

REVIEWS

Sharing the Past: Shaping the Future Scottish Church Society, 2009.

The late Professor J.K.S. Reid bequeathed money which allowed this volume to be privately published, a collection of essays old and new with a common bond around the aims of the Scottish Church Society – namely, according to the preface, inviting the ‘Reformed and Presbyterian Church of Scotland to reconsider its catholic roots’. Although open to a wide readership, the collection sets out to offer resources especially ‘to those seeking ordination or newly ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament’.

‘Sharing the past’: some of the essays previously published as occasional papers retain strong vitality and interest. The second essay in the collection, by Stewart Todd, is a particularly fine example. Entitled ‘On being the church in an age of religious indifference’, he offers a beautifully written and referenced reflection both on what it means to be church and how indifference and, closely related, agnosticism, may evoke responses some better than others. Dr Todd, himself convener of the Editorial Group, never fails to engage the reader in his other contributions. In particular worth mentioning would be his general essay on worship, where he succeeds in being both profound and practical, and his reflections on the ministry where, for all that in its original context the essay set out to address a controversy of the day (in 1984), the insights offered are judicious and deeply thoughtful, borrowing from the thoughts of von Balthasar. It shows how at its best the exploration of catholic tradition reaches for the heart of what it means to be Christian. And there are essays of comparable quality by others, by John McPake on issues around ministerial ordination and a much older essay by H.J. Wotherspoon on creeds and confessions.

Although some of the contributions on offer are very introductory in their nature – so much so that they disappoint, being neither footnoted nor at all free of almost gratuitous personal opinion – the editors have made a commendable attempt to bring together a range of essays to stimulate interest. While the Church of Scotland continues to find its way in terms of defining the sphere of matters spiritual as opposed to what may be subject to the laws of the land (and the European Union), the articles by James Weatherhead and Marjory Maclean reproduced in the collection bear some continuing weight. There are

three (variable) essays on matters of church architecture and furnishings, again a continuing area of live debate and discussion. There is a completely new and typically rich essay on church music by Douglas Galbraith, whose shorter contributions on the subject to *Life and Work* in very recent months have been equally thought-provoking.

And while one impression of the book as a whole is of its unevenness of quality – perhaps inevitable with essays from so many different contributors – there are also inconsistencies in the book's production. For example, there may be the occasional footnote to bring matters up to date, a helpful strategy given that many of these essays were written some years ago, but this has not been consistently followed through. For example, the publication of the 1989 report on the ministry of the Eldership has no explanatory footnotes whatsoever that might alert the reader to its fate at the 1990 General Assembly. Or, in offering Weatherhead's essay without extra references, the Church of Scotland's legal position is left hanging back in 1998, and much has happened since then. And it is strange that when essays have been modified (very) slightly since their first time of publication – for example, those of Henry Sefton and John McPake – still there is nothing explicitly noting this. Thus all told we are offered a mixture of some material that is dated in a not very good sense; some opinions which are expressed without persuasive arguments in support; some work footnoted and attentive to a wide perspective and some work less insightful; and therefore within the collection, not surprisingly, points of view which are at odds with those expressed by fellow contributors.

Despite such critical remarks, the concluding one is nevertheless to be thankful for this publication. I have read essays here which I did not know had been written and I know now that I was the poorer for that. Catholicity – which is most certainly about sharing the past and being shaped for the future, locally and universally – is an extremely important mark of the church. Our communion by the grace of God is, say, with John Donne in England in the seventeenth century as with Nicene fathers in the fourth as well as brothers and sisters in other denominations; and the Word to be proclaimed is of God and from God.

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Liturgy in the Age of Reason, Worship and Sacraments in England and Scotland 1662-c1800 Bryan D. Spinks, Ashgate, Farnham, Surrey 2008. ISBN 798-0-7546-6089-7

Professor Bryan Spinks is no stranger to the Church Service Society as he has served as our Vice President and President. He is Goddard Professor of Liturgical Studies and Pastoral Theology at Yale Institute of Sacred Music and at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, USA. He was previously for seventeen years Chaplain to Churchill College, Cambridge.

