion is drawn that no prayer or hymn is in order which is not of the nature of adoration, and 'ministry', which must necessarily be addressed to the congregation and not to God, is debarred from the principal part of the meeting. In the most extreme cases, it is not even permitted for the Scripture to be read, since to do so is not to 'adore' the

Lord. It is interesting to notice that opponents of these strict views usually accept the same presuppositions as their brethren, namely that adoration is the proper occupation of the believer at the Lord's Supper; for they defend the reading of Scripture and 'ministry' before the breaking of bread on the ground that these things are *conducive* to worship.

The normal 'morning meeting' is therefore restricted to 'worship' (adoration) and to such elements as may contribute towards it. The range of activities comprises: prayer (of praise and adoration), hymns (of praise or reflection on the work of Christ, usually with emphasis on his death), reading of Scripture relating to the work of Christ, 'Christ-centred' ministry, and of course the breaking of bread. The content is thus determined by the unwritten liturgy.

It is not generally recognised by Brethren, however, that the connotation they put upon 'worship' is unknown to most other Christians. In normal use, the word 'worship', far from being the term for a particular kind of prayer, includes all the activities which take place in a church service: confessing of sins, intercessory prayer, hymns, reading of Scripture, confession of faith, sermon, collection, etc.

Examination of the words translated 'worship' in the NT (see Appendix) confirms the usage of the majority of Christians, and leaves us without Biblical authority for restricting the term to one form of prayer, even if it is the highest. Worship is rather the constant attitude of the believer toward God, his recognition and expression of the worthiness of God. C. F. Hogg wrote: 'Worship is not something done on occasion and in association with others; it is the characteristic and normal attitude toward God of the believer's soul'.³ To serve God, to fear God, and to worship God are virtually synonymous.

From this it follows that *public* worship is ideally the collective expression of worship (in the wider sense) on the part of the faithful community. The activities of public worship will therefore reflect and collectivise the life of worship of the individual members of the church, and since nothing is more characteristic of private worship than the diversity of its expression, the concept of diversity and complexity will be prominent in public worship. Whatever means the individual Christian uses to express his sense of worthiness of God will, on the whole, be appropriate also in times of public worship. If, for example, by confession of sin or the obedient hearing of the Word of God the Christian acknowledges the holiness and worthiness of God, the church as a whole in its public worship may also employ these means. Brethren often say that a 'morning meeting' reflects the spiritual life of the congregation during the week; I would go further and say it ought to reflect their spiritual life in all its variety. It is interesting to find Oscar Cullmann remarking that the component parts of the service of worship in the NT church were 'extraordinarily manifold', and that 'the worship life of our Church in contrast seems remarkably impaired'.⁴ And Cullmann belongs to a liturgical Church!

Diversity is of course one of the first features a person used to Brethren ways notices about an Anglican service. In the service of Morning Prayer,⁵ for example, the following elements appear: sentences of Scripture encouraging repentance, an exhortation to repentance and confession, confession of sin, pronouncement of God's forgiveness for the penitent, the wide-ranging Lord's Prayer, invocation for God's blessing on the service, a psalm (95) which includes both praise and warning, an OT reading, the *Te Deum* (praise and confession of faith), NT reading, the *Benedictus* (Lk 1: 68ff.), the Apostles' Creed (confession of faith), prayers (for spiritual blessings: intercession for queen, royal family, clergy and people; benediction); and in addition (though these are not prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer) many churches include a sermon and hymns.

By comparison, the scope of a 'morning meeting' is rather narrow, in that there are essentially only hymns and prayers of adoration in addition to the breaking of bread. Any sermon before the breaking of bread will probably be limited to the person of Christ. And there is still in some places a tendency to focus attention throughout the service almost exclusively on the death of Christ.

What elements, then, do we appear to be lacking in our services of worship?

a. Confession. It is sometimes remarked by visitors to Brethren assemblies that the Brethren do not seem to think it necessary to confess their sins. Everyone knows that the Anglican service of Morning Prayer begins with a call to confession and the general confession, but Brethren sometimes raise three objections to that procedure: (i) that it is not necessary to ask for forgiveness because our sins have all been forgiven (ii) that we come to the Lord's Supper to remember the Lord, not to remember our sins, and (iii) that any confession of sin should be a private matter, done by way of 'preparation' for the Lord's Supper.

(i) Perhaps there are not many who would make this objection, and it is probably only arguable within an ultra-dispensationalist framework, but a certain feeling that to ask for forgiveness is somehow sub-Christian lingers on among some who could produce no reason for their feeling. There is not much in the NT perhaps about confession and asking for forgiveness, but these practices are such natural expressions of the religious conscience that it is not surprising that the NT does not take much space to inculcate the habit. It is only among Bible-worshippers, for whom everything must be justified by a text of Scripture, that any objection could be felt to the practice of confession of sins. In any case, surely the phrase from the Lord's Prayer, 'forgive us our trespasses', is sufficient warrant, and if Brethren are right in calling this a 'model prayer' rather than a set form of words, there is all the more reason for the frequent asking of forgiveness. Brethren know all about the past, present and future aspects of salvation; there are also past, present, and future aspects of forgiveness

and confession. The Christian man is, in Luther's phrase, *simul justus et peccator* (at one and the same time justified and a sinner), and so may, and indeed should, make his daily confession to God without detriment to the once-for-all forgiveness he has obtained.

(ii) This second objection is perfectly valid, but the purpose of confession is not to direct attention to our sins, but to God who 'pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel'. There cannot be many who have not found that their appreciation of God's goodness is enhanced by their recognition of their own worthlessness. And further, it is morally dangerous to concentrate on God's worth and glory without constantly allowing our knowledge of Him to impinge upon our own lives; it is to separate religion and ethics, which is paganism (and the sin of those notorious 'saints in the assembly, devils at home').

(iii) To the third objection it may be replied that even if each member of the church had 'made his confession' beforehand, it might still be proper to have a *communal* confession of sins in church, or a confession 'one to another'. And since it is extremely unlikely that every member of the congregation will have made such a confession previously, is it not valuable to incorporate a general confession into the service of the church? It is interesting to find in the *Didache*, perhaps the earliest Christian document outside the NT, evidence for such confessions: 'In the church thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and shalt not come to thy prayer with an evil conscience' (chap. 4), and 'Now on the Lord's Day, when you are assembled together break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions' (chap. 14).

It is encouraging to see that in recent years there has been some criticism of current Brethren practice, as the following quotations will show:

There seems no justification in Scripture or common sense for the concept that the morning meeting is distinctively and exclusively a 'worship' meeting, from which the expression of all spiritual sentiment other than adoration is to be excluded. This idea finds a bizarre expression in the notion that penitence is out of place on this occasion, and many of us might feel that little impoverishes the Communion Service so much as a complete absence of all sense of unworthiness to eat and drink the Lord's Supper.⁶

The NT emphasis on the Lord's Supper as an act in which we re-enter into the saving grace of the death of Christ presupposes the necessity for an acknowledgement of our own unworthiness, and the confession of our many sins and failings.⁷

How can we possibly forget our sins, our sinnership, when we remember the Lord at the Supper?⁸

That Christ saw fit to refer to the forgiveness of our sins as immediately behind his provision of this memorial [cf. Mt 26:28] should be sufficient to silence, once for all, any suggestion that it is wrong to refer to the forgiveness of our sins when we meet around His Table.⁹

b. Petition. Petitionary prayers are often looked down on by the 'spiritually-minded' and excluded from the service of worship. It must be acknowledged that many of the 'bread and butter' prayers one hears take a rather mechanistic view of the activity of God and so are uninspired and uninspiring. But there is reason for thinking that intelligent and large-hearted petitions may have a place in worship and a connection with the Lord's Supper. The man who begs a favour of his superior honours the power and position of the one to whom he addresses his request. Can it be denied that 'large petitions' may be as much an expression of our worship (sense of God's worthiness) as any recital of the glories of God's nature? And if in the Lord's Supper we have set before us the self-giving concern of Christ for his people and the world, what more appropriate occasion can there be for bringing church needs and world problems before him?

c. Sermon. Brethren are sometimes criticised for making overmuch of 'the ministry of the word', setting up the image of the 'ministering brother' as the ideal type of Christian, and turning their churches into 'preaching boxes' out of *Cold Comfort Farm*. But side by side with this overvaluation has gone a deprecation of the importance of the sermon at the Lord's Supper, so that it is often called 'a little word' or 'a few thoughts' (sometimes more appropriately 'a few scattered thoughts') and at times omitted altogether or else squeezed into the last ten minutes. Although many assemblies have made room for a sermon at the end of their morning service, the sermon is not thought of as *belonging* to the Lord's Supper, and in some cases it becomes the catalyst for a quite separate service subsequent to the Lord's Supper. The justification offered for this 'ministry of the word' is: 'On Sunday morning we get the largest number of the church together; more often than not they go away without any food at all'.¹⁰ This is, it must be realised, an argument from expediency; and of course in the absence of a better argument there is nothing wrong with that. But the question remains whether there might not be some theological reason which not only allows, but demands a sermon.

It is a commonplace among writers on liturgy who stand in the Reformed tradition that the two basic elements in the service of worship should be the Word (scripture and sermon) and the Sacrament.¹¹ The sermon is, as R. H. Fuller puts it in his valuable book *What is Liturgical Preaching?*, 'a bridge between Baptism and the Eucharist . . . It is the function of the liturgical sermon to reach back to the Baptism of the members of the congregation, to renew in them the sense of membership of the ecclesia, and to lead forward to the liturgical action of the Eucharist'.¹² As I see it, the significance of the Word is twofold: first, as Word of God, since it comes from God's side and not from the congregation, to be God's 'contribution' to the service of worship (and as such it should be an independent, free-standing element in the service just like the sacrament); and secondly, as *Word* of God, to be explanation of the significance of the ritual of the Lord's Supper and announcement of the action of God that is to occur in the Lord's Supper. The service of the Word should

thus be seen as an integral part of the meeting,¹³ not as a mere appendage to it, and as preceding and explaining the breaking of the bread, not as a subsequent item.

What in fact takes place in Brethren churches? 'There is many a celebration of the Lord's Supper at which the Scriptures are not read at all. If we add to these the many cases, when all we hear is either the institution of the Supper or the Passion Story, it is no exaggeration that for many of us the Scriptures have no living link with our worship'.¹⁴ Both the Scripture and the preaching of the Word are neglected in our morning services, and the result is that the rich significance of the Lord's Supper¹⁵ is only dimly recognised by most of the members of our churches.

Attention has been drawn here to three respects in which our services of worship seem to me to be deficient; without doubt there are others. The strength of liturgical forms of service lies to a large extent in their ability to incorporate all these elements of worship into one service, ensuring that all types of expression of the church's sense of God's worthiness are represented. Is this something which only a fixed liturgical form can do, or is it possible that when we recognise our deficiencies we may be able to introduce these elements into our own more free form? I do not know; perhaps the question can only be answered after we have tried. But I suspect that there is a limit to which a free form of service is capable of accepting expansion of scope. The more pieces there are to fit into the jigsaw the more there is to go wrong; and from the point of view of time it is difficult (though perhaps not impossible) to imagine how so many varied items could, in free form, be fitted into an hour or so.

The weakness of the liturgical form in respect of the content of the service is of course that it allows for no flexibility, but ordains that such and such elements, no more and no less, shall appear in each service of worship. But we may well ask whether with our more free form of service we have escaped the snare of inflexibility. What items in the 'morning meeting' are optional, in practice? It should also be noted that liturgical forms are not necessarily inflexible, and that given certain basic principles a great deal of variety and adaptation is possible. There is undoubtedly no group of churches who could make liturgical experiments and innovations with more freedom than the Brethren, and it is possible that it will be in the realm of liturgy that they will make their greatest contribution to the life of the ecumenical church of the second half of the twentieth century.

II. Order

We glory in the absence of pre-arranged order from our services of worship. Yet there is an order, perhaps not so rigidly fixed as to need an Act of Parliament to change it, but very firmly rooted all the same. If I walk into an assembly where I have never been before, I can be morally certain that the following will occur: There will first of all be a hymn, followed by a prayer. The alternation of hymn and prayer will continue for about three-quarters of an hour (not necessarily in the 'hymn-sandwich'

form, for there may be two or more prayers in a row, but never more than one hymn; and there will perhaps also be a 'little word'). At about 11.50 (if the meeting began at 11), the bread is broken, and the collection and notices will certainly come after that, and usually in that order. There will be a sermon of some sort, and the closing item will be a prayer. My guess is that no more than 10 per cent of assemblies in this country fail to conform to this pattern.

When it is pointed out that there is little to recommend this sequence of events, there are few that maintain that there is anything sacrosanct about the sequence, and most quite happily agree in theory that there is no good reason for this particular order, and that there could be no objection to, say, beginning with a Scripture reading or breaking the bread 15 minutes after the beginning of the meeting. But the minimal number of occasions on which such innovations are introduced and the rapidity with which they drop out of fashion is evidence of the remarkable pertinacity of the traditional order.

That there is no reason for the order and that another order might be equally good is readily agreed, but this is because it is consonant with the principle that order is human, but spontaneity divine. All orders are equally human and fallible, so there is little to choose between them. But if one tries to suggest that the order of a service of worship may have a spiritual significance and express an important theological truth, the agreement soon vanishes.

What theological truth, then, ought to find expression in the *order* of the service?

At the heart of the meaning of worship, as it seems to me, lies the notion that it is something men offer to God by way of response to the divine action and initiative. Logically and theologically the divine action comes first, and the offering of worship (the human *re*-action) is determined and motivated by it, and thus secondary to it. So worship is not something contrived by the worshipping community, but essentially a consequence of God's activity. The service of worship should therefore reflect this dependent and secondary nature of worship.

