

Worship in Kenya.

IN attempting to discuss worship in the mission field, it must be understood that the writer describes only what he is familiar with in his own field—that of the Kenya Mission of our Church. He cannot speak for other fields, or other lands, but has some reason to believe that what is done in Kenya is fairly typical of our other missions in Africa.

In the worship of the African Church in Kenya we can detect three principles more or less consciously at work in the minds of the missionaries of this and the former generation who have been responsible for ordering and leading it. In the first place, while inheriting and bringing with them a tradition of dignified simplicity, they have not felt bound by home precedents. It is not difficult to see that what is suitable for Scotland and her people is not necessarily suitable for a people so different in temperament and outlook as the African. Nor is there any form of worship endeared to them by long association and practice. There is in Africa, even more than in India and China, an open field for experiment, as there is virtually no tradition of worship of a nature such as the Church can adopt and build on.

In a few cases, of course, the missionary may be so thirled to the old "home" way that he is himself unwilling for any other form, and refuses to allow the African Church under his charge any liberty in the matter. But most avail themselves of that liberty of adaptation which is our cherished privilege in the Reformed Churches.

Secondly, they have aimed very definitely at securing the active participation of the congregation. Mental concentration is a new thing to a primitive people, and can only be obtained by giving them something to do. Even in the sermon a question is often asked and answer elicited in order to keep attention !

For this reason it is the usual practice to teach African converts to kneel at prayer, to respond "Amen," and to say the Lord's Prayer with the minister. The Creed and a

form of "General Confession" are also regularly repeated, and responses said or sung to the Commandments.

A third principle more honoured in the breach than in the observance is that of bringing in African ideas and forms where possible. There is, however, extraordinarily little to work on. The African has a fine natural instinct for worship, for the unseen is real to him as it never is to a more sophisticated people; and all his life is surrounded with that sense of awe and mystery which lies behind the impulse to worship. But the forms in which Africans express these emotions and impulses are for the most part unsuitable, and too much associated with undesirable features of the old pagan life to be taken over by the Church. We are, however, securing some "African" hymns, *i.e.*, hymns composed, both words and tunes, by Africans; and these are sung more naturally by the people than artificial translations of our European hymns set to tunes which Africans, accustomed to their own scale, simply cannot sing correctly. In some of these, following African custom, the "matter" is sung by a leader or small group, the whole congregation joining in the refrain. Many of them are Biblical narratives in their own form of "vers libre," and therefore serve an instructional as well as a devotional purpose. But in the "Africanisation" of our worship we still have much to learn, and there is room for bold experimentation.

Forms of worship have been influenced to some extent by our proximity to other missions. In the Kikuyu Country the work of our Church is inter-twined with that of the C. M. S., the M. M. S., and the A. I. M. (an inter-denominational mission, mostly Americans). Ever since 1908, efforts have been made to secure unity and co-operation among missions, so paving the way for a United Church in the future. A moving spirit in these efforts was the late Dr Henry E. Scott, leader of our Kikuyu Mission. One line of effort has been to endeavour to draw up joint forms of service for occasional use, whereby Africans might be accustomed to some of the prominent features in the worship of other Churches; and so might join intelligently in such worship when away from the ordinances of their own Church. These efforts have not met with much response, but they have had a definite influence on the worship of our own congregations. A typical Sunday morning service is as follows:—

Hymn.

Introductory sentences (all standing).

Prayer: General Confession said by all, followed by extempore supplications by the minister.

Lord's Prayer; said by all.

Ten Commandments (or two Commandments of Jesus) with responses by people. (All kneeling).

Hymn.

Old Testament Lesson.

Hymn.

New Testament Lesson.

Apostles' Creed, said by all baptised persons, standing.

(Un-baptised remain seated).

Prayer: Thanksgiving and Intercessions. (All kneeling).

Hymn.

Sermon.

Collection (offerings in money and kind) followed by written collect.

Hymn.

Benediction (standing).

(Sometimes the last hymn is omitted and the Benediction follows the collect, all kneeling).

A book of forms of worship, prepared in 1926, is in the hands of African ministers and evangelists, and contains a skeleton form of service as given above. There is, however, liberty to depart from it as occasion requires. It also contains a number of prayers to guide leaders of worship on special occasions, *e.g.*, the main festivals of the Christian year, occasions of importance in African life, such as seed-time and harvest, and times of calamity—drought, locusts, pestilence, etc.