This remarkably comprehensive work is a rebuttal of the poor opinions of eighteenth century worship held by Kerr and McCrie in Scotland and Overton and Relton in England. Professor Spinks rejects descriptions such as 'moribund and stagnant and ... a low ebb in the history of the British Churches' (p.3). On the contrary, the Churches of Scotland and England tried to rise to the challenges that the 'acceleration of new ideas and changes to the inherited worldview and way of life' brought in both countries during the Age of Reason. (p.251)

Some of the ten chapters have intriguing titles:

Chapter 4 Singing God's Praises from the Margins

Chapter 7 Affectionate Worship

Chapter 8 Common or Garden Liturgy

Chapter 10 Glimpses of Dissenting Worship – Old, New and Curious

The description of the eighteenth century Church of Scotland as 'The Georgian Kirk' (chapter 9) is at least unusual.

This study makes extensive use of contemporary sources and many are quoted at length. Inevitably, the supply of sources is greater in England than in Scotland and many of the comments on worship in Scotland are from English visitors. On the whole, these are not favourable. He does not record the impression of an Englishman present at the election of Scottish representative peers in 1754. The opening prayer offered by one of the Royal Chaplains, Rev Robert Wallace, elicited the comment, 'The Liturgy of the Church of Scotland seems to be very beautiful.'

Members of the Council of the Church Service Society will recall that the Rev James Stewart drew our attention to liturgical material compiled by Rev John Logan when he was minister at Leith. This material has been edited by Professor Robin Leaver and was made available to Professor Spinks who describes it as 'a carefully crafted service' (p.228).

Readers will have deduced that the chapter on Affectionate Worship refers to the Evangelical Revival. The Cambuslang Wark of 1742 is fully discussed and reference is made to the critical edition of the William McCulloch manuscripts of the Revival prepared by Keith Beebe as part of his Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Aberdeen.

This is a comprehensive rather than an exhaustive work and selections have had to be made. John Newton and William Cowper are mentioned only briefly but there is more extended coverage of Thomas Haweis and his *Carmina Christo*. Mainstream Methodism and the Wesleys are fully described but there is also space for the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

The Glimpses of Dissenting Worship include Isaac Watts, John Glas and the Sandemanians and the Swedenborgians or New Church Signified by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation. Some will recall the New Church in Woodlands Road, Glasgow.

Chapter 6 on Newtonian and Lockean Theology: Liturgical Revision and Rational Sacraments opened up new vistas for this reviewer. The influence of Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke on the Rev William Whiston and Rev Samuel Clarke is fully discussed. Both Whiston and Clarke questioned the received doctrine of the Trinity and both suggested liturgical revisions to give expression to their views.

It is customary for a reviewer to point to errors and omissions. The illustrations are numerous and well chosen and, with one exception, are fully identified. The cover picture of St Margaret's Church seems to be of a London church but there is no indication whether its location is Westminster or the City of London. There is a full bibliography extending from page 255 to page 272. Two other works might have been included: L.E. Schmidt: *Holy Fairs*, Princeton 1989, and Duncan Forrester and Douglas Murray (eds.), *Studies in the History*

of *Worship in Scotland*, Edinburgh 1984, 1996. Only two misprints have been noted: p.3 para 4 line 3, 'tenants' should read 'tenets'; p.215 line 14, 'Simpson' should read 'Simson'.

This is truly a monumental work and is dedicated to the memory of the author's wife, Linda Valerie Spinks.

Henry R. Sefton
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Worship and Liturgy in Context Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice. Edited by Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay. S.C.M. Press. 2009. ISBN 978 0 334 04168 9

It is rumoured that before the publisher undertook to publish this book the editors had to find a title which would not immediately suggest that it was addressed to a Scottish readership in particular. Nevertheless Professor Forrester quickly makes it plain in his introductory chapter, 'In Spirit and in Truth', that the primary, though by no means the sole, context giving rise to the title is Scottish. It is to be hoped that within that context, at least, this volume will be widely read and carefully considered. So read and considered it should serve to raise discussion of the Church's public worship above the rather superficial level which seems to be widely prevalent.

