

IN MEMORIAM

ALEX MOWAT

Members of the Society will have been sad to learn of the death of Alex Mowat at Easter 2009. The date of his appointment as Treasurer of the Society seems lost in antiquity, but certainly there will be few members now who can remember a time before he served as Treasurer. A lawyer by profession (after a short career in repertory theatre), and a son of the manse, he had a strong sense of service and commitment. He was of a generation when it was taken almost for granted that the Church would benefit from the expertise of its professional members, and he gave generously of his time and service both to our Society and to the Session and congregation of Greyfriars where he was an active Elder for more than fifty years.

Like his fellow lawyer and Kirk Session colleague, Nevile Davidson Kelly, Alex set huge store by the Church's worship. He was highly supportive of ministers, but if a visitor or student omitted absolution from a service, or a prayer remembering the Communion of Saints, these omissions would be noted and commented on. He believed that both God and the congregation deserved careful and thorough preparation of services, and provided this criterion was met he would reach out to a wide range of ecumenical approaches, greatly enjoying Choral Evensong on Radio 3, seeking out churches of different traditions on holidays abroad. All his life he was a fervent Jacobite; and although he greatly loved Greyfriars, where the National Covenant was first read out and signed, he took himself every year to St Mary's Cathedral for a service honouring Charles I King and Martyr.

Members of the Society will associate Alex, rightly, with his lucid explanation at AGMs of the accounts he kept so meticulously. Perhaps not many will have discovered what a colourful and fun-loving character he was, or known of his great generosity and sense of humour. He served the Society quietly, competently, faithfully, from the time of Stuart Louden's ministry, and we remember his contribution with admiration and much gratitude.

D.M.B.

IN MEMORIAM

ANDREW STEWART TODD, D.D.

The death of Stewart Todd on 2nd September 2009 has necessitated the removal of the leading name from the list of our Honorary Presidents. That is a cause of great sadness. The record of his life provides cause for great gratitude. For him the Holy Ministry, the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, was clearly a whole-life calling, to which he whole-heartedly devoted himself and the considerable gifts which were his. Equally evident was the fact that that devotion was based on a faith secure in its foundations but never inflexible in its outworking in changing conditions.

In the context of this Society, to the Council of which he was first elected in 1970, his concern for 'the Church Service' was, of course, paramount. That concern was also wide-ranging, extending from basic liturgical and theological principles, to words, to music, to setting, to ecumenical implications – well illustrated in his contributions to our publications.

His membership of the Edinburgh University Singers in their heyday and his acquisition of a grand piano while still living in lodgings in Edinburgh are indicative of a strong commitment to music-making. So it is unsurprising that his first article in *The Annual* (1961) was entitled 'The Function of Music in Worship'. It was followed four years later by the publication on the same pages of his Lee Lecture for 1964 on 'Music in the Service of the Church'. What might be surprising is the strength of his argument that the place of music is ancillary. A short quotation must serve to convey the gist of that argument: 'If music has a function in our worship, it can only be to serve this mighty mystery, the Christ-Word in our midst. Music is to be the hand-maid.' That is very Calvinistic. Almost inevitably he became a member of the Revision Committee which produced the Third Edition of the Church Hymnary, the helpful liturgical ordering of which is said to have been adopted on his initiative.

A paper in *Liturgical Studies* of 1971 entitled 'Eucharistia Recovered' displays more directly his concern for liturgical principle and, in particular, his conviction that the Sacrament, climaxing in the Great Thanksgiving, is the normative form of Christian worship – a conviction reflected in the 1979 Book of Common

Order published under his leadership as Convener of the Assembly's Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion.

His two latest contributions to these pages are quite diverse in their subject matter. In Issue 37 he wrote on Church Furnishing and in Issue 41 he published an updated version of his 'Patriarchal Lecture' of 1988 to the Society for Liturgical Study on 'The Greening of the Liturgy' – a call for the reinstatement of a better balance between Creation and Redemption in Eucharistic prayer, reflecting awareness of current 'green' issues.

His membership of the Joint Liturgical Group led into yet another area. In the assignment of subjects to writers for *Getting the Liturgy Right* the topic 'Movement and Drama in worship' fell to him. The result displayed his customary theological undergirding, balance, and contemporary awareness – with references to sources as diverse as Sir Hermann Bondi, Chief Scientist at the Department of Energy, and David Watson, evangelical pioneer of the Renewal movement.

Stewart Todd's theological grasp has been mentioned more than once. It led to another Assembly Convenership – that of the Panel on Doctrine. A time of acute tension over issues of human sexuality called for the exercise of his considerable skill as a chairman, evident in other spheres also, his open-mindedness, his gifts of listening and leading and seeking harmony.

The emphasis on the Word, evident from the beginning and throughout, points in a direction too little noticed elsewhere, to the fact that he was a preacher of real eloquence, force and stimulus, well informed and alert to the temper of the times. In a letter to *Life and Work* in 1999 written by the late Ian Mackenzie on 'Worship' to counter any suggestion that 'ceremony and sacrament' are antithetic to preaching, he mentions that in a year spent under Stewart Todd in North Leith he heard Sunday by Sunday sermons 'which were splendid in vitality of exegesis and robustness of expression.'

In St Machar's Cathedral, to the stones and living stones of which he was deeply committed, that kind of preaching had its firm place in a service that was clearly ordered, well-crafted in expression, ceremonious to the degree demanded by the setting, but devoid of frills. To suggest that it found its inspiration in the

Anglican tradition is surely false. Rather it looked behind Westminster to the earlier more Catholic tradition of both pre- and post- Reformation periods. And if at times there was a hint of Trollope in his appearance and manner, it was never unaccompanied by a quietly humorous self-awareness. Justly proud of the distinctions which came to him, the honorary doctorate of the University of Aberdeen and a chaplaincy to the Queen, he wore their sartorial accompaniments with unostentatious grace.

The Society has lost a man of longstanding commitment to its purposes. Many of its members have lost a valued friend. More personally, I have lost a deeply cherished colleague whose conversation, hospitality and confidence (with those of his wife, Janet) led after my coming to Aberdeen to a friendship of abiding quality and influence.

AT THE GRAVE

Balquhiddy Cemetery, 9th September 2009

They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

(Daniel 12.3)

Since, in the good providence of God, the earthly life of our brother, Andrew Stewart Todd, is come to its end, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and, trusting in God's mercy, and Christ's victory over death, we look with confidence to the resurrection at the last day and the life of the world to come.

'Happy are the dead who die in the faith of Christ! Henceforth', says the Spirit, 'they may rest from their labours; for they take with them the record of their deeds.'

(Revelation 14.13)

Let us pray.

O LORD, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy word is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.¹

BRING US, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitation of thy glory and dominion world without end.²

We shall rest and we shall see, we shall see and we shall love, we shall love and we shall praise, in the end which is no end.

(The words are St Augustine's)

J.C.S.

¹ Marked 'Probably 16th century. Author unknown' in *A Chain of Prayer*, S.F. Fox.

² This is from a sermon by John Donne, probably slightly adapted by Eric Milner-White. (*Daily Prayer*)