Africans are "powerful in prayer"—they know no shyness in preaching, or leading in prayer! But they tend to inordinate length; their prayers lack any logical arrangement and often tend (like some at home) to be "prayers informative," or homilies addressed indirectly to erring members of the congregation! So they are urged to use written forms often (though not always), in the hope that the use of such will establish an orderly and more reverent tradition of public prayer. In the administration of Sacraments it is the rule that the African ministers use the written forms, although opportunity is given for additional extempore petitions.

As the Creed has been mentioned already, it is well to make clear its use. It is the basis of instruction for baptism, and is confessed before the congregation before baptism. It is also confessed by those baptised in infancy on their admission to first Communion, and by those seeking baptism for their children. In ordinary services it is commonly

used, being said by baptised persons only, and it is always used in the Communion Service. The Nicene form is not used, although ministers and evangelists are familiarised with it in their training.

As the big morning congregations on a mission station include large numbers of catechumens, as well as persons not yet under Christian instruction, it is not the custom to hold a big Communion Service following on the ordinary morning worship, as in Scotland. The Communion takes place either in the morning about 7 a.m. (a convenient and beautiful hour for worship in a hot country), or in the afternoon, and only communicants attend. Monthly Communion is usual on the central stations and where an ordained minister is resident. In outlying congregations a Communion is possibly only about three or four times a year, as these must wait for a visit from an ordained minister.

In the Communion Service the approach used is based on the alternative form given as an appendix to the *Euchologion* (1923 edition). The service is as follows :—

Opening Hymn.

Prayer of confession and for pardon.

Exhortation, including Beatitudes and Creed.

Hymn of approach.

The Institution.

Eucharistic Prayer. This begins with the "prayer of the veil," followed by the "Sursum Corda," the people responding. Then follows the Great Thanksgiving (as in the *Euchologion*), including the Triumphal Hymn (in which the people join), and the Invocation. The prayer closes with the Lord's Prayer, said by all.

The Delivery is made in our customary Scottish fashion, and is followed by a Thanksgiving Prayer, and prayer of intercession. The service is closed with a Hymn and Benediction.

An interesting development has taken place recently through the desire to promote Church Union. There is a Committee on Union sitting at present, on which the Church of England, Church of Scotland, and Methodist Church are represented, and it has been asked by the staff of the Alliance High School, a secondary school for African boys run by a group of Protestant Missions, to prepare a Communion Service for use by ministers of all denominations dispensing Communion in the School Chapel. There was some doubt as to the attitude of ecclesiastical authorities at home to such a proposal, but a draft was prepared and duly sent home for criticism. The replies have shown much interest and goodwill. In particular, Anglican

scholars have been most helpful in their suggestions, and it would appear likely that, as the service will not be an "Anglican" one, the use of the new form will be permitted to Anglican Clergymen holding a Communion Service at the school. If this is achieved, the service may well be authorised for use in Government and other schools where Africans of different denominations are gathered together. And we feel that a real step towards unity would be taken by the acceptance of a common order for Holy Communion.

It is impossible to deal with the service in detail, as a revised draft is now being submitted for further criticism. But it incorporates by agreement elements much valued by Scottish Churchmen. Indeed, the discussions have revealed to those of other Churches what noble elements of primitive order have been preserved in the Presbyterian Service. Assuming that a Service of Preparation has already taken place, including Praise, Intercession, Scripture Lessons, and Sermon, the Communion Service proper is approached by a Hymn, the Creed (Apostles' or Nicene), a Prayer of Confession, Intercession for the Church, and the Offering. A Thanksgiving for the Communion of Saints follows on the intercessions.

The Communion itself begins with the Grace and the reading of the words of the Institution from 1 Cor. xi., the congregation standing. Then follows the Great Thanksgiving, including such responses as the "Sursum Corda" and the "Ter Sanctus"; and the Prayer concludes with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit (including the Memorial as in many of our Scots forms), and the Lord's Prayer. In the Action, the words of our Lord are repeated again, and permission is given for the minister either to give the elements directly to the Communicants, or to do so through officiating elders. After the Delivery comes the Peace and prayers of thanksgiving and self-dedication. The position used by the presiding minister is not laid down, and may yet be the subject of further discussion.

It is hoped that these notes will make clear how the missionaries in East Africa are seeking to introduce the African to all that is best and finest in the noble traditions of the past, which are his inheritance in the Church as much as ours. Not only are they seeking to pass on what they have learned to love in their own Church and its worship, but also to introduce the African to some of the treasures enshrined in the traditions and liturgies of other Churches. Moreover, they seek to preserve for the African

that liberty of choice and adaptation which lies at the heart of the Reformed tradition in worship, so that, as the control of the Churches' Government and the ordering of her services gradually pass from the missionary into the hands of the African Christians, they may be able to make their worship truly African, and yet remain loyal to the great inheritance of the Church Universal.

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