

A SERVICE FOR A COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

We seem to have entered on a period when every community is to have its own annual festival. Ministers asked to arrange a Festival Service, or looking for a change, may be interested in the order appended, which has proved itself by providing insight after insight over nine years now.

On the invitation coming to me in 1975, my first thought was to see if I could incorporate one or more of the groups performing during the Week. But while there would have been merit in trying to stitch some of our weekday activity into a pattern of worship, in the end it seemed more important to move away from any reinforcement of the notion that a festival means entertainment for a community. Within a Festival Service we could make it abundantly clear that for individual members of the church faith is indeed the celebration in their daily lives of God's Yes to the world in Jesus. So I asked three very different people, whom I considered confident enough to be frank, even brave, to speak to us for five to ten minutes each, out of their own personal experience, on how they celebrate life. I made it clear that I did not want to be consulted about what they should say: it was to be their own contribution out of their personal experience and from which I and others might learn.

On one particular point, the minister was the first to have to learn. Each contributor was asked to choose his or her own hymn. In 1975, a woman of 46 with a history of cancer operations and having finally committed herself to church membership only a year or two before, asked instantly for, "What a friend we have in Jesus". Then in 1976, someone else who'd come into membership only in recent years, this time a man of 58 with five war-time prison-camp escapes behind him, a food shop manager living very much in the present-day world of staff dishonesty and a multitude of human problems, selected the same hymn: he'd missed the previous year's service and had never heard the hymn sung in South Leith during his membership. When I mentioned that it was not in the new hymn book but we could always have it duplicated, he said not to bother and chose instead "Tell me the old, old story", from the days of his boyhood attendance at a Salvation Army club.

As an encouragement to non-church people to attend the Festival Service - and to catch the interest of newspaper reporters - ancient communion and baptismal silver are put on exhibition and conducted tours of the church and churchyard are arranged to follow public worship. When one of our finest young leaders took his turn in the pulpit in 1980, he began by revealing that just two years before he had come into the church for the first time in his adult life on the occasion of this Festival Service.

Notice the form of the Blessing. The first year we tried this a middle aged woman took everyone in her office through the Service line by line on the Monday morning, and told how she'd been almost overcome with joy at being able to hold hands with her ageing Mother and Father, and sing God's blessing on them.

A SERVICE FOR LEITH FESTIVAL

Welcome and Pauline Greeting

Intimations

Choir Introit: Hymn 405 v1 "All my hope on God is founded"

"Let us worship God"

A TIME TO REJOICE

Hymn 354 "Glory be to God the Father"

Call to prayer (John 3 verses 16,17)

Prayers of approach and celebration

Hymn 367 "For the beauty of the earth"

A TIME TO REFLECT

Three church members tell how they celebrate life:

Frank Davidson Chosen Hymn 448 "Just as I am"

Janet Tulloch Chosen Hymn "Count your blessings"

Archie Gray Chosen Hymn 444 "I feel the winds of
God today"

The Good News written by Paul: Colossians 3 vv 1-4, 12-17

Choir Anthem: "With a Voice of singing" - Martin Shaw

The Good News spoken by Jesus: John 15 vv 5-17

A TIME TO RESPOND

The Offering: our gift of money that others may be helped celebrate Life

Giving the Glory: Hymn 658 "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"

Affirming the Faith of the Church: Hymn 546 "I believe in God the
Father Almighty"

Praying as People of God: giving thanks for God's Yes to the world
in Jesus.....

interceding for people with little to celebrate at this time.....

a prayer for Leith

anticipating communion with the saints

using Jesus' own pattern: OUR FATHER ("debts")

GOING OUT TO THE WORLD IN PEACE

Closing Praise "A Hymn for the Nation" Written by F P Green

Tune: Battle Hymn of the Republic

THE BLESSING: We take hands and sing to each other the traditional
blessing, used from Old Testament times, "The Lord
bless you and keep you".

The Rev Jack Kellet
South Leith