

TO GLORIFY GOD

Essays on Modern Reformed Liturgy.

(Edited by Bryan D. Spinks and Iain R. Torrance. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1999. £24.95)

The Church of Scotland's most recent service book, *Common Order*, has been well received since its appearance in 1994, and it has proved to be a notable addition to the public worship of the Kirk. This volume contains chapters which reflect and comment on the service book and on its sister publication in the USA, the *Book of Common Worship*. It is important that liturgical developments in the English speaking Reformed tradition be critically examined and assessed, and this volume will be of interest to all those who use and study these services books. There are chapters on the background to the liturgies by those who were closely involved in their preparation, and contributions which reflect on the theological, liturgical and linguistic content of the two books.

Those who are particularly interested in the Scottish book will be glad to know that it receives more than its fair share of attention. Six chapters are devoted to aspects of *Common Order*, while only two are concerned solely with the American *Common Worship*. There are, however, nine chapters dealing with different types of liturgical material and services in which the two books are compared. These comparisons are fruitful in bringing out the distinctive features of the books and in highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. In relation to some rites, such as those for marriage and funeral services, some differences are due to the very different relation between Church and State which is found in the two countries. In this regard it is a pity that two of the authors refer to the Church of Scotland as 'established' when 'national' would be a happier description.

If American readers might feel aggrieved at more attention being given to the Scottish scene, they will be glad to note that, of the seventeen contributors, six are based in the USA, although that number includes

one of the editors, Bryan Spinks, who has recently moved there from England. Six contributors are from Scotland, four are from England and one is from Switzerland. The one Continental contribution highlights how much our liturgical work in Scotland has been carried out in relation to other English speaking traditions rather than to our fellow Reformed Churches in Europe. One exception to this rule, however, is the welcome use in *Common Order* of the French Reformed baptismal rite which emphasises the priority of God's grace in this service.

A prominent feature of the book is its attention to theological considerations. This is to be welcomed, as in the Reformed tradition above all it should be recognised that theology is the foundation of liturgy. In this respect, however, the two chapters which examine the doctrines of God and of Christ in these service books conclude that *Common Order* is not as in tune with contemporary theological developments as is *Common Worship*. In other chapters, such as those which deal specifically with particular services, there are weighty sections on the doctrinal background before the liturgies are examined. Much food for thought is to be found in these treatments, which include chapters by Iain Torrance and by James Kay on baptism, by Kenneth Stevenson on the marriage services, and by Bryan Spinks on funerals.

Another welcome characteristic of this volume is the wide variety of points of view of the contributors. Readers of *The Record* will be glad to know that a chapter by Tom Davidson Kelly gives the perspective of the Church Service Society on *Common Order*. It is worth noting that some of the comments by the Society, such as those concerning the alternative placing of the 'warrant' within the prayer of consecration, and the inclusion of the *Sancta Sanctis*, have been addressed in the reprinted version of 1996. In addition, Will Storrar addresses the issue of the book's relation to the changing role of the Church in Scottish society and concludes that in some respects at least the book reflects a post-modern outlook. There are also two contributions from a conservative theological position. David Searle of Rutherford House welcomes both

books, although he considers that the American book is clearer on the issue of universalism, while Donald Macleod presents a valuable critique of the liturgical enterprise from the perspective of the Free Church of Scotland. However, what he says about the undue emphasis on the sacrament in worship, and on the role of the Holy Spirit in the prayer of consecration, would appear to be closer to the liturgical traditions of Zwingli than those of Calvin.

All in all this volume is full of many rich insights and it is to be welcomed as warmly as the two service books which it considers.

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The Christian Year: Calendar, Lectionary and Collects

London: Church House Publishing, 1997

ISBN 0-7151-3799-9, £15.00, 268 pages

The Lectionary: Scripture Readings for Sunday Worship throughout the year

Reprinted from *Common Order* 1994 with an Introduction.

Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, on behalf of The Panel on Worship of the Church of Scotland, 1997

ISBN 0-86153-242-2, £2.25, 35 pages

The Christian Year: Calendar, Lectionary and Collects provides an alternative to material in *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Alternative Service Book*, 1980. In 2000 or soon afterwards, it is expected that this will form part of the material, some of which is still not complete, that will replace the ASB. It is a well presented reference book divided into four sections. First, the Calendar, one of the most useful elements in this section is the two pages given over to the dates of “Easter and Accompanying Festivals”. This sets out in a clear table the dates not only of Easter, but also of Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, Pentecost and Advent Sunday, until 2025. The second section is “The Lectionary” itself, which is based on the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). This is used as the principal Sunday service lectionary. The RCL is used partly because it stays with “a biblical book long enough to understand its underlying shape, message and emphasis” (p246). The third and longest section, the “Collects and Post Communion Prayers”, is a rich resource, clearly laid out. It uses as a starting point *The Book of Common Prayer* and brings together material from English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh traditions. The intention is to develop a common set of collects for “Anglican churches in these islands”. The fourth and final section, “Commentary and Sources”, offers brief explanations of the three previous parts of the book. Some of these are too short and might usefully have been placed in the Introduction. Nevertheless, at £15.00 for the hardback, it is a valuable investment for Anglican and non-Anglican churches alike.

The Lectionary: Scripture Readings for Sunday worship throughout the year offers a simple no-nonsense outline of the Revised Common Lectionary. With 35 pages and priced at only £2.25 it is clear that both the size and the cost have been kept low in order to encourage wide distribution in congregations. The brief introduction nevertheless provides a fine exploration of the development, advantages, and shape of the RCL. In the introduction to *The Lectionary* lies the important statement that the set of readings are not meant to be a “straight-jacket”, but rather it is hoped that “they will become the lectionary of the world church”. *The Christian Year* and *The Lectionary*’s embracing of the RCL suggest that this may not be an entirely unrealistic dream.

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