We meet at this point a terminological difficulty over the word 'worship'. Is worship merely the human response to the divine initiative, or is it both the activity of God towards us and our answer to Him? The latter has been argued by certain Lutheran and Anglican theologians, who speak of worship as a twofold event, God's speaking and our answering. '[God] is the primary subject. Worship is first and foremost God's service to us. It is an action by God, which is directed towards us. Our activity in worship can be nothing other than reaction and response . . . The two sides in worship are therefore in no sense equal; they cannot even be considered as the two poles of worship, for they are essentially different.¹⁶ 'Worship is a two-way traffic. It is not one-way traffic from Heaven to earth . . . , nor one-way traffic from earth to heaven'.¹⁷ Such statements, although valuable in stressing the primary character of the work

of God, introduce a confusion into the discussion. It is surely a highly idiosyncratic use of words to speak of worship as 'God's service to us'. We need to distinguish between worship itself and the 'service of worship'. There must be room in a service of worship for God to speak to us, but when he does so, as for example in the Scripture, this is not in itself worship, though our simultaneous response of believing and obedient hearing of the Word may be worship. The term 'service of worship' or 'morning worship' may indeed be misleading if it suggests that all that occurs in that gathering is worship (that is, the human response).

If we agree, then, that worship is response to God's prior activity, how should this understanding of worship be reflected in our services?

First, by avoidance of the exclusive use of phraseology which lays stress on the initiative of the church in worship. Phrases like 'bringing our baskets of first fruits' have doubtless gone out of fashion in most places, but there are modern equivalents. Even more open to objection is the distinction often drawn between 'giving' and 'getting' on the principle that it is more blessed (or spiritual) to give than to get.¹⁸ What, as R. H. Fuller asks, if this 'ostensible, and often ostentatious, devotion' to the principle of spirituality turns out to be not spirituality at all but British Pelagianism?¹⁹ The cliché that the tone of a 'morning meeting' is determined by the spiritual lives of the congregation during the week (whatever truth it may contain) likewise reflects the view that worship is primarily the *offering* of the congregation (determined by the quality of their life), and not *response* to the activity of God.

Secondly and more importantly, the rhythm of 'action of God' followed by 'reaction of men' can be woven into the structure of the service. A key point in the service is the very beginning; here is the ideal opportunity for making explicit the sense of the congregation's dependence upon the prior word of God, even in their worship. Nothing is more appropriate therefore at the beginning of a service than reading from the Scripture, whether it be sentences of God's welcome to his people, a call to confession, or an account of God's activity in Christ. Sometimes a hymn will also fulfil this function, but more often than not I feel that a hymn of praise gets the service off on the wrong foot, because it is, so to speak, our contribution and not God's. (In an Anglican church I used to visit, the service began with a breezy delivery of the announcements, one of which at least could be relied on to raise loud laughter in the congregation. This was ruinous, of course. Whether the fact that the vicar has now become a bishop has any significance I do not know.)

Furthermore, this rhythm or pattern may be appropriately applied to other parts of the service. A confession of faith (e.g. the Apostles' Creed) is a fitting response to a revelation of the name or nature of God whether in the Scripture, sermon, or hymn. But perhaps the most important place for some response, and a place where in Brethren services there is a conspicuous vacuum, is following the communion. If the Lord's Supper is an occasion when Christ offers himself to his people in the bread and wine,

there occurs here a very meaningful action of God which ought to be followed directly by a reaction of men. In the character of the Lord's Supper as God's renewal of the new covenant, it requires the church's response of 'all that the Lord hath spoken we will do'. The taking of the collection immediately after the Supper, which happens in many Brethren churches, has often been remarked on as a complete anticlimax which tends to destroy the seriousness of the Supper. To say this is doubtless to undervalue the potential spiritual significance of the collection, but it must be acknowledged that since explicit statement of the meaning of the collection is never made (as it might be in an offertory prayer) it is not surprising that many look on it as a purely 'secular' or material occurrence which takes place within the service only because this is the most convenient time for it. Nevertheless there can be no question that whatever the spiritual significance given to the collection may be, it should never be allowed to be the only expression of response on the part of the congregation to the work of God in the sacrament. In other words, if our giving of money is our return to Christ for the giving of himself in the sacrament, it is perfectly appropriate if it forms part of a larger expression of our response, but it is utterly inadequate as the whole of that response, a rôle which it is unfortunately called on to play in many Brethren churches. Some indeed have become aware of the incongruity of the collection at this point and have tried to remedy the situation by interposing a hymn. Certain hymns do in fact express the response which is proper at this time, but the number of occasions on which appropriate hymns are chosen is, in my experience, small. To be sure, some response by the whole congregation rather than by one individual on behalf of the congregation is to be preferred; and if, as in a Brethren church, the only form of written liturgy is the hymnbook, a hymn it will have to be. A communal or antiphonal reading of a passage of Scripture could also be appropriate, and though it is rarely if ever done it would not offend any of the unwritten Brethren rules of procedure. But one 'item' of response may well be thought to be insufficient for the importance of the occasion, and in my view nothing less than a whole liturgical complex is called for at this point.

The strength of a liturgical form is that the basic order of events depends upon theological presuppositions, even though certain accretions to the fundamental shape may not be explicable. The Brethren order of service lacks any theological justification (beyond the secondary aetiologies that have grown up in some quarters), and at some points even runs counter to the essential nature of worship.

The weakness of liturgical forms in the sphere of order is that the order is inflexible even though it is not at all points justifiable. Once again we must ask whether Brethren services do not suffer in practice from inflexibility of order. There is a theory of free and therefore changeable form, but if we move into the realm of theory we might argue from the other side that it is not difficult to imagine a liturgical form whose order is adaptable.

III. Phraseology

Under this heading let us first consider the advantages and disadvantages of a printed form of service which supplies not only the order of the service but also the words to be used at each point; and then examine how Brethren services compare with liturgical forms.

The main advantages of a prescribed form of words are these: (i) All the congregation may take part in prayers and many other elements of the service. This can be a means of expressing on the one hand the unity of the church and on the other the right of the individual Christian to direct access to God without the intervention of a human mediator. Thus while Brethren often understand the priesthood of all believers to mean the right of all (male) believers to *lead* the congregation's worship, it is arguable that more fitting expression is given to this truth by the participation of *all* the congregation in vocal worship. (ii) Many who use a printed liturgy find that for instance the prayers of great saints not only put into words for them what they think and feel but can never manage to express for themselves, but also enlarge their understanding and appreciation of the nature of God and work of Christ. However gifted the members of an assembly may be, their spiritual experience and understanding is limited beside that of the whole church of all ages; if, by comparison, the spiritual wisdom of the church universal is laid under tribute, the depth and richness of the worship can be greatly increased. (iii) The language of liturgies is usually pithy and memorable; this is of value in that it focusses the minds of the congregation upon what they are saying or what is being said, and also in that much of it remains with the congregation after the service is over. Some also find the language of liturgy beautiful, and although the cult of the ugly has not yet gone out of fashion, it is difficult to see why, other things being equal, a prayer should not be beautiful. (iv) Familiarity with the service in all its details is to many a great help in worship; they know what is coming next, so they do not have to think for words and can think themselves *into* the words they are saying by habit. C. S. Lewis, with almost Chestertonian extravagance, says 'I can make do with almost any kind of service whatever, if only it will stay put'; and again, 'As long as you notice, and have to count, the steps, you are not yet dancing, but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice . . . The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God'.²⁰ Without going to such lengths, many of us who are not used to a liturgical service will know the value of knowing the words of a hymn by heart, so that it is not necessary to pay attention to the words as 'those words that are to be sung' and it is possible to concentrate entirely upon the significance of the words.

Some of the weaknesses of the liturgical form are these: (i) It excludes any spontaneous expression of devotion. (ii) The weekly repetition of the same words can become boring and meaningless. (iii) Liturgies tend to become fossilised and out of date, so that they no longer express the faith of Christians in the modern world.

How does Brethren 'liturgy' fare when measured by these standards? In the first place, because there is no fixed form of words, none of the advantages of a liturgical service mentioned above are to be found. But in the second place, the absence of a written liturgy does not *ensure* that services lack the weaknesses of the liturgical form. The absence of a 'programme' does not always make for spontaneity, as we well know, but often for gaps and desperate expedients to fill those gaps. We are not compelled to use the same form of words every Sunday morning, but there are not a few members of our churches who have one basic prayer which appears on each occasion with variations. If we doubt the extent to which the language of our services is fossilised, we have only to consider how seldom we have taken from the service some fresh and memorable phrase or thought. And it might be added that the perpetuation of the venerable language of prayer which we have heard a thousand times but which remains utterly distinct from our common vocabulary is probably doing much to drive home the wedge between the secular and the sacred in our thinking and life.

To describe a Brethren service in the terms I have used will perhaps be thought to be over-pessimistic. It is true, and it ought to be said, that there are churches where there is a delightful spontaneity and freedom in the service of worship, and where people talk and pray from their contemporary spiritual experience, often struggling to fashion a new vocabulary of worship out of their own language and rejecting the second-hand language of other people's experience. But for every one assembly like this there are probably ten others as deeply immersed in cliché, tradition, and liturgical torpor as the average Anglican parish church of our polemics.

It is furthermore worth remarking that the weaknesses of the liturgical form are not necessarily inherent in that form. There is no reason why room should not be left for spontaneous prayer in a liturgical form; some Anglicans have taken a first step in this direction by inserting prayers not prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer. There is perhaps a place for much greater variety of liturgical forms; no one wants a service that is completely different every week, but perhaps some compromise between excessive variation and inflexibility may be achieved. As for the fossilisation of liturgical language, it cannot be denied that it has proved very difficult for churches to break away from the language of the Book of Common Prayer, as study of *The Liturgy in English*,²¹ which gives the communion service liturgies of 20-odd churches both Anglican and non-Anglican, will show. Perhaps the time has come for non-Anglican churches and churches without an inhibiting liturgical tradition to show what can be done in the way of contemporary, meaningful liturgy. A recent letter in *New Christian* from the Archdeacon of Doncaster draws attention to our present situation:

A new liturgy for East Africa has recently been produced, but the whole Christian heritage of worship is Western in pattern. Can the Anglican Church encourage our brothers in Africa to cut right away from the Prayer Book and this Christian heritage, and start

afresh to draw up forms of worship that really speak to the depths of the African soul? There is little sign of this being done; and if it were done we would probably pull it to pieces. We would say that it was syncretistic, or it was too emotional, or liturgically infantile, or what have you.

If Christianity is to be rooted firmly in Africa the forms of worship must be natural to the thought patterns of the ordinary people. At present members of the revival movement attend the formal church services, but for the most part they do not worship there but in their fellowship meetings.²²

I cannot but agree; but I think as well that the need for a freshly thought out liturgy is almost as great in England as it is in Africa.

It seems to me that there are three areas of our church life that stand in need of radical adjustment: witness (the equation of the gospel with preaching must be abolished), discipleship (both in teaching the Bible and in relating it to our modern world we fail to carry out the terms of the Great Commission), and worship. Our present forms of worship, however valuable theoretically, are not in practice what Christian worship ought to be; but we have in the Brethren the unique advantage of freedom to experiment and innovate and in so doing try to discover in the sphere of worship what the Spirit saith to the churches.

APPENDIX

The three most important terms for worship in the NT are *proskyneō*, *latreuō*, and *leitourgeō*, together with their related nouns.

Proskyneō, usually translated 'to worship', refers properly to the oriental custom of prostration before a (divine) king, a god, or something holy. It is not prayer but a symbolic physical act (Mt. 2.2; 4.9; 28.9). Attention is often drawn to the physical act by the addition of such words as 'falling down', or 'taking hold of his feet'. A request occasionally accompanies the prostration (e.g. Mt. 18.26; 20.20). This meaning of 'to prostrate oneself' accounts for half of the 60 occurrences of *proskyneō* in the NT.

Proskyneō has also developed as a general word for 'to perform religious duties', 'to worship' God or idols. In the meaning 'to worship God', apart from one passage in Jn. and a reference to the worship of God by heavenly beings in Rv., it is used exclusively of Jewish worship, and not of Christian (e.g. Jn. 12.20; Ac. 8.27; 24.11).²³ Jn. 4.20-24 does refer to the worship of God in the New Age, but this usage is determined by the use in the same context of *proskyneō* for the worship of the Jewish cult. Paul uses the word only once, referring to the obeisance of an unconverted man upon seeing that God was in the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 14.25).

Leitourgeō 'to perform a religious service' and the noun *leitourgia* 'religious service' refer to Jewish worship (Lk. 1.23; Hb. 9.21; 10.11), Christ's 'service' in mediating the new covenant (Hb. 8.6), and when used of Christian service refer usually to service to other Christians (Rm. 15.27; 2 Cor. 9.12; Phil. 2.20). Only once *leitourgia* means Christian worship of God ('worshipping and fasting', Ac. 13.2), and here it probably refers specifically to prayer.²⁴

Latreuō 'to serve, worship' and *latreia* 'service, worship' generally refer to the regular performance of cultic acts (Lk. 2.37; Ac. 26.7). Once again most references are to Jewish worship; when these words are used of Christians they express the continual allegiance of the believer to God (e.g. 'whom I serve [*latreuō*] with my spirit in the gospel of his son', Rm. 1.9; cf. 2 Tm. 1.3; 'the true circumcision worship [*latreuō*] God in spirit'). Cf. also Hb. 9.14; 12.28; Rm. 12.1 'your reasonable service [*latreia*'] (AV), 'your spiritual worship' (RSV).