In addition to the Editors who, respectively, provide an introduction placing worship in a context mainly historical, and a conclusion looking to 'emerging' trends and contexts, there are 17 other writers who deal with 19 distinct topics. These essays are arranged in 5 Parts, entitled: 'Worship and Culture', 'Theologies of Worship', 'The Living Past', 'Communities at Worship Today' and 'Changing Patterns of Worship'. It is unlikely that any reader will wish to say a loud 'Amen' at the end of every contribution. Nor should that be expected of such a composite work. The reviewer, likewise, must be selective and point to that which, for him, evokes the most interest or the strongest reaction.

The arrangement is surely significant. Primacy of place is not, as so often in our tradition, given to theology, but to the cultural context of worship. The writer of the first essay, David Fergusson, is indeed a theologian of high distinction but his opening subject is 'Aesthetics of the Reformed Tradition'. The

pejorative use of the term 'Calvinistic', even in our context, is widespread and Professor Fergusson recognises the difficulty in finding acceptance for serious consideration of such aesthetics but provides good grounds for a continuing effort to do so.

The same writer also provides the first essay in the second section, on 'The Theology of Worship'. Near to the beginning he makes the important observation that 'The study of the history of Doctrine reveals the way in which doxological practices preceded and shaped the formation of doctrine. Without asserting an absolute priority of Doxology over dogma, one can acknowledge the importance of worship in shaping Christian belief.' He ends by chiding the Church of Scotland for its inertia in giving practical expression to the scholarly consensus of the past century in relation to the frequency of celebration of the sacrament and hence to its ethical significance.

The second essay in each of these sections comes from the pen of Donald Macleod, on 'Celtic Spirituality' and on 'Word and Sacrament in Reformed Theologies of Worship: A Free Church Perspective'. As always he is stimulatingly confrontational. Without endorsing the older Celtic Christian spirituality in all its features he asserts that it was emphatically orthodox and Trinitarian, as against those who find and approve supposedly Pelagian tendencies in it. And he wonders why 'conventional wisdom forbid(s) us to include Celtic Protestantism in any assessment of Celtic Spirituality'. His Free Church perspective on Word and Sacrament has much that calls for serious consideration, albeit from different angles, by both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church, and doubtless more widely also.

Although attention has been concentrated on only a small proportion of the content, there is much of interest and stimulus throughout the volume. Many readers of this journal will be pleased to find a largely sympathetic account of 'The Scoto-Catholic Movement in Presbyterian Worship c.1850-c.1920' though pedants like the present reviewer may wish to question whether the epithet 'Presbyterian' is appropriate to worship and whether 'Scoto-Catholic' (a usage, not kindly meant, coined by W. P. Paterson) is not better confined, if it is to be used, to that section of this Society which founded the Scottish Church Society. Some may be less than fully persuaded by Jane Dawson's account of the changes effected by the Reformation. She does not, however, as Paul Nimmo does, write of 'the Church's foundation in 1560'. Such a statement should not

be found outside the pages of the less reputable sections of the Press and is the more surprising in the context of an article on Baptism, since the validity of that rite before the Reformation, whatever may have been the case with peripheral ceremonies, was unquestioned by the Scots Reformers and is fundamental to their position.

Other articles, though less central in their concerns, and more descriptive in style, may well draw readers into rewarding but previously, by them, unexplored aspects of the overall subject.

Professor Forrester's father was wont to suggest to his students that they should sell their beds to acquire some volume of particular significance. I do not go so far in relation to *Worship and Liturgy in Context* but the current Professor Forrester and Dr Gay should have their timely efforts rewarded with critical attention on the part of a numerous readership.

James C. Stewart

Liturgy and Architecture From the Early Church to the Middle Ages.

Allan Doig. Ashgate, Farnham. 2008 ISBN 978-0-7546-5272-4 (hardcover) and ISBN 978-0-7546-5274-8 (pbk)

Allan Doig notes in a short preface that writers on liturgy will usually have something to say about mode and place of celebration and that those writing on ecclesiastical architecture will have something to say about liturgy, but that an accessible study of their interaction is lacking. That he sets out to provide. That intention, together with its firm basis in far-reaching study should commend it to readers of this journal. It is not, however, a 'popular' work and does not always read easily. That is sometimes a matter of style and sometimes of vocabulary. A glossary of the many specialised terms would help.

