

life would be nothing, and under the heading of "scenario" he emphasises that worship is something in which we are all involved together as God's people. Finally, as an attempt to bridge the gulf between those who favour liturgical direction and those who do not, Mr Wallace looks at worship as "reasonable behaviour" (of Romans 12:1), and human behaviour" seldom falls neatly into patterns and scenarios. He identifies certain movements in worship for which there are no specific slots and which permeate the service: approach, family awareness, offering, intercession, commitment and petition. The author feels that this approach enables us to distinguish "between the unstructured worship which partakes of spiritual order though innocent of liturgical orthodoxy, from that allegedly free worship which is merely pious chaos."

There is much thought-provoking and original material in this booklet which it is hoped Mr Wallace will develop at greater length in future. On the evidence of this fresh, lively, and entertaining study, he will have much more of importance to say about the relationship between liturgical development and the free church tradition.

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CHILDREN AT COMMUNION

In the first three chapters of his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul outlines the life of the Christian within the cosmic setting of God's plan to unify all creation in Christ, who is seen as being the author and reconciler of creation by his death and resurrection and also the head of the church which is the place where this reconciliation has already been made visible.

Each Christian, united to Christ in baptism, forgiven by the death of Christ, freed from bondage to the evil cosmic powers whom Christ defeated, is called to become what he already is - one for whom Christ died and raised to newness of life. Our temptation is to live as if it was not true but in so doing we live a lie (3:9.). The ways we are tempted to live this lie are self-righteous legalism (2:16-23); living as if Christ were not the risen Lord (3:1-8); and disunity in the Body of Christ. (3:9-11). The Lord's Supper by contrast shows that we are indeed united to Christ and therefore the wicked folly of living these lies,

The structure of Calvin's Institute reveals this same theme. In Book II he insists that all parts of our salvation are procured by Christ's obedience unto death. Then Book III is headed 'The way in which we perceive (percipio) the grace of Christ' and shows how we are united to Christ through the work of the Spirit. Then Book IV shows how the Spirit achieves this in the Church, the Body of Christ, through Word and Sacrament.

All this has the closest bearing on children at communion, for at their baptism they were marked with the fact that they are ones for whom Christ died and rose from the dead. And their whole life thereafter should be directed towards realising this sheer grace of God poured out on them. There is no better way of doing this than by being nourished at the Lord's table for here the whole centre of the faith is spread out before us and we have the presence of the crucified and risen Lord most intimately with His people.

One of the problems, indeed I think probably the most dangerous, confronting the Church of Scotland today is the collapse of a life of spirituality for so many people. Family prayers centred upon the Bible is a rarity. What piety there is, normally does not flow out from the incarnation and Christ is looked on only as an example. How can this spirituality be transformed and deepened?

In a discussion with a leading Catholic historian the question was posed, how did he account for the renewal of the Catholic Church in this century? His reply was that it came about, in his opinion, from the fact that Pope Pious X in 1906 said that Catholic spirituality should be centred around the eucharist each Sunday, and that children should communicate. The result was remarkable and the renewal of Vatican II stems in no small part from it. First it meant that Sunday by Sunday the whole Church was being recalled to the centre of the faith and confronted with the loving presence of Christ. This over the century, has begun to displace the accretions to the faith that had built up from non Christological and often non biblical theology. At each service since Vatican II there are three passages read from the Bible, frequently with exposition. So Word and Sacrament instead of being "played off" against each other are coming together in a most creative way. And because children are at communion the whole family is participating in this, and children Sunday by Sunday are helped to see what in fact they already are in Christ, because Christ is now at the centre of worship.

The same thing has happened to a lesser extent in the Church of England since 1840 and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the real centres of Christian life that one finds in many parishes in England.

In the small parish from which I came in Melbourne children have been attending communion for the last eight years. Each month there is a family communion service, and each month there is also an ecumenical communion service (with Catholics and Anglicans), the first of these being deliberately orientated towards the younger age groups in the Church. Initially when we started to do this most children in the church were aged about seven to ten. In a time when so many adolescents cease coming to church I can only say that the result here was that last year there was the largest confirmation class in the ninety-year history of the congregation.

As I see it, this is essentially a pastoral problem - in Calvin's phrase 'how to help people perceive the grace of Christ' so that they may then live by faith in response to this grace.

The argument that one must not come to communion until one understands is generally invalid because if strictly applied nobody could come. For who fully comprehends either the cost of our salvation or how Christ is present at the eucharist? As Calvin insisted it is beyond our reasoning or imagination. How does a child understand the love its mother? - largely, I think, by coming to her.

We can certainly learn a great deal from Israel of the whole family being gathered around the passover meal, and contemplating as they ate and prayed together, the mighty acts of God in their redemption from slavery. How much of this do the younger children understand? But by coming they are helped to understand more deeply. Just as the Word of God converts so is the Sacrament a converting ordinance for it is as, Augustine said (followed in the Reformation by Peter Martyr), a visible Word of God. For what makes the Word of God the Word of God is, as Luther saw so clearly, that it gives us Jesus Christ. And this too is precisely what the sacrament does. If, as some evangelicals say, one must not come to communion until one has had a religious experience of Christ this would seem to be putting our response before the grace of Christ and runs the grave danger of 1) making our faith into a work and 2) cutting off a way Christ has given of perceiving His saving work so that trust in Him may grow.

There are a number of pastoral problems. We must beware of making them legal problems. Communication must be left largely to the pastoral sensitivity of the minister, (perhaps with the aid of a small and spiritually sensitive group of elders) and the child and its parents.

A wise friend said to me that his first communion was so memorable that he would not like children to attend initially in a haphazard way. Perhaps the