NOTES

1. 'We have become so formalized in our procedure and so stereotyped in our expressions, our utterances, that anybody might think that we have got a rubric, if not a liturgy' (F. N. Martin, in *A New Testament Church in 1955* [High Leigh Conference of Brethren], p. 57).
2. An unnamed writer in *The Believer's Magazine* (Jan. 1963), p. 20.
3. Quoted by W. Heron, in *The Faith* (ed. F. A. Tatford) (1952), p. 225.
4. *Early Christian Worship* (1953), p. 12.
5. I do not imply that of all the Anglican services Morning Prayer corresponds most closely to a Brethren 'morning meeting'; perhaps the closest equivalent would be a Sung Eucharist.
6. A. Weston, 'Brethren Sacramentalism', *The Harvester* (May 1963), p. 72.
7. J. K. Howard, *The Witness* (Dec. 1964), p. 456.
8. E. W. Rogers, *The Harvester* (Feb. 1964), p. 22.
9. 'Touchstone', *The Witness* (March 1962), p. 107.
10. E. W. Rogers, in *A Return to Simplicity* [High Leigh Conference of Brethren, 1956], p. 43.
11. This is not only the Reformed position, for the Roman Simple Prayer Book now heads the two parts of the service of the mass: the 'Liturgy of the Word' and the 'Eucharistic Liturgy'. Cf. also the Vatican Council Instruction on the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, III. The Homily (Const. art. 52), p. 20. (I am indebted for these references to Fr. Alan Livesley.)
12. *What is Liturgical Preaching?* (1957), p. 12.
13. This seems to have been the case in first-century churches (cf. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 12; and Fuller, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20).
14. H. L. Ellison, *The Household Church* (1963), p. 73.
15. Some admirable articles on the subject by J. K. Howard appeared in *The Witness* (Oct. and Nov. 1964).
16. W. Hahn, *Worship and Congregation* (1963), p. 15.
17. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
18. In quarters where the term 'catholic' is the 'O.K. word', giving is 'catholic' and 'to come to church to get is held up as something which only benighted Nonconformists do' (Fuller, *ibid.*).
19. *ibid.*
20. *Letters to Malcolm: chiefly on prayer* (1964), pp. 13, 12.
21. B. Wigan, *The Liturgy in English* (1962).
22. P. G. Bostock, in *New Christian* (Nov. 4, 1965), p. 16.
23. B. Reicke, 'Some Reflections on Worship in the New Testament', in *New Testament Essays. Studies in memory of T. W. Manson* (ed. A. J. B. Higgins) (1959), p. 196.
24. *op. cit.*, p. 195.

RECENT LITURGICAL TENDENCIES AMONG THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

G. F. Tripp

In the last forty years or so an unwritten liturgy has become progressively defined among the 'Taylor' Exclusive Brethren. Whereas in the early days of Brethren, anything beyond the most rudimentary framework of the Breaking of Bread Service (now usually referred to as 'The Morning Meeting') would have been resisted, an orderly sequence is now considered essential to spiritual worship. Indeed, a prayer or 'thanksgiving' outside the prescribed order will normally fail to receive a single 'Amen'.

How has such a change become possible? Mainly because, under Mr. James Taylor's teaching, it has gradually become accepted that the ministry of an accredited 'Servant of the Lord' is authoritative. That is, a doctrine propounded by the recognised 'Leader' is in due course accepted by the lesser leaders the world over as no less mandatory than Scripture itself. To secure such acceptance is a major function of the increasingly frequent three-day meetings, and through them the new teachings have been disseminated to the rank and file. It is this process which has progressively transformed the Morning Meeting into its present somewhat stereotyped pattern.

The first change was the insistence on the use of one loaf and one cup, and the moving of the Lord's Supper itself towards the beginning of the Meeting. By 1940 it was generally accepted that the right time for the breaking of bread was immediately after the opening hymn. This arrangement was based upon the idea of a progression in the service: first the Lord remembered in His death, then His leading the praise to the Father. (It soon became a solecism to address the Lord in prayer or song after the Father had been invoked.) No room remained for ministry of the word before the Supper, although after it a short reference to the Scriptures, to stimulate praise and thanksgiving, was an acceptable—if not a regular—feature of the service.

Over the same period, the ministry stressed the 'memorial' aspect of the Supper (that is, 'remembrance of Me') at the expense of remembrance of the atoning aspect of the death of Christ. Repentance of sins, confession and the experience of forgiveness were regarded as exclusively private exercises, completed before setting out for the meeting. The gathering was intended to provide spiritual conditions in which the Lord would reveal Himself, thus promoting praise and worship. The loaf was a reminder of His great sacrifice—His body 'given'; the cup—what He had accomplished for God in the work of redemption, laying the basis for a new relationship—'the new testament (or covenant) in My blood'. The stress throughout was on a corporate rather than an individual experience,

and this was related to the concept of the 'assembly' (that is, the Church, the congregation of the redeemed), which became progressively prominent, particularly in relation to its mystical union with Christ. These valuable concerns, however, led on to the steady disappearance from the service of all reference to the Lord's suffering for sin, to individual salvation, and indeed to sin itself. Calvary and the Cross were words seldom heard.

In the years 1948 to 1950 a major doctrinal upheaval took place, stress being laid on the distinctiveness and 'Person' of the Holy Spirit. This was duly reflected in adjustments in the service, and soon led to worship and praise being addressed to the Holy Spirit both 'as God', and in relation to His own work.

The hymn book, first compiled in 1856 and revised in 1881, 1903 and 1932, has always had an important place in the Morning Meeting among Exclusive Brethren. As the emphasis in ministry changes, so new hymn books become a necessity. Following the ministry regarding the Holy Spirit, a further revision was made in 1951 introducing original hymns to the Holy Spirit and to the triune God; hymns stressing the 'marital relationship' between Christ and the 'assembly' were also introduced. (Some of the latter regrettably conveyed a fleshly rather than a spiritual impression.) Many old hymns were altered to suit the current teaching. This new book had a profound effect upon the Morning Meeting, and after various arrangements had been put to the test of use, the ministry finally favoured the following order:—

The meeting opens with a hymn in relation to the Lord's Supper, the celebration of which follows at once. Afterwards a hymn of praise to the glorified Lord is followed by references in worship and praise to the place the Lord Jesus has taken 'as Man', seeking companions—His brethren. Then references to His union with the 'assembly' and worship to the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of adoption—Romans 8.15) lead on to the Father, and finally to God himself, revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Thus, within the severe limitation that all reference to, or consciousness of, individual moral questions must be excluded from the service, the liturgical form reached after about forty years of experiment has much to commend it. But, as usual, men have come to rely on it, and failure has inevitably resulted. Instead of functioning as a guide or framework, the form has become a mould from which—week by week the world over—similar services emerge. At no point have Exclusive Brethren used the word 'liturgy', and the very concept itself would be rejected. Yet in character this service has become truly liturgical, and anyone who strays from it courts public inquiry or rebuke.

WORSHIP IN INDIA :

A SHORT DESCRIPTION

W. J. Pethybridge

This is a brief description of things as we find them among the Indian assemblies which are associated with Brother Bakht Singh and his fellow-workers. This is a rather clumsy title for a work which seeks to be fully non-denominational and unsectarian, but it is the simplest that will make things clear.

These assemblies are an attempt to be a true Indian expression of New Testament practices, and at first one is surprised to see how the differences seem to be so great, yet without violating New Testament standards.

For instance everyone removes their shoes before entering the place where the meeting is to be held. This is of course a regular Eastern way of showing respect, like our removing our hat. It is done in entering a home as well as a temple, by all. Sitting on the floor on straw mats is a very usual Indian method of rest, and is certainly cheaper than providing benches, which would make the legs of many ache.

Music is sometimes in the form of translated English hymns with their normal tunes, but usually they sing hymns composed in the local Indian language to Indian tunes, which take a little getting used to. There is the little harmonium of Indian design together with drums, tambourines, and occasionally other Indian instruments.

The meeting is usually in a 'pandal', a simple thatch roof on rustic poles, which keeps off the sun or occasional rain, and provides all the shelter needed in a hot country. This pandal is often in the garden of a well-built house which affords accomodation for the full-time workers and their families and visiting friends. Though simple beds are often used, Indians can always crowd up together on the floor to sleep, and make light of what would to us be intolerable discomfort.

The Sunday morning meeting is usually presided over by the leading elder, often a full-time worker. Everyone is allowed to come, but before the breaking of bread a clear warning is issued about the 'damnation' of those who partake unworthily. This means that many do not take part, and sometimes even those who usually join in will abstain, feeling unworthy for one reason or another.

There is not a definite set pattern, but a typical meeting might go like this:

1. Opening prayer by leading brother.
2. Period of singing several hymns.
3. Message from the Word to stimulate worship to the Father and Son.
4. Period of open worship in which all may take part, usually in giving of thanks and praise, but occasionally a chorus will be sung.
5. A short message on the meaning and solemnity of breaking bread.
6. Thanksgiving and distribution of elements. Congregation remains kneeling, and if they desire to partake they raise their hand until the elements are brought to them.
7. Long prayer of intercession for workers in different parts of India, for the sick, and for those in special need.
8. (Either here or at the close) The collection: those not born again are asked not to contribute. While a hymn is being sung, they all file to the front and place their offering in the box on the table, all sisters first, then brothers. Last week I saw a poor sister bring an egg and leave it on the table by the box.
9. A long message of exhortation to godly living and fruitful service and witness.

THINKING AMONG BAPTISTS—THE RENEWAL OF LITURGY IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Stephen F. Winward

My purpose is to indicate five main ways in which Church worship is in need of drastic reformation, in the light of the new insights supplied by Biblical theology and of the principles of the Liturgical Movement.

1. Worship as Dialogue

I begin with the structure of pattern of our worship—or rather the widespread absence of such a structure. When I visit a Baptist Church, I am offered an ‘order of service’ which consists of a large number of ‘items’. If I enquire why these are arranged in a certain sequence, no explanation is given beyond saying that this is the customary order. On other occasions I find that these items have been re-shuffled like a pack of cards. There are so many items, and it does not seem to matter in what order we have them. There is, in other words, little or no awareness of the fact that, like the human body with its organs and skeleton, worship has a *given* structure which should be exhibited in the liturgy. This given structure is the dialogue of Revelation and Response, of the divine Word and the human Answer.

On the western exterior of the Abbey at Bath, Jacob’s ladder, with the ascending and descending angels, is carved in stone as a symbol of worship. In his dream at Bethel, the patriarch sees a stairway reaching from earth to heaven. On this ‘ladder’ there is movement in two directions—messengers are ascending and descending. It is a vision of the two-way communication constantly taking place between earth and heaven. Here God takes the initiative in revealing Himself to Jacob—He speaks, promising to give him the land on which he lies and descendants without number. On waking, Jacob responds to this revelation in spoken word and sacramental act—he sets up a monolith, consecrates it with oil and makes a vow. Here is revelation and response, message and prayer, divine promise and human vow. The vision and the message elicit a response in which word and action and awe are combined.

The structure of our church worship should exhibit this typical biblical dialogue of revelation and response—and the revelation precedes the response, the divine Word the human Answer. This is not the case in Baptist worship today. We have turned the service described by Justin Martyr¹ in the second century upside down, by placing the main praises and prayers of the people *before* the Word of God—read and preached.

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What is more, unlike Jacob and Justin, and contrary to the intentions of Luther and Calvin, we have limited the human Answer to spoken words, eliminating on most occasions the sacramental action.*

2. Worship as Offering

Our second need is to recover the Biblical conviction that worship is offering. Look at the first act of worship in the Bible, which is typical of Hebrew worship at Tabernacle, High Place, and Temple. Righteous Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and on a rude stone altar offered them to God. Worship is vegetable or animal sacrifice accompanied by praise and prayer. And when Christ came, and offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice once for all, worship did not cease to be sacrificial. In response to the one, true, immortal sacrifice of Christ, and made acceptable by that sacrifice, the Christian priesthood is to offer continually the "spiritual sacrifices" of praise and prayer, service and witness, costly gift and holy living.

But what reply should I receive if I were to stand today in the porch of a chapel, and ask each worshipper 'Why have you come to Church?'' He would not say, 'I have come to make an offering'. He would probably say 'I have come to get a blessing'—or words to that effect. The biblical 'Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness . . . bring an offering and come into His courts' has become 'Seek uplift in an atmosphere of peace, get a blessing in His courts'!

*Perhaps I can best indicate what I believe to be the true structure of the liturgy by outlining the weekly Sunday morning service of my own local Church. It is conducted from behind the Lord's Table facing the people, and has three main parts:

The Preparation

- Scriptural Call to Worship
- Hymn of Praise
- Call to Penitence, Confession of Sin, Declaration of Pardon
- Prayer of Supplication
- Collection of Gifts (retained at the rear of the chapel)
- Notices (if any)

The Liturgy of the Word

- Old Testament and/or the Epistle
- Psalm (sung or read responsively by Pastor and People)
- The Gospel and the Sermon
- Confession of Faith (Creed or Hymn)
- Prayers of Intercession and the Lord's Prayer
- Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Liturgy of the Upper Room

- Offertory Sentences, Offertory Procession (in which gifts and communion elements are brought to the Table), Offertory Prayer
- Hymn and Sentences for Communion
- The Prayer of Thanksgiving
- The Breaking (literally) of the Bread with the Words of Institution
- The Distribution of the Elements and Reception
- Post-Communion Prayer, Hymn of Praise, Benediction.

In this pattern, all the parts of the Word, read and spoken, are together, and *precede* the main prayers of the people and the sacramental action. It has the same basic structure as the service of Justin and Calvin, and sees worship as Dialogue between God and man.