The recent celebrations of significant anniversaries of Calvin and of the Scottish Reformation have served to remind some of us that it was the intention of the Reformers to recover the primitive face of the Catholic Church. To that end considerable use was made of the early Church Fathers. But archaeology and the study of documentary liturgical sources had yet to provide, in relation to places and forms of worship, the kind of resources available from the Early

Church in relation to doctrine. Accordingly one may assume that those who stand in the tradition of the 16th century Reformation will probably find the most immediate interest in what is said in the first chapter about the earliest, pre-Constantinian, era when the main concern was to provide appropriate rites and places for the worship for local, non-specialised, congregations.

At no time, it would appear, were Christian communities content to be without walls. Already in the New Testament meetings of the Church in houses belonging to more prosperous members are frequently mentioned and archaeology has confirmed that even when the community acquired its own buildings, house-churches continued to provide a common form. Allan Doig's description of the considerable remains of such a church at Dura-Europos on the eastern fringes of the Roman Empire occupies several pages. Dating probably from the 230s, it casts interesting light on such matters as the separation of sacramental spaces, the placing of the altar/ table and its relationship to the place of preaching, and the presence (or absence) of figurative decoration, and its purpose.

Perhaps, however, the Reformers, and others seeking authoritative models, would not have been greatly helped by more recent discoveries. In the 'Conclusion' to the first chapter we find:

What is striking about the evidence so far is not that a normative architectural prototype can be found at the end of a line of development from apostolic times, ... but that there is a remarkable diversity of forms that served an equal diversity of communities over a vast geographical area. A similar picture of very early liturgical practice is emerging in modern scholarship.

The conversion of Constantine and the 'establishment' of the Church brought both continuity and change, examined in chapter 2. Churches became public buildings and found in other public buildings a model. Constantine's conquest of the East led to the remaking of Jerusalem as 'the Holy City of the biblical narratives', place of pilgrimage with buildings and worship reflecting key events in the life of Christ. Elsewhere, the needs of the imperial court and the self-assessment of the Emperor as to his religious significance, and the appropriate manner of his arrival at, and progress through, the liturgical assembly all had their effects on the setting and the ceremonial of the liturgy. This is further developed in the third chapter, 'The Emergence of the Byzantine Rite and the

Church Building as Sacrament', with extended attention to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

The focus then moves West again and to the development of the type of Roman chancel for which San Clemente in Rome continues to provide a remarkably complete archetype. Attention then moves north to Gaul and the development of a distinctive Gallican Rite. From there we are led to the creation of the new Holy Roman Empire under Charlemagne with its own architectural and liturgical requirements.

Chapter 6 examines the different requirements of developing monasticism and of the growing practice of pilgrimage. The latter, by its nature, provided a vehicle for the transmission of architectural ideas, including those of Islamic origin encountered in Spain, and serving to enliven the current Romanesque style. The last section of this chapter looks at the 'Cistercian Protest' resulting in a paring back of both liturgy and its setting to 'essentials, emphasising abstract architectural qualities and spiritual depth in the structure of the liturgy'.

The final chapter deals with 'Gothic Architecture and the Latin Rite: From Origins to the Close of the Middle Ages'. Here four main examples are chosen – the work of Abbot Suger at Saint-Denis, near Paris; then, moving north again, Canterbury (a martyr shrine); Wells ('the West Front as a Renewed Liturgical Element'), and Salisbury (with its own liturgical use).

The book is copiously illustrated. There are ten fine colour plates. There are plans, drawings and photographs in black and white, but some of the plans are less helpful than they might be, being reproduced from other places on a much reduced scale and without the reproduction of the key to the numbering or lettering on particular parts.

Aside from its particular intention, the whole work provided this reader with a fascinating tour through fifteen centuries of church history by a route refreshingly different from the more usual doctrinal and ecclesiastical-political routes – a route which, despite the scant consideration of the kind of buildings in which the majority of worshippers encountered the liturgy week by week, probably gives one a better 'feel' for their experience of the life of faith than these more usual routes.

James C. Stewart