In reaction against the 'sacrifices of Masses', the left wing of the Reformation became suspicious of, and usually hostile to, the whole conception of worship as offering. It is still maintained today, by some, that the Christian cannot offer anything to God, since this has already been done for him by Christ. The Puritans, in particular, so emphasised the downward movement of revelation and communication through the Word, that they made inadequate provision for the upward movement of the worshippers. 'If, for convenient but not absolute purposes of description, a distinction can be made between the downward movement of revelation and the upward movement of aspiring human response, then the Puritan cultus stressed the former and the Anglican cultus the latter'.²

Our task is to correct this distortion, not by seeking to belittle that which God gives and we receive in worship, but by insisting that the true response to divine giving is human giving, i.e. offering. 'Graciousness by definition cannot pauperise the recipient; and *agape* can never be "a charity" in the odious sense of a benefit condescendingly conferred upon a passive beneficiary . . . the illimitable riches of God's grace and generosity cannot be accepted without the most costly response of which we are capable'.³

Four things are involved in the recovery of this awareness that worship is offering. The people must be taught that *praise* is a sacrifice to be offered up to God; we do not, or should not, sing psalms and hymns to get 'uplift', pleasant emotional experiences, or even 'messages'. Likewise *prayer* is a spiritual sacrifice offered by the priestly community to God on behalf of mankind—it is not a sermonette to help or edify the congregation. It also means that the *offering of gifts* is seen as an essential part of worship. The offertory is the place where God's stewards and fellow-workers offer up the fruits of their labour to God for His purposes.

Most of all it is bound up with the recovery of a true *doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice*. In the past, when theologians and people alike thought of sacrifice exclusively in terms of the death of the victim and not also, as the Bible does, of the offering of its life, and when the purpose of sacrifice was regarded as predominantly propitiatory, and the elements of oblation and communion so prominent in the biblical sacrifices were ignored—then Christians were shut up to the false antithesis. Either the Eucharist was a repetition of the sacrifice of the cross, or it was a mere memorial of it. It is in fact neither. 'It is not a question of recalling something which happened 2,000 years ago on Golgotha. The past is here too the present, as the Lord Himself makes the past and eternally valid sacrifice contemporaneous with us'.⁴ As we 'spread forth' the sacrifice of Christ we both receive him who gave and gives himself, and—united sacramentally with him—we offer ourselves to God as the climax of our *sacrificium laudis*.

3. Embodied Worship*

Our worship is also in need of reform, because it is predominantly verbal and disembodied. A contrast may help to make this clear. Consider the kind of worship offered by David when he first brought the Ark

*Mr. Winward has also dealt with this aspect of worship in his essay contributed to *The Renewal of Worship* (ed. R. C. D. Jasper, Oxford, 1965)—J.M.S.-M.

of God into Jerusalem. The Ark itself was the embodied presence—for God Himself was closely associated, if not identified, with that cultic symbol. The eyes, as well as the ears, were involved. So also were the bodies of the worshippers in the solemn procession. The devotion of David was expressed outwardly in the dance. And procession, dance, music, shouting and song were consummated in sacrifice and sacrament in the total gift of the burnt offering and the communal feasts of the peace offering. All this was very far from being a 'purely spiritual' act of worship. The divine presence and the human response were alike embodied. The Ark, the dance, and the offerings may be taken as representing the three strands—symbol, ritual, sacrifice—which were the main constituents of the cult, the embodiment of Hebrew worship. Inner devotion was given outward expression, in words and deeds, in patterns of activity which included the body, made use of matter, and were perceptible to the senses.

Now, by way of contrast, look at the worship of a Strict Baptist Church in England today! It consists of a hymn, a long extempore prayer, a hymn, the reading of a whole chapter of the Bible, the collection, a hymn, a sermon of forty-five minutes, a hymn, the benediction. Apart from the collection, it is all words, and, apart from the hymns, all the words are spoken by one man. This type of service they would defend, as over against the 'crude and primitive' worship of David, by citing the words of our Lord to the woman at Sychar: 'God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'. Such interpretation completely overlooks the fact that 'spirit' in the Old Testament means life-giving, creative activity (as in Ezekiel 37). As in other traditions, they are the victims of the baneful influence of Zwingli of Zurich, the principal opponent of embodied worship. Almost Manichaeian in his contrast between the material and the spiritual, Zwingli abolished the physical and the sensuous, symbol and ceremony, and relegated worship to the sphere of the mind.

In the Puritan-Pietist tradition, there is marked hostility to the outward embodiments of worship. The ideal here is a 'purely spiritual' worship—by which is meant an exclusively verbal worship. That which is addressed to the mind is allowed; all appeal to the senses (other than hearing) is excluded. You may be spoken to, and you may speak—that is all. You may use the ear-gate but not the eye-gate, the mind but not the body. The limitations and weaknesses of such a type of worship are obvious. Addressed almost exclusively to the mind, and making large demands on the attention, it is hardly surprising that in an age of television and the cinema, it makes little appeal to the proletariat. It is too wordy, notional, abstract, intellectualistic.

We, the heirs of the Puritan tradition, need to complement our stress on the inward (complement, not abandon) by an appreciation of the importance of the outward components of worship. That is to say, we must take symbol, ceremony, and sacrament more seriously. While

continuing to appreciate the vital importance of verbal symbols, we must also make more use of visual symbols.

The most important of these 'externals' is the church building itself.⁵ Symbols within the building—the Lord's Table, the Baptistry, the Pulpit, the Lectern, the Bible, lights, pictures, etc.—are also important. Nor must we be afraid to use the body in worship—to stand, kneel, bow, to use the hands in prayer as in preaching. The outward as well as the inward is involved in the total response of an animated body (not a pure spirit) to the revelation of God *in the flesh*. The Incarnation implies embodied worship.

4. Liturgy and Liberty

We are also confronted with the task of overcoming the false antithesis which in the past has been created between liturgy and liberty. In 1662 the Act of Uniformity sought to impose a fixed written liturgy upon the Churches of this country. In their laudable resistance to a fixed, excessively stylised, and enacted (State enacted) liturgy, many of our forefathers were driven into opposition to liturgy as such. Among Free Churchmen there is still a widespread misunderstanding of the true nature of liturgy. It is assumed that liturgy is *necessarily* a form of service in which all the words are written down, prescribed by ecclesiastical, or even State, authority, and constantly repeated. This is to define liturgy in terms of one particular manifestation of it—a manifestation incompatible with true liberty.

In the New Testament *leitourgia* is the work of the People of God, whether assembled or dispersed. When the People are assembled, the liturgy is the place of encounter between Lord and Church, the vehicle of divine revelation and human response. It is worship *ordered* so as, on the one hand, to declare the whole Gospel, and on the other hand to enable the people to make an adequate response—in union with the whole Church militant and triumphant.

Since liberty and liturgy, spontaneity and order, are both alike essential to full Christian worship, we must seek to avoid the two extremes taught us by Church history. At the one extreme is the prescribed, inflexible liturgy which leaves little or no room for variation and adaptation, for the 'inspired spontaneity' and freedom of the Holy Spirit. At the other extreme is the disorder and anarchy, the subjectivism and individualism, the confusion and poverty of content which results when the Biblical and traditional forms of worship are jettisoned—the 'squalid sluttery of fanatic conventicles'. The right way of combining liberty and liturgy is by provision of *Common Order*, in which the biblical precedent of prescribing the actions but not the words is followed. Orders, rubrics, and words for the various services of the church are provided as patterns and for guidance, but not fixed or prescribed (the vast difference between the words 'provide' and 'prescribe' should be noted).

All over the world, Baptists have so far failed to provide the order and content of worship. We have been left at the mercy of what Calvin called 'the capricious giddiness' of individual ministers, most of whom

have received no training in the principles of worship. 'It is one of the tragedies of the situation that the Churches which have given their ministers the maximum liberty of liturgical improvisations are those which have given them the minimum training in liturgical principles'.⁶ In our book, *Orders and Prayers for Church Worship*,⁷ Dr. E. A. Payne and I have made a first attempt to provide Baptists in Britain with a book of common order. But a book for the pastor is not enough: the people need a prayer book for much the same reason as they need a praise book although for a long time there was opposition to the latter in our churches. Congregational worship would be impoverished if there were only solo praise—especially if it came from the pastor! Ought we to be satisfied with one man praying and the others listening—as the *only* way of praying?

5. Congregational Participation*

The greatest single weakness of Baptist worship is the way in which the man in the pulpit monopolises the service. While we pay lip service to the priesthood of all believers, our worship is predominantly a one-man affair. In this respect we have failed to leave behind the clericalism and sacerdotalism of the Roman Church. 'New presbyter' in this realm also is but 'old priest writ large' (John Milton). In this respect our worship compares unfavourably with that of the Bible and the primitive Church. In the early sacrificial worship of Israel, in the later synagogue, in the pentecostal worship described in 1 Corinthians 14, in ante-Nicene worship, the people took an active part. But in Baptist services the Minister does almost everything—he reads the Scriptures, offers prayers as a monologue, preaches the sermon, and administers the sacraments with a minimum of aid. All that is left to the congregation is singing hymns and giving money. I should like to mention here some of the attempts we have made in our local church to develop and encourage congregational participation.

(a) We have a lectern as well as a pulpit, and different laymen are selected each Sunday to read the lessons.

(b) The Psalms are said responsively by Pastor and People.

(c) We make use of memorised dialogue in our services. The parts recited by the People are memorised in the Church Meeting (week nights) and added to from time to time.

(d) A layman frequently recites the offertory sentences, and when the stewards have brought forward the gifts, the People, standing, say the offertory prayer.

(e) We make some use of the ancient three-fold way of offering intercessions. A Deacon gives the bidding "Let us pray for . . .". In an adequate period of silence, the People then pray as bidden, after which

*Mr. Winward has elsewhere (*The Reformation of our Worship*, 102, 109) acknowledged the place accorded to this ideal among the Brethren. However, before we congratulate ourselves that we know all about this subject, let us reflect on the pertinence of Mr. Winward's remarks to the conduct of services other than the Breaking of Bread—J.M.S.-M.

the Pastor “collects” the silent prayers in a few concise sentences (the origin and proper use of the collect). A second bidding is then given by the Deacon, and so on.

(f) We frequently, but not in all services, say prayers together out of a book.⁸ The parts to be said together are printed in italics. This book includes a large selection from the Psalter, much other scriptural material, and the ‘garnered excellence of the saints’.

While no one of these ways of encouraging congregational participation, taken by itself, goes very far, yet when they are all used, considerable advance has been made, especially in the direction of common prayer.

Epilogue

Just a brief word in conclusion. The principles of the Liturgical Movement challenge us to reform and renewal in different ways. With Anglicans, for instance, I should have sought to share the great positive values of our worship tradition, some of which they lack. Instead of the five aspects I have selected, I should have chosen five others—the centrality in our services of the Word of God, read and preached, the fervour and quality of our congregational praise, our flexible approach which leaves ample room for the freedom of the Holy Spirit, the warmth of fellowship which characterises much of our worship, the evangelical conviction and concern of our preachers and people. These five characteristics I, in common with you, value immensely. I have not spoken of them because, thank God, these things are a reality in our churches. Without losing these treasures of our heritage, we need rather to attend to the ways in which our worship is in need of reformation and renewal. Perhaps of the five aspects I have selected, I may use the Saviour’s words: ‘It is these you should have practised, without neglecting the others’.

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1. *First Apology*, 67: translation in, e.g., F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, 196.
 2. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 32.
 3. C. F. D. Moule, *The Parish Communion Today*, ed. D. M. Paton, 84.
 4. G. Aulen, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, 192.
 5. On the bearing of the principles of the Liturgical Movement on church architecture, see Peter Hammond, *Towards a Church Architecture*, and Basil Minchin, *Outward and Visible*.
 6. L. Newbigin, *A South India Diary*, 86.
 7. Carey Kingsgate Press, 1960.
 8. S. F. Winward, *Responsive Praises and Prayers for Minister and Congregation*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1958.
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Now if the form of the service of worship is to help express this two-sided character of the reality of God—this nearness and this ‘total otherness’—then *both* must find expression in form. There must be both the liturgical presentation of the majesty of God, which reaches out beyond the ages and in the language of tradition transcends the present moment, *and* that nearness of God in our market places and our highways and hedges.

Helmut Thielicke, *Encounter with Spurgeon*, p. 30

TOWARDS AN AVAILABLE MOUNT

Philip Handley Stunt

It has already been suggested in this issue that there is no basic conflict between the so-called freedom of the spirit and the use of liturgical forms in the ordering of congregational worship. It has also been demonstrated that the worship of most of the Brethren¹ is already ordered by quite definitely liturgical influences however unofficial, unobtrusive and even unsuccessful they may be. We now have to consider what practical steps are open to people who are committed to brethrenism but who believe that public worship should be something more than current Assembly practice affords. In considering this therefore I shall not discuss whether the New Testament provides a pattern for worship, nor attempt to argue the case for a more liturgical approach to worship but aim to suggest to those who have already faced those problems and are convinced that reform is necessary how the revitalisation of Assembly worship might be approached, and in particular how overt liturgical means could be used without threatening basic principle. Before attempting this it will be necessary to diagnose the cause of the present trouble and estimate what may have gone wrong with Assembly worship perhaps a long time ago. Next we shall consider the removal of some obstacles to the kind of reform that seems appropriate. Finally we shall suggest the proper rôle of liturgical exercises in an assembly.

I. An Approach to the Problem

The questionings giving rise to this issue of the *Journal* are not the result of a sudden deterioration of Brethren worship. There has been little change in the liturgical practice of 'open' Brethren for generations, but the catalytical atmosphere of ecumenical discussion has precipitated an awareness of the unsatisfactoriness of things as they have long been. The original and distinctive contribution of the early Brethren to the modern history of the church may perhaps best be called the principle of recognition. They sought, somehow, to recognise in practice that the local church consisted of all in each place² who had responded to the gospel of the Cross and the Kingdom of Christ whatever their degree of maturity, their opinion on classic controversies, or their ecclesiastical connection, and it is vital to understand clearly that this principle of recognition, basic to true brethrenism,³ is not necessarily the same as that traditional body of accretions often euphemistically referred to as 'Assembly Truth'. To recognise what the Lord has already made or done or given is quite different from trying to reconstruct what He is thought once to have preferred; the earliest movements of Brethrenism were not aimed at reconstructing a particular variety of local church with a distinctive specification for worship, ministry and government however biblical it might seem but at recognising the brotherhood, gifts and authority already given among local Christians. It is instructive to observe in passing that

the particular way the pioneers were led to practise their principle of recognition was not the modern way of united evangelism but the way of united worship; so that after centuries of exclusivism founded on various tests there began to emerge congregations of evangelical Christians united on the potentially inclusive basis of their common brotherhood in Christ and membership of His local church, ready to recognise each other's gifts and the responsibilities and authority committed to each.⁴ Unfortunately within a very short time, as history so plainly records, practical expressions of this essentially inclusive principle of recognition gave way to cravings for an ideal pattern of local church. The Brethren did the very thing they had been warned against, they ceased 'to be an available mount for communion for any consistent Christian'.⁵ As a result the movement quickly developed exclusive features so distinctive that in effect a new denomination emerged beyond the bounds of which, once it had become established, the distinctive vision of brethrenism has never really spread.⁶ Thus was the promising 'just-brethrenism' of the pioneers transformed into a familiar brand of ecclesiastical apartheid. Outside the movement the whole idea of brethrenism as it might so wonderfully have been has become suspect among the churches at large and obscured and distorted by the spectre of Brethrenism as it has actually been; within the movement the highly developed and characteristic features of modern Assembly life have become so established that even the most candid and self-critical Brethren can easily believe they are essential to true brethrenism.

The relevance of this to the limited subject of Brethren worship today is simply that if Assembly worship is in the doldrums it is really only a symptom of this historic departure from the basic brethren principle of recognition. The regrettable fact is that after more than one hundred years of Brethrenism, evangelical Christians in a locality are still not found worshipping together, sharing each other's gifts, or recognising each other's callings to responsibility and authority in the local Christian community; still less are the namesakes of the early Brethren giving a lead in this direction.⁷ Moreover this defection has perhaps had more disastrous results in Brethren Assemblies than in other kinds of congregation because, depending entirely on recognition rather than on appointment and election, once an Assembly has become isolated from other Christians in its locality it is confined to recognising such gift as its own company happens to afford which, since a given Assembly may not happen to comprise the entire body of local believers, may be small, dwindling or even non-existent. In the field of worship therefore the result has been predictably that the Brethren have developed, along with their ecclesiology, a liturgy (and with it that liturgy of which David Clines has written) so esoteric that it excludes from the Assemblies the very people without whom the concept of brethrenism cannot be realised—other members of the local church in that place.

But if Brethren worship is ever to mature it must first become the worship of the local Christian brethren in more than name. As we consider how to set about revitalising this esoteric worship it becomes clear that this cannot be done (without violating the basic principle of

recognition) unless it is by first removing the barriers that keep these people out, the obstacles they see as preventing them from coming in. Only after these obstacles have been removed and truly inclusive brethrenism becomes a characteristic of the Assembly can it expect successful reformation of its worship: reformation will flow from the influence of these other Christians with their wide variety of liturgical insights.

This is not, of course, a call to put the clock back; there is no more justification for supposing that brethren principles can only be practised by slavish imitation of the early Brethren than for supposing that New Testament principles can only be practised by aping the acts of the apostles. 'To trust in a church, whether early or contemporary is neither safe nor biblical'.⁸ The call is rather to go back in repentance⁹ to the point where the way was missed and from there to move forward to fulfil the vocation of the present. It is as if in one of those second chances the Lord of history rarely gives, there is offered to the Brethren today an opportunity to take up the torch again and to influence decisively ecumenical polity at a time when what happens in England is likely to set the pattern for practical Christian unity the world over.

II. Obstacles to a Solution

If the first step towards liturgical reform in the Assemblies is to make them really open to all believers there are clearly no prospects in merely doctoring hymn books or tinkering with the 'morning meeting'. If reformation of worship needs first a pattern of ecclesiastical life commendable to the local evangelical community the first steps towards such an 'available mount'¹⁰ will involve wider aspects of church life than we can consider here, exciting though it might be. I have therefore selected four matters (there may be others) on which the normal Brethren attitude makes it hard for other Christians to take our brethrenism seriously and which therefore need to be reconsidered by Brethren who want to see Assembly worship improved and who realise that this depends on first drawing in other Bible-honouring local Christians. The four matters each of which at present constitutes some sort of barrier to this necessary integration are our attitude to public worship, our choice of language, our use of the arts and our recognition of gift.

(a) *Our attitude to public worship*

This involves two matters so fundamental both to worship and to the practice of brethrenism that unless they can be dealt with it is doubtful whether there is any real hope of saving Assembly worship at all.

i. *Public.* As David Clines has already indicated,¹ the Brethren connotation of worship and the restricted eucharistic Zwinglianism that goes with it is unknown to most other Christians for whom worship is something much wider.¹¹ This peculiarity gives rise to the impression that the Assemblies have no real equivalent of what most Christians know as public worship. Moreover this impression is intensified by the way some Brethren contrive to distinguish between worship and communion, for

the latter of which alone the Lord's supper seems to provide, so that they appear to make no recognisable provision for the former (unless perhaps incidentally in a meeting for 'prayer and praise' the existence of which often seems to betray the liturgical inadequacy of the Lord's Supper). This particular deficiency may be understood by those versed in 'Assembly Truth' or 'God's Principles of Gathering' but in view of the record of God's people throughout the Bible and Christian history it is certainly an obstacle to true brethernism and probably excludes many Christians from the Assemblies. This can only be overcome by recovering the Biblical idea of public worship as a service which 'will enthrone God in the life of the community, not seclude him in the precincts of the sanctuary'. However hard that may prove (and it will call for some open-minded Bible study for a start) once recovered, such worship will emphasise to the Assembly its responsibility for its neighbours and will open the way for corporate obedience to neglected apostolic injunctions: e.g., by corporate prayers for local councillors, magistrates and civil servants, by acts of dedication giving liturgical recognition to the needs of the poor and by public prayer for the community's welfare such as work, labour relations, planning, production, seed time and harvest. It is, after all, the costly command to pray all kinds of prayer for all kinds of men that we are called to obey;¹² and such obedience in the course of truly public worship will also result in a healthier regard for places of worship, not just as licensed premises (albeit for weddings) beyond which activity passes 'outside the control of responsible overseeing brethren',¹³ but also as hallowed places where the community's greatest sacrifices are made and needs met.

Other benefits too will follow. Public worship which uplifts God in the community helps to teach the community His truth especially where such worship includes congregational use of forms of sound words; first, sound forms aid teaching within the fellowship at times when gift is neglected or under-developed or when for social or political reasons it becomes difficult to meet for study or teaching, and may also preserve the fellowship against assaults of error or extremism when pastors are lacking. Secondly, in really public worship sound forms teach beyond the fellowship and may profoundly affect the whole community;¹⁴ the fact that a group of righteous and happy neighbours meets to use ascriptions such as 1 Timothy 1: 17 cannot fail to have some effect on local society provided it is known that they meet and what they do when they meet.

ii. *Congregational*. The other feature of Brethren worship which surely keeps some Christians away from the Assemblies is the lack of evident congregational participation. It is curious that people who make so much of the congregation as a body should seem in their worship to be no more than a loosely associated group of individualists. The impression is probably fortified by the pronounced emphasis on autonomy of congregations and by the autocratic system of oversight, but it is true that apart from hymn-singing the whole congregation does not apparently take part in anything else (frequently including amens). 'Worship is the first concern of the church and it must be the worship of the whole church,

priests and people together'.¹⁵ If Anglicans can say this it is the more surprising that Assemblies who abhor hieratic worship should in fact have developed what looks like a caste of priestly individualists, usually plural admittedly, though serious recognition of gift would often jeopardise even this. It is therefore vital deliberately to ensure that every person has an evident and substantial part in public worship. We shall see later how this may be done, but in passing we can note that provision for such congregational participation can more than anything emphasise to those present their common, plural priesthood.¹⁶

If at present the Brethren tend to attract individualists, and if evangelical emphasis on separation often associated with individualism has obscured the assembly corporately as the salt of the earth and a city set on a hill, this imbalance could be corrected by liturgical reforms which draw in other Christians and by worship which demonstrates to the faithful and the worldly community the essential unity of the church, a doctrine which has profound devotional, instructional and evangelistic merit.

(b) *Our choice of language*

As we shall see later the ultimate choice of words for the worship of a church is its own affair. But there are three linguistic obstacles to the success of brethrenism the removal of which will facilitate the reformation of Assembly worship along the lines indicated above.

i. *Claims about ourselves and criticism of others.* First, there is a tendency to claim too much about ourselves as brethren. True, the label 'Brethren' was first pinned on by others¹⁷ but it undoubtedly arose from the pioneers' aim 'to exhibit . . . the common brotherhood of all believers'.¹⁸ Only the most credulous would now insist that the Assemblies as a whole in practice exhibit this brotherhood better than other evangelical churches; and insistence on the pioneers' claim to be 'nothing, nobody but Christians'¹⁹ however innocent, seems to many other mere Christians plainly hypocritical.²⁰ If therefore other Christians are to feel free to worship with us we must take care that we do not claim to welcome all believers while contriving to exclude many of them from the privileges and responsibilities of full fellowship by applying (even unofficially) various tests of doctrinal emphasis or interpretation of scripture.²¹ Those claiming to be 'just Christian brethren' must be careful not to take sides confessionally, officially or congregationally on matters over which equally godly, clever and Bible-honouring men have repeatedly differed. That is the path of exclusivism. It is also necessary to guard against a similar tendency to make claims about our worship, our freedom from forms, ritual or tradition, and our practical recognition of gift and authority, unless we are quite certain that these things are in fact true. How often must exaggerated or merely fanciful claims on these matters have interested many people who soon became disillusioned, and with what consequent disastrous effect on Assembly witness?

Similarly too, we must be very careful not to criticise the liturgical practices of our brethren beyond the Assemblies. We must not indicate

our disapproval of their use of common order or common prayer if, as David Clines suggests we do, we have our own common order (at least) or if we adhere tenaciously to a few favourites in our own hymn books; still less must we speak loosely about ritual, ceremony and tradition as if we had none of our own. For the eradication of habitual attitudes such as some of these which do so much to isolate us from other Christians we must obviously be looking more to our pastors and teachers than to our liturgiologists (if we have any); thus far our choice of language is more a matter of moral than liturgical principle.

ii. *Versions of the Bible*. Secondly, there is the perennial question (not peculiar to Brethren) of the AV Bible. It might be assumed after generations of thanksgiving for the Bible in English that everyone realised the importance of conducting worship in a local vernacular. Unfortunately now that scholarly translations are available it is often men who formerly led the thanksgiving who are found to be the champions of obscurity; worse, their counsels often seem to prevail. But if we believe intelligible Bible reading is a means of grace whereby the Holy Spirit reaches minds and wills, it is clearly our duty to speak up against any imprisonment of His truth in a dead language. The theatre and the academy are the places for Elizabethan English today. We must leave the public use of the AV to churches where the spectacular and the intellectual are the main pre-occupations.²² This is of course a topic on which evangelicals are divided, and obviously we must first be convinced about what is intelligible; but we must not assume that the AV is intelligible just because we think we understand it; neither when choosing a version for liturgical purposes must we tolerate greater obscurity than we allow for teaching; the language of worship is too potent a teaching influence. Can any intelligent and honest English Christian still say of the AV with Cowper,

‘The Sacred Book no longer suffers wrong
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue
But speaks with plainness art could never mend
What simplest minds could soonest comprehend’?

I doubt it. Why after all are the NEB and RSV selling so well on the church bookstalls? Why is the RSV ‘being used more and more as the basis of new commentaries²³’ if not because they not only clarify AV obscurities but speak in the common tongue and liberate the Word? If we still give thanks for such a blessing we must accept it and discontinue public use of anything less than the best. The ludicrous alternative is to deny the very freedom for which we give thanks! Even if the early Brethren did not think the English Reformation went far enough, many of the Christians desperately needed in Assembly worship today appear to be far more keenly aware than most Brethren that they still owe much more to their common Reformation heritage than to the particular ecclesiastical mutation which produced their denominational characteristics. No serious advocates of the crucial liturgical reform with which we are concerned should therefore allow sentimental conservatives or excitable reactionaries to force the clock back 350 years and deny ordinary people

the right to have the Bible customarily read at public worship in the language they speak. Brethren who really want to practise brethernism can set an example to the rest of the churches by resolving with Erasmus writing 450 years ago to 'fight absolutely the opinion of those who refuse to the common people the right to read the divine letters in the popular language'.

iii. '*Brethrenese*'. Thirdly, there is the characteristic manner of speech apparently peculiar to the Brethren. This is not just the celebrated un-written liturgy; it is a whole verbal idiom quite distinct from that of other Christians. Many Brethren, of course, deny its existence; believing all they say is biblical and often having little contact with other Christians, they do not realise that even their daily speech may betray them as Brethren and that instructed evangelicals may recognise a 'Brethren' speaker by his style, even when his topic is main-stream orthodoxy. But isolation is the key; however innocently they may have arisen, these shibboleths are the result of a century of exclusivism, and they are also clearly inconsistent with brethernism and with the vital requirement that worship should be intelligible. If other believers are to share Assembly worship this is an obvious field for reform, though ironically, success depends on prior disappearance of other exclusive features affording freedom for other Christian brethren to influence our language at all!

The choice of a Bible translation and the use of an esoteric idiom both go to the heart of worship. All the great Christian liturgies have been rooted in local, national or imperial cultures; we too must aim at a genuinely contemporary and local liturgy. It must not of course be self-consciously contemporary like recent 'with it' services involving pop and slang; these are less than contemporary, merely fashionable. And it must be neither more nor less local than natural frontiers dictate, which in Britain will probably be increasingly national. Whatever happens there can surely never be a case for an international English-speaking Brethren liturgical lingo.

(c) *Our use of the arts*

A somewhat studied disregard of the arts by Brethren is another obstacle to that integration of other Christians without which brethernism cannot really flourish. God's people have always wanted to express their devotion by vocal and visual creative means (a fact which the Bible recognises and does not deprecate)²⁴ and anyone purporting to practise brethernism must recognise this too. The consequent variety in worship (not necessarily complexity, as some insist) need not jeopardise Biblical simplicity (which has nothing to do with representational art, plain décor and indifferent singing). There is after all a natural connection between beauty and worship: since the liturgy of worship is but a link between the orderliness of God's truth and the spontaneous feelings of the worshipper, considered expressions of worship founded on revealed truth will tend to be beautiful, beauty being in essence no more than order appreciated. And where the arts are concerned 'beauty perceptible by the senses can be a sign of grace'²⁵ that is, of God reaching out to the worshipper, though

clearly liturgical art must always be purposeful (not merely ornamental), Biblical (i.e. true to the gospel) and self-effacing (by which I mean that although it may of course shock us, it must not do so wantonly nor must it draw attention to the artist). Thus, provided they remember that the liturgical function of the arts is to bring God's mighty works before men and not, as some Puritans supposed, to bring man's mighty works before God, the Brethren have nothing to fear from a full liturgical use of the arts. To exclude or ignore the arts is to make less likely the practice of true brethernism and, consequently, vital worship.

The removal of this particular obstacle to the necessary integration of other Christians will call for some very fresh thinking on a variety of subjects, some of which Brethren do not normally regard as related to worship at all. In addition, evangelicals as a whole have long suffered from the misconception that the arts are essentially carnal and this has either driven artistic ability out of our churches or at least made it shrivel up so that developed artistic gift is rare. The first and obvious step must therefore be to challenge local Christian artists to relate their ability to our belief.

To take very briefly indeed one example, architecture²⁶ affords opportunities to rethink the application of brethren principles to the arts (not that much Brethren architecture appears ever to have been thought through). It is for example 'un-brethren' to keep producing buildings like gospel halls which are not only often unlovely (and to many Christians unlovable) but inadequate for the liturgical needs of many local Christians. If Christian Brethren build at all they must provide and hold on trust for the whole Christian community buildings which the whole Christian community can unashamedly own and, of course, find suited to its purpose. Similarly it must not be supposed that only 'Brethren' architects will be reliable; they may be of course for 'exclusives', or even for economists who want pop/trad halls, but their exclusive employment tends to harden the stereotype of the gospel hall. Apart from the aesthetics and economics of structure and fabric, brethren principles must primarily be applied to the internal details of congregational buildings so that they function liturgically when used. There is, of course, no need to wait for a new building before experimenting though existing premises will impose certain limitations in many cases. Here we can only mention in the barest outline one or two examples of the sort of matters to which our principles can be applied. Among the more obvious of these will be the mode and location of what many Christians will call the administration of the sacraments. Today Brethren themselves differ over the position of the table; here we can only remark that the central position most Brethren prefer is acceptable to many other evangelicals including many Anglicans who would like to re-site their tables in the transept; at the same time there is obvious symbolical significance in sitting around only three sides of the table and breaking bread from what Anglicans call the north side position. Equally important is the siting of the baptistry. The pursuit of true brethernism will obviously soon necessitate provision for the practice

of baptism 'in both kinds' and it seems entirely consistent with the principle of congregational participation to enact the drama of baptism as centrally as that of the Lord's death. This is already the practice in most Baptist and Congregational churches; what seems liturgically peculiar is to break bread but not to baptise in the body of the congregation (as most Assemblies do) or to baptise but not break bread in the body of the congregation (as many Anglicans do—though their symbolism of baptism near the door of the church is eloquent). The sacraments are of course not the only means of grace with liturgical consequences in architecture. Others are, obviously, the Bible itself (including visual presentations of its message) and prayer. Briefly, the former requires deliberate recognition of our submission to the word (at least by a lectern and preaching stand if not also by ceremonial entry or opening of the book itself as Stephen Winward has suggested), and the latter requires provision for kneeling (at least in space if not in comfort!).

Where music is concerned, the traditional Brethren attitude which is an obstacle to reform of Assembly worship has already begun to crumble among 'open' Brethren. Instrumental accompaniment of hymn-singing even on Sunday mornings is increasing but full admittance of music to worship involves more than that. It must be remembered that though religious music is regarded by many Christians as merely a vehicle for words, it is, like the other arts, a meaningful form of expression for its maker. This means that for a start the music chosen as a vehicle for words must be apt, and not only metrically so; it has been rightly said that most of the battles over Sankey and sentiment arise from confusion of joy with jollity. Once admitted, music can be an invaluable aid to ensuring congregational participation; one obvious reform will be to revive the band or ensemble which was often a feature of worship in churches before organs were widely introduced; those who can play should be encouraged to do so whenever they can. At the same time the truth that a joyful noise is more important than a skilful rendering must not obscure the paramount principle that we must give our best; the tone-deaf are few, and although musical people may deplore poor playing or poor music, the tone-deaf never object to good music well played! As singing is the only universally acknowledged congregational act (apart perhaps from sitting!) those who have difficulty in knowing where to begin with reforms may find the introduction of new congregational hymns a suitably thin end of the liturgical wedge. To accommodate all the local Christian brethren the aim must be congregational familiarity with the greatest hymns whoever wrote them, and those psalms and canticles which have been the back-bone of the worship of God's people down the ages. A particularly exclusive feature of Brethren congregational activity is neglect of the Psalter. Although there are some metrical psalms in Brethren hymn books the boycott of the Psalter is principally due to emotional attitudes to the way some Christians sing them (e.g. plainsong, antiphonally, anglican chant system). But true brethrenism tries to meet the need of the whole local church which means readiness to sing psalms in all the ways popular with local Christians, even perhaps pioneering of the so-called New Testament Psalms²⁷ or the works of Fr. Gelineau.²⁸

Finally, we must remember that music is an ancient aid to teaching (already recognised in the use of choruses for children for example); we must not overlook the well attested value to singer and hearer of the great musical settings of the Bible (e.g. Messiah, Elijah) neither must we ignore the obvious opportunities of the great Church festivals, provided that music is always used in accordance with our liturgical principles and never presented as a mere concert.

(d) *Our recognition of gift*

The suggestion so far has been that Assembly worship has for long suffered from the failure of the Brethren to practice in the Christian community the principle of recognition which is the essence of true brethernism. The break-down began as soon as Brethren started to reconstruct ideal New Testament churches by applying various tests which effectively isolated them from other Christians so that their Assemblies no longer represented the community of local Christian brethren. Once so isolated they had to confine their recognition of gift and authority to accredited members of their own Assemblies, with the result that their worship has sometimes become very peculiar as it depends largely on the recognition of gift which is often manifestly absent from the Assembly, being found elsewhere in the local Christian community. It has therefore been suggested that in such cases Brethren worship can only be revitalised by reopening the Assembly to a more representative variety of local Christians and their gift. As we have seen however, this involves first dealing with certain obstacles, three of which we have now considered, (the prevailing attitudes to public worship, the choice of language and the use of art). We now turn to the final obstacle selected for attention here which links up the others and may indeed need little further comment after what has been said or implied already. This obstacle is, of course, the travesty of 'recognition' which most Brethren accord to 'gift' (the Lord's gift of gifted people to His church),²⁹ when it happens to lie outside their own Assembly, or Assemblies of a similar kind. Today other evangelicals are sometimes beginning to recognise gift within their own fellowships rather better than many Assemblies have ever done, but the distinctive challenge which has always faced the Brethren is to show the churches how to recognise gift *across* denominational barriers, to recognise and esteem their brethren in Christ whoever they may be, and to recognise, encourage and submit to their gift wherever it is found. The applications of this idea to other aspects of assembly life such as ministry, government and pastoral oversight are exciting indeed but here we must confine attention to liturgy.

If it is true that a less esoteric attitude to public worship, a more imaginative and charitable choice of language, and a less distrustful and more thankful use of the arts would encourage our local Christian neighbours to take a new look at brethernism, how very much more would be achieved by a practical recognition of their own gift. The former would indeed begin to encourage some of them to depend on *us* and to begin to worship with us; but only when the latter reciprocal ingredient is added

do we begin to depend on some of *them* as they actually take part in our worship which in the very act becomes theirs, theirs and ours, the worship of Christian brethren indeed. If there is anything biblical about true brethernism it surely is that its basic principle of recognition is a practical expression of that interdependence which is characteristic of the body of Christ as revealed through St. Paul.

In practical terms this step simply means that we must deliberately treat liturgical gift like any other, whether we find it in ourselves or in others.³⁰ Just as we should submit to the ministry of those apt to teach, the authority of those to whom power is given and the care of those pastorally gifted³¹ (and in each case to no other), and just as we seek (for example) administrative guidance from those with administrative gift, and indeed readily accept a thousand and one facilitating helps from all manner of gifted brethren,³² so we must recognise and accept as gifts to the whole church *for the work of worship* those apt in liturgical matters. We shall only find a way of worship truly available to all Christians if we seek, encourage and follow those by whose gifts (literary, oratorical, musical etc.) the whole church can profit liturgically. To take but one example, we all recognise that not everyone can lead extempore public prayer in an intelligible way, and most of us value more highly the leading of those who can. But it remains for most Assemblies to do anything realistic about giving practical recognition to this gift. We must not of course fall in the snare of confusing natural endowment with spiritual gift but neither need we groundlessly assume that spiritual gift will not be connected with natural endowment. And we must encourage the cultivation of discovered gift by providing opportunity for the practice and study without which it can never be profitably developed or employed. Some of the clearest (and briefest!) and most uplifting extempore prayers one can hear anywhere come from men well acquainted with the rich heritage of Christian liturgical experience. If our so-called Brethernism in practice excludes them from the local fellowship we have only ourselves to thank if our worship is the poorer; (far worse, we also carry on our own heads the responsibility for not ministering to other Christians the insight we have;) and unless we allow those already among us who are similarly apt, to learn from history and to profit from the gift of those gifted but outside 'the Assemblies' we may in fact be quenching the Spirit whose freedom we claim to champion.

Aptitude for extempore prayer is a handy and obvious example but there are many gifts relevant to worship some of which can only flourish in a more liturgical atmosphere, though this need not exclude others. Where liturgy is concerned however, literary and oratorical gift is of quite especial importance; its presence may be detected by the ability to read Scripture in public, to select or coin contemporary similes more meaningful than those of oriental agriculture for example, and to invent aids to teaching and worship such as catechisms, choruses, creeds, confessions, versicles, responses and collects which can inspire, instruct, enliven and enlighten those within, beyond and on the fringe of the local fellowship. And if it springs from a truly fraternal regard such recognition of liturgical gift will

not lead to the universal imposition of a uniform pattern of worship but rather to a variety of manifestations which can only promote the independence and coherence of the church in each place.

III. Liturgical Brethrenism

(a) *Objections*

Before we move on to a few suggestions for detailed application of these principles it is necessary to deal briefly with the two most common and least defensible objections to the use of liturgical forms.

i. *Ritual*. First, there is the idea that any form of liturgy is (the murky truth to tell) basically an attempt to create a religious atmosphere or arouse religious feelings by pandering to fallen instincts with sensual ritualism, a view very often held without regard for the very obvious 'Brethren' liturgy of which David Clines has written. But 'abuse is not a valid argument against right use'.³³ Someone else's failure to use liturgy properly does not condemn liturgy. We can hardly emphasise too strongly that to induce feelings is certainly not our object. Ritual is not intended to help us to *feel* but to help us to exercise that faith by which we *know*. Just as it is possible 'to have forms but not to look to them for life',³⁴ so ceremonies need be 'neither dark nor dumb' and not all ritual has 'blinded the people and obscured the glory of God'.³⁵ There is nothing necessarily wrong with ritual; what is wrong, is ritual thoughtlessly or ignorantly observed, or ritual which is meaningless or which means error. We should just notice, therefore, at least three valid objects of a planned and efficient liturgy already hinted at by other contributors and on which all writers on the subject seem to be agreed though some identify more than three.³⁶ First, liturgy is a means of ensuring that worship is *Congregational*, that every member of the assembly takes an adequate, apparent and real part in its public worship. This was clearly a feature of the worship of New Testament Christians who were repeatedly found acting together.³⁷ A firm grasp of this will help us to overcome the relevant obstacle referred to above. Secondly, liturgy is a means of ensuring that congregational worship is *orderly*. This is not only a question of bad manners or disorderly behaviour but of disciplining worship at a deeper level too. Obviously liturgy can ensure simplicity and dignity by maintaining a balance between the extremes of riotous spontaneity and excessive complexity; but at a deeper level liturgical control can ensure that the oral and dramatic expressions of the worshipping priesthood are consistent with the doctrine they confess.³⁸ It is fundamental that liturgy must be based on theology and not vice versa; truly biblical liturgy can preserve us from the theological aberrations which can creep in where there are no liturgical sanctions; and of course it follows that those with liturgical gift must first have a sound grasp of doctrine. Thirdly, liturgy is a means of ensuring that the orderly activity of the worshipping congregation is *intelligible and edifying* to themselves and to others. The 1549 Prayer Book was expressly intended 'that the people might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God'. It is not sufficient that the grace and glory of God should be proclaimed; they must also challenge men, so that as well as

expressing repentance and dependence it may be evident that they know themselves committed and bound by their profession.³⁹ No church which keeps these three objects in sight need fear the full exercise of liturgical gift.

ii. *Liberty*. The second common objection is that liturgy is a threat to the so called 'liberty of the Spirit'. Here again the objection may be traced at least in part to a wrong assumption. It is plainly ridiculous that churches often regarded (though sometimes only by themselves) as 'live' churches should eschew the use of forms simply because the forms themselves do not appear to have brought life to so-called 'dead' churches! There is no rational basis for thinking that worship using prescribed actions or forms of words is worth less than worship without them, and there is certainly no biblical basis for it.⁴⁰ If forms cannot make worship spiritual, so neither can their absence preserve it from being unspiritual. This second objection is also partly founded on the belief, already mentioned, that Christians should only do what the early churches did and that because their worship was characterised by spontaneity we must shun liturgical forms. There is however abundant evidence for the use of liturgical forms by the New Testament churches⁴¹ and apart from the fact that we are not the New Testament churches, it seems generally more relevant to ask rather whether the forms developed under the pretence of being no forms achieve better results than openly devised forms can. In other words, liturgy or 'liberty', is the result desirable and dependable in the experience of most Christians today? Fundamentally this objection to liturgy results from a mistaken notion of the way the Spirit works. This, of course, goes to the root of brethrenism: the true freedom of the Spirit in congregational worship will only be found when His gifts to the congregation for liturgical purposes are given full practical recognition. It is not really therefore a question of liturgy *or* liberty but of seeking for liturgy (order) *in* liberty, by letting the Spirit, the Lord of the church, lead the church through His gifts into the pattern which the church recognises and follows in the resulting liturgical order, with or without forms. This is the tension between freedom and order in ministry and worship which underlies all the relevant passages in St. Paul and which gives meaning, in worship as in other matters, to the statement that 'where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom'.

(b) *Phased reform*

Once an Assembly has faced up to the principal matters which may need attention before its worship can be revitalised at all and has determined to recognise liturgical gift wherever it is found in the local Christian fellowship it can begin to consider the practical role of liturgical devices in its worship; and provided the three above-stated objects of liturgy are borne clearly in mind the unfettered Spirit will develop His own local patterns be they municipal, regional or national. Few suggestions therefore will really be necessary here except perhaps to prompt initiative. But, someone will ask, what can possibly be done in an Assembly where there seems absolutely no prospect of tackling, overtly at least, any of the obstacles mentioned above? And even should the whole Assembly favour

the liberating process (de-exclusivisation?) which must surely take a long time, can nothing be done about worship meanwhile? It seems to me that not only can much be done meanwhile, provided the campaign is mounted with discretion, patience and imagination, but that provided the paramount objective of serving the whole Christian community is kept in sight, the steps which can be taken on the liturgical front will themselves prove to be the key to a broader liberation of the whole life of the Assembly. I suggest the task can be approached in four phases which may be viewed either as successive chronological stages or as four increasingly wide and deep views of one operation. Some churches will pass through the stages one by one, others will find one or more of the phases, even all four perhaps, developing simultaneously.

i. *Tidying up*. First comes a simple operation mainly concerned with matters of orderliness, personal behaviour and courtesy, any of which may be operating to exclude more scrupulous Christians. Many details we can leave to the consciences and wills of those gifted with open eyes and influence in each Assembly, but a few specifically liturgical matters ripe for immediate attention which is unlikely to disturb anyone, fall into two groups. Most of them are obviously negative and will be aimed at the removal of any sloppy, casual attitudes such as singing with hands in pockets, habitual unpunctuality, and disturbance of meetings e.g. by duty janitors walking up to the front; similarly there must be firm discouragement of, for example, 'prayers that preach' and long prayers generally, the customary pre-reading of hymns and the interruption of the service by letters of commendation or notices (unless of course the latter immediately precede intercessions in which they feature). More positively, opportunities will be found, for example, to hand out Bibles as well as hymn books to strangers and to encourage the use of such uncontroversial formulae as, for example, 'let us pray', and the habit of a really audible congregational 'amen' said by men, women and children.

ii. *Salvage*. The next stage involves building on existing liturgical features in such a way that accepted good practices are improved and equally good and theoretically acceptable but at present deliberately scorned practices are introduced. In this phase the focus sharpens somewhat and questions of our attitude to worship, repentance and giving may be brought forward in ministry along with more specific and perhaps stronger warnings about unworthy sharing of the Lord's supper, and other biblical teaching relevant to worship. Clearly it is at this stage that a sermon should be introduced if at all possible as part of what many Christians will call the 'ante-communion'. At the same time special attention can be given, for example, to dealing with the language problems mentioned already, to the choice of music, speed of singing, the variety of hymns available (aiming ultimately at a really worthy selection from the nation's hymnody) and also to raising the standard of oral reading of Scripture. This last can be encouraged by arranging for sizeable portions, if not whole letters, to be read to the assembly from time to time in place of an address. It will also be wise to introduce at this stage the freedom to kneel for prayer though this can initially be confined to prayer meetings.

The rather shy observance of the Christian calendar should be developed too, both as a teaching aid and a link with others and there should also be some endeavour to make the physical act of giving (money) a really significant congregational act,⁴² possibly by distinguishing between giving for the poor and giving for expenses of the fellowship, possibly by making the congregation bring its gifts to the table. Obviously this phase must begin unobtrusively; but it should ultimately involve boldly claiming freedoms which at present only exist in theory such as the right to initiate (give out?) the Lord's Prayer, to invite congregational participation in antiphonal reading or singing of psalms, and to use certain responses. (How often have I refrained in a morning meeting from calling out 'lift up your hearts!' because I realised just in time (or was it too soon?) that the wonderful response to a *Sursum Corda* could not be expected). The purpose of this whole phase is, as it were, to 'limber up' the present format, to exploit all admitted possibilities so that it is flexible enough for the next phase to follow.

iii. *Available mount.* So far, possibly over a considerable period, the process will have proceeded largely by stealth with no sudden or radical changes; and of course the leaven will have had to go right through church life and not be confined to the 'morning meeting'. But as its influence spreads and the obstacles already referred to begin to dissolve, other Christians will be free, tempted, and I believe, ready to come and join in, and as soon as they do a third stage will begin. Brethren worship in its former, exclusive, peculiar and introspective form will begin to disappear; there will appear instead what may truly be called an assembly of local Christian brethren at worship. And the sooner a given Assembly can demonstrably and justifiably regard itself as such the sooner will the transformation be complete. From then on, therefore, the emphasis will cease to be on improving or reforming *our* worship but on seeking the form of worship which is to be *characteristic of the fellowship* of truly united *Christians in our locality*. As other Christians come in, the basic brethren principle of recognition will come into its own as the assembly allows its worship to be guided by the Holy Spirit and submits to the leading of those gifted in liturgical matters. Undoubtedly this will prove to be the most challenging stage of all and one which will surely find out the reality of our brethrenism, as the assembly, recognising gift wherever it appears, learns to discipline its characteristic freedom in submission to the pattern the Holy Spirit indicates through the liturgical gift He provides. In this advanced stage therefore we shall almost certainly find that however much spontaneity is retained certain liturgical features will become necessary and these will probably emerge along the lines of the great creeds and historic formulae such as the Gloria, The Lord's Prayer, The Agnus Dei (not in Latin of course) and others; equally probably will there have to be some form(s) of general confession and declaration(s) of forgiveness, some recognition that very many Christians will want to kneel at worship, and some prominence given to the Bible, both symbolically as by exhibiting it open and by having a reading desk, as well as by using a lectionary of some sort. It will also be during this phase that there will be seen to be a

place for the arts in their proper role in the development of worship in the beauty of holiness (beauty=order appreciated).

iv. *Gift and pattern.* In the final phase, having cleared away the rubbish, salvaged the valuable and imported the best, we should be able to identify as a meaningful whole the emerging pattern of congregational worship in a given local assembly. This will in no sense be the end of the road, the discovery of a pattern proof against the universal tendency to exclusivism. It will not even mean that the emergent pattern will not change with the years; the opposite seems likely, provided new gift is not excluded. But it also seems likely that the pattern will have certain more or less constant features and that these will be more like than unlike the broad patterns of Christian worship for much of its long history.

David Clines has pointed out that for most Christians worship is more than adoration. He has also referred to the urge which Christians have to confess their sins and the reasonableness of doing so congregationally. He has drawn attention to the 'rhythm of action and reaction' and Stephen Winward has likewise drawn attention to the 'dialogue of revelation and response' between God and man, things which have always been basic to ordinary Christian worship. Further, the private and congregational experience of generations of saints itself reveals an almost universal pattern of devotions which we cannot ignore. It begins with conviction of sin and the presence of God leading to *repentance*, it continues with a considered rehearsal of the *gospel* of the grace of God in the ears of the forgiven, incredulous but exultant penitent, and it culminates in resolute expressions of *faith* and devotion leading to obedience to the Saviour and dedication to others.⁴³ Taking together therefore all these features it is very likely that in really open assemblies where the gifts of the Spirit are properly honoured, the ultimate liturgical pattern will partake of them all. Certainly the biblical principles of many of the Christians who will worship in the assembly (if true brethernism ever becomes more than an ecclesiastical mirage) will lead the principal service of public worship away from a merely commemorative act towards a fuller exercise of faith and love.⁴⁴ And it seems to me that practical recognition of the idea of worship as dialogue combined with the liturgical experience of the church in our land which other Christians can bring in from outside the Assemblies as we now know them, could, with the aid of a genuine practice of the principle of recognition of gift, produce a liturgical order second to none and acceptable to a very large majority of evangelical Christians.

As such a liturgy evolves we shall therefore in this fourth and final stage of the reform of Assembly worship find ourselves looking for full employment of the local liturgical gift in each kind of devotional expression which forms part of the full orb'd pattern of worship (e.g. those expressions which could be labelled with the words *repentance*, *gospel* and *faith* as used in the paragraph above). And in particular as well as producing individual contributions, extempore or prepared, we shall expect to find the congregation learning to look to those with liturgical gift to devise and prepare material for congregational use. Within a given

fellowship, of course, the form and detailed content of such a liturgy and even its predictability will vary with the occasion or according to the guidance of those responsible; but such a liturgy will afford a unique opportunity to achieve a balance between the spontaneous and the pre-ordered and will ensure that neither dominates the services. In the expression of its *repentance*, for example, the assembly will obviously require the liturgical draftsman's gift in the preparation of congregational confession(s); again in the expression of the *gospel*, the good news of God's grace, the assembly may call on the liturgical draftsman's gift for public proclamations of forgiveness, for prayers such as may precede the breaking of bread and the dramatic administration of the elements before the congregation and to each of them, and possibly also, for example, in the composition of gospel canticles. Other expressions of the gospel such as public confessions of faith by using a creed (clearly calling for the liturgical draftsman's gift) or by a sermon or by group study of the Word are at the same time also expressions of *faith* as the congregation together responds to the gospel. Here the draftsman may produce numerous expressions of congregational response by hymn, doxology, prayer, intercession and dedication of gifts. And of course at various points in a service there will doubtless be other biddings responses and prayers.

So far from being unbiblical there is not even anything 'un-brethren' about such practices, as witness the Brethren hymn writers of the 19th Century. Moreover there is no need to be shut up to one general confession, one general thanksgiving, one 'prayer of humble access', etc. We may expect a congregation to be familiar with two or three or half a dozen of each at any one time and to learn many more over generations; and through regular use they are bound to have a deep effect on the private devotional life of individuals, quite the reverse in fact of the process referred to by David Clines on page 7, not to mention their teaching value within and outside the church, to which we have already referred.

Fundamental to all that has been said is the conviction that a thriving liturgy at once *congregational*, *orderly* and *edifying* can only be found in congregations where all the brethren of Christ in a place are as free from liturgical sanctions as from legal exclusivism, where the unity of the Body is strongly felt because the gifts of the members are freely recognised and indispensable, and where the united fellowship is not only *seen* to be separate (different) *from*, but *known* to be unsacrificed *to* the worldly place in which it is set. In a fellowship like that a form of worship such as we have anticipated could go a very long way indeed to marrying the needs, traditions and experience of all the brethren for whom the 'mount' must be made 'available'. Its central feature remains the breaking of bread the memorial aspects of which are especially treasured by Brethren; its dialogue of proclamation and response will be familiar to many other

non conformists and could be more satisfactory than the present experience of many of them; and its overall pattern of *repentance, gospel and faith* should be familiar to members of the Church of England in whose forms of Common Prayer a similar pattern is discernible.⁴⁵

But of course to resolve is one thing, to overcome, quite another especially when the principal reason for conservatism is neither traditional cultural nor educational, but emotional, and the emotion fear. Nothing is better calculated to encourage that preservation of forms, interpretations or even beliefs which our Lord so clearly associated with vain worship;⁴⁶ and in the present case perhaps the greatest enemy will be the fear of having been unsound after all. For a successful conclusion of many of the matters we have discussed any Assembly will really depend far more on a genuine recognition of teaching rather than of liturgical gift. Even then imagination and courage will be required at every step. In the matter of liturgy the Brethren must stop 'blowing ecclesiastical bubbles' and 'playing church'⁴⁷ and get down to their vocation, a vocation which might be expressed in terms chosen by the bishops writing at Lambeth in 1930, 'The vision which rises before us is that of a church genuinely catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all "who profess and call themselves Christians", within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole body of Christ . . . It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled'. But in terms of the worship of the local Christian brethren this vision will never be fulfilled until we broaden our minds and frankly recognise that 'it takes all sorts to make a world; or a church. This may be even truer of a church'.⁴⁸ In 1845 when the ecclesiastical principles of the Brethren movement were put to the test 'the brethren in their first great emergency found themselves absolutely unprepared . . .'.⁴⁹ In the present national and ecumenical situation the Assemblies today face not so much an emergency as a call to a great emergence. Shall we too be unprepared?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A capital 'B' will be used to indicate the Brethren, or Brethrenism, as popularly recognized, a small 'b' to indicate the more ideal concept of all Christians as brethren and what I shall call the practice of true brethrenism. Similarly, 'Assembly' will indicate a church Brethren would recognize as an Assembly; 'assembly' will be merely an acceptable synonym for 'church' or 'congregation'.
2. J. N. Darby described them as "all consistent Christians", people later more often referred to as "sound in faith and godly in life". See note 5 infra.
3. *True* brethrenism is to be clearly distinguished from Brethrenism as the world has come to regard it.
4. Although I cannot develop the idea here, I have deliberately said '*potentially inclusive*' because in its most thoroughgoing and promising form the movement hardly got off the ground. True, at the beginning, recognition of the *brotherhood* of believers was certainly given practical expression, and there have always been Assemblies, though sometimes few, which have facilitated united worship for Christians of all kinds. In some degree too, recognition of *gifts* of ministry (especially of evangelism, though not generally of other gifts) has been practised, although

except for the very early years and the latest developments in the most open Assemblies, it has been almost entirely confined to recognising gift within Brethren Assembly circles. In the realm of *government* and pastoral oversight, however, the principle has probably never been worked out in practice at all. In the words of Dr. Charles Sims of Exeter at a Conference of Brethren at Swanwick (1966) we have got stuck where we were left 100 years ago!

5. In 1833 J. N. Darby wrote 'I do trust that you will keep infinitely far from sectarianism. The great body of Christians who are accustomed to religion, are scarce capable of understanding anything else, as the mind constantly tends there . . . you are nothing, nobody, but Christians, and the moment you cease to be an available mount for communion for any consistent Christian, you will go to pieces or help the evil'. *Letters* in three volumes Vol. 1 p. 18.
6. Younger readers may not have read the historic 'Open Letter to Assemblies of "Brethren"', published in *The Harvester* nearly 20 years ago; several of the signatories are now members of CBRF. Only brief quotation is possible here. 'One of the most tragic aspects of Church history is the record of the devitalised and pathetic survivals which have issued from great movements of the Spirit of God . . . Nor do the Assemblies seem any exception . . . some of the basic principles . . . are no longer in evidence . . . a puny sect . . . has arisen . . .' In the same issue the late Montague Goodman wrote, ' . . . it is becoming patent to all who are prepared to think fearlessly, that Assemblies as a whole . . . have, in practice, ceased to become witnesses to the vital truth of the unity of the Body of Christ and have relapsed into the sectarian condition of the church systems from which they originally withdrew . . . In fact brethren today are not the brethren of 100 years ago—we no longer stand where they stood'. 'Where Have we Drifted?' *The Harvester* 1947 vol. 24 No. 9.
7. This belief is borne out by evidence from a variety of evangelical Christians up and down the UK outside Assembly circles, by the prevailing pattern of ministry within the Assemblies and by enquiry about the composition of Assembly congregations when visiting Assemblies and other churches in the Home Counties. Members with evidence leading to a contrary conclusion in their own locality might be able to furnish the basis of some useful CBRF research.
8. A. Cole *The Body of Christ—a N.T. Image of the Church* (Hodder) 1964 p. 70. This book is one of the *Christian Foundations* series published under the auspices of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.
9. Bearing in mind that the Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists all boast Revival fellowships it is worth recalling the words of a perfecter of true brethrenism reported at the CBRF AGM in 1965 that 'the Brethren don't want a research fellowship; they want a repentance fellowship'.
10. J. N. Darby *op et loc cit.*
11. As Mr. Clines's article has already demonstrated, frequent implied comparison with the Church of England seems inevitable because (a) so many Brethren regard the Church of England as the worst example of liturgy, form and ceremony this side (?) of Rome; (b) so many of the evangelicals who might be expected to join in reformed Assembly worship are Anglicans; (c) the liturgy of the Church of England has so profoundly influenced the worship of all liturgically-minded nonconformists. In this last connexion see A. E. Pearton, *The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches*, (Jas. Clarke) 1966, an exciting book pioneering a new field and including an enormous bibliography. (Incidentally, over 1 per cent of CBRF members are now members of local Anglican churches and half of those are clergy. Other denominations are of course also represented.)
12. 1 Tim. 2: 1-4.
13. 'Open Letter on Tongues' *The Witness* October 1965.
14. See in this connexion J. A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great* (Darton Longmann & Todd) paperback 1960 in English, chap. 13.
15. 'Report on Prayer Book Worship' issued by the Lambeth Conference, 1958.
16. 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9.
17. See for example A. Miller, *The Brethren, their Origin, Progress and Testimony* (the first substantial history of the movement, to about 1870) 'They were spoken of as "Brethren from Plymouth"'. This naturally resulted in the designation "Plymouth Brethren" which has been applied to them—sometimes in derision—ever since!

18. W. Collingwood quoted by G. H. Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves* p. 104.
19. J. N. Darby *op et loc sit*.
20. Any Assembly which claims to be 'open' clearly implies this claim too even though studiously avoiding the word 'open' or refusing to 'belong to the Brethren'.
21. We must not overlook the fact that many Bible-studying evangelicals really are as puzzled as many Brethren are to find they have not reached the same conclusions as the Brethren and been swept into the Assemblies!
22. 2 Tim. 3: 7; 4: 3.
23. F. F. Bruce, 'One Bible, Many Versions' *The Christian* 9th Oct. 1964.
24. Exod. 35: 31.
25. J. Gelineau, S. J., *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* (Burns & Oates) translated C. Howell, S.J. On this subject see also H. Walford Davies and Harvey Grace, *Music and Worship* (Eyre & Spottiswoode) 1935.
26. On this aspect of the subject see S. S. Smalley, *Building for Worship* (Hodder, Christian Foundations series) 1967, an admirable book which should be studied by all concerned, (especially those unconcerned).
27. *New Testament Psalms* is a liturgical experiment by the well-known Vicar of Roydon, formerly of Woodford. He has pointed for singing to Anglican chants a selection of about 50 gospel and other NT passages, using, variously, AV, RSV or NEB texts. Some are very short and compare interestingly with many C.S.S.M. Choruses. About 20 of the settings are also published separately in individual leaflets. All available from the publisher, Christopher Wansey, The Vicarage, Roydon, Essex.
28. *The Psalms—A New Translation* (Fontana) 1963 by a team of scholars in co-operation with The Grail, is specially arranged for singing to the psalmody of Fr. Gelineau.
29. For a recent definition see J. I. Packer, 'The Holy Spirit and the Local Congregation' *The Churchman* June 1964 (Church Book Room Press) 'Is there a common formula covering such varied abilities and activities as those listed in (say) 1 Cor. 12: 28-30? Yes, there is; it is this: a spiritual gift is *an ability to express and communicate in some way one's knowledge of Christ and His grace.* (author's italics) It is not a mere natural endowment, though usually it is given through the sanctifying of a natural endowment. Spiritual gifts have a spiritual content: they display the riches of Christ, by manifestation of something received from Him. All forms of service which do this involve an exercise of spiritual gifts, for Him (1 Cor. 12: 7) and edifying (cf Eph. 4: 12, 16)'. The issue includes two other valuable papers on 'The Holy Spirit and Revival' and 'The Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture'.
30. Col. 4: 17. The question has been asked, 'What was the neglected gift of Archippus?'
31. 1 Tim. 5: 17; 1 Thess. 5: 12, 13; Heb. 13: 17.
32. Acts 6: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 16.
33. S. F. Winward, *The Reformation of Our Worship* (Carey Kingsgate Press) 19; discusses many kindred and complementary ideas.
34. H. M. d'Aubigné *The Reformation in England* ed. S. M. Houghton (Banner of Truth) 1962, I, 31.
35. *Book of Common Prayer*, 'Of Ceremonies'.
36. For simple introductions to the subject readers might well see H. E. Hopkins, *Morning and Evening Prayer* (Hodder—Prayerbook Commentaries) 1963, pp. 27-35, as well as S. F. Winward *op. cit.* and (published since this was written) J. I. Packer, *Tomorrow's Worship* (Church Book Room Press—Prayer Book Reform Series) 1966, chap. 3, though much of the booklet is relevant to other aspects of the present topic as well.
37. Acts 1: 14; 2: 44, 46; 4: 24; 5: 12; 15: 22; Rom. 15: 6-30; 1 Cor. 14: 23; 10: 17.
38. 1 Cor. 11: 17-22; 14: 40; 1 Thess. 5: 20, 21; Jas. 2: 2ff.
39. e.g. 1 Cor. 14: 4, 5, 14, 15, 26.
40. Compare St. Matthew's and St. Luke's account of the giving of the Lord's Prayer: 'Pray then like this' (Matt. 6: 9) a *pattern* for free prayer; 'When you pray, say . . .' (Luke 11: 2) a *form* of set prayer. Our worship should use both.
41. See generally, R. P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott), 1965.
42. Phil. 4: 18; Heb. 13: 5.

43. It is perhaps in the light of such a pattern that the prevailing pattern of Brethren Assembly worship meetings may be seen to be almost exactly back to front. Praise, adoration and worship come first, the dramatic memorial or reminder which might be expected to give rise to praise is usually staged after it is all but over, and the nearest approach to an expression of repentance or acknowledgement of sin is often left to be inferred from consciences vowing to do better in future after hearing an exhortation at the very end of the assembly; the 'exclusives' at least placed the partaking of the elements at the *beginning* of the meeting!
44. 'As often as we communicate in the symbols of our Saviour's body, we mutually bind ourselves to all the offices of love, that none of us may do anything to offend his brother or omit anything by which he can assist him when necessity demands and opportunity occurs'. J. Calvin, *Institutes* 4. xvii. 44.
45. Since this was written there has appeared a new booklet *The Gospel in the Prayer Book* by J. I. Packer (Church Book Room Press) in which Dr. Packer demonstrates this clearly and develops ideas introduced in *Tomorrow's Worship*, see note 35 supra.
46. Mk. 7: 7; Jn. 5: 36, 40.
47. 'Mr. R. T. Grant told me in 1898 that G. V. Wigram, ere he died in 1879, bitterly lamented the fact that Brethren had been "blowing ecclesiastical bubbles" and "playing church" and that he felt God could not go on with them in such folly. He passed away just as his prophetic words were in course of fulfilment'. H. A. Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement*.
48. C. S. Lewis *Letters to Malcom: Chiefly on Prayer* (Fontana) 1966, 12.
49. W. B. Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 121.

The most isolated Christian does not come to God like the pagan mystic, as the alone to the Alone. Even if he does not use a traditional formula like the Lord's Prayer or the Gloria, he prays within a whole framework of Christian ideas received from others. When his prayer is most spontaneous and from his own heart, the belief according to which he prays, the general type of his prayer, and much—probably most—of his actual phrasing are still largely drawn from what he has learned from others—his teachers, Christian services he has attended in the past, his mother, his Bible, many different sources. Ultimately it all comes to him, even the use of his Bible, from the tradition evolved in the worshiping church.

Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*

An unexpected feature of his public prayers was that he would use in his extempore exercise memorised sections of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. There was a classic occasion one Sunday morning at Bethesda. He had used a prayer from the Communion Service. When the members of the congregation were leaving, an elderly member, who vigorously held that all 'set prayers' were wrong, was heard to remark to his neighbour: 'Mr. Short prayed very beautifully this morning. At times he sounded almost inspired'.

Capper and Johnson, *Arthur Rendle Short*, p. 162

FROM THE MONITORS

Humanist, January 1967

The editorial discusses the Law Commission's approval to the idea of divorce by mutual consent. The Anglican report *Putting Asunder* is noted, favourably, and it is pointed out that the 'sacramental view', which results in some RC countries having no machinery of divorce, may be appropriate to their members, but should not be imposed on others. 'Moral difficulties arise when only one partner wants a divorce, or when both partners want the marriage to end but are concerned about the children. This is a situation in which society is surely entitled to intervene. No man is an island. Humanism has nothing in common with egocentric individualism'. (This quote may pinpoint the Humanist presupposition—what constitutes 'entitlement'?—but should be borne in mind by those whose image of Humanism is one of complete social irresponsibility in matrimonial affairs).

Prof. Flew reviews Dr. Miles's book *Eliminating the Unconscious*. The review, and possibly the book, would be of interest to anyone considering the concept of 'Mind'. A few useful points are mentioned. '... Mace's distinction between metaphysical, methodological, and analytical sorts of behaviourism. The metaphysical . . . asserts something about what there ultimately is, and is not. The methodological . . . without necessarily committing himself to any such rock bottom ontological claims, maintains that behaviour is the only possible or profitable object of scientific study. Finally the analytic behaviourist (like Miles) claims that sentences which might appear at first glance to be about entities called 'minds' or 'mental events' turn out on examination to be sentences about behaviour'. A little later there is a critical note that the psychoanalysts regard their theorising as less tenuously connected to evidence than it is in fact. If this sounds rather unrealistic word-play, Flew reminds us 'this assault is launched on behalf of the view which sees man as essentially corporeal, and against the view which holds that the real me is somehow essentially incorporeal . . . only if the second view is correct could it even begin to be plausible to suggest that we shall survive death'. (Compare this with Hugh Dibbons' discussion of Greek and Hebrew views of man in CBRF.

Roger Martin writes on 'The Business of Communicating'. This shows the Humanist concern that immense present forces of literacy be wisely used. Here is another concern which Christians may share with them. They may not put the Scriptures in their publishing list, and there is no reason why it should not remain (intelligently presented) high on the Christian list. But surely we can agree that 'As in other departments of our expanding technology, the mechanics of communication appear to be in process of outstripping our capacity to understand and control them responsibly for the welfare of mankind . . . The machines of communication are with us, ready alike for the good user and the bad. The study of them, and of the people who employ them, is of the greatest importance to us all'.

The rumpus about the Sex and Morality report gets an interesting review by Clifford Allen. He finds the report a basically sound addition to the literature on the subject, and is concerned rather to show up the BBC reaction to it. ' . . . stripped of all verbiage, the Working party believes that premarital and extramarital intercourse should be avoided for ethical reasons, and people should make up their own minds on what is right or wrong without threats of hell-fire. Every Humanist will agree that this is common sense. Yet how has this view been greeted by the Church?' He gives a generally fair account of the greeting, without, however, pointing out the Working party's terms of reference. To him it 'reminds one of the newspaper which, during the last war, stated that Hitler should be given a fair trial, found guilty, and hanged'.

CHARLES MARTIN

*For reasons of space, other contributions and correspondence
have been held over.*

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