



Worship and Liturgy in Context, edited by Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay, London: SCM Press, 2009, pp. 416, ISBN 978-0334041689. £25.00

Worship and Liturgy in Context is, as the title suggests, a book that is broad in conception and aim: a breadth that is reflected in the selection of essays therein. The contributors, of nineteen essays in total plus an introduction and conclusion by the two editors respectively, are drawn from a commendably ecumenical range. Moreover, they include some of the leading theologians, historians, and practitioners of our time, brought together in one attractive and accessible volume, and for that the editors, Duncan Forrester and Doug Gay, deserve full credit. Both editors are Church of Scotland ministers as well as university academics, and this book evinces a constant and deliberate balance of the reflective and the practical.

The book's diverse selection of essays have been organised under five headings, beginning with "Worship and Culture". This is perhaps the most loosely defined section, containing only three essays which deal respectively with "Reformed Aesthetics", "Celtic Spirituality", and "Worship in Scottish Literature". The second of these essays provides an important perspective on Gaelic worship and culture. However, the other two offerings, while compelling in their own right, do suggest a rather limited definition of culture as 'the arts'.

Moving on, Part 2 – "Theologies of Worship" – has a specifically doctrinal focus, which is then nicely balanced by the historical concentration of Part 3. Entitled "The Living Past", this section reminds us that worship practices are every bit as humanly constructed as they are divinely ordained. The scope of the project then widens dramatically in Part 4, "Communities at Worship Today"; while Part 5 continues this broader and more ecumenical emphasis with an eclectic selection covering "Changing Patterns of Worship". This final section is the most self-consciously liturgical, looking variously at the impact of Vatican II on worship practices; the pervasive influence of the worship of the Iona Community across denominational and international boundaries; the challenge to preachers that is 'open-air preaching'; and the compilation of the fourth Church Hymnary.

In a book with such a broad scope, there has to be some common

thread to unite the otherwise very disparate contributions. Here, the key unifying principle, as outlined by Duncan Forrester in his introduction, is that the worship of a church always takes place in relation to a diversity of contexts: historical, regional, communitarian, and cultural. But that in itself is so broad a principle that one is thankful for the much narrower focus on Scotland, and narrower still, on the Church of Scotland.

The choice of such a focus makes this volume vulnerable to charges of insularity, if not sectarianism. However, the editors are keen to stress that the ostensibly ‘narrow’ ecclesial focus is precisely what enables this book to *avoid* sectarianism: Forrester writes how, as editor, ‘we will be especially interested in the outside forces that have influenced Christian worship in Scotland’, while considering also the influence on worship of the Scottish Reformed tradition beyond its own borders. This ecumenical interest surfaces at various points throughout the book, not least in the historical accounts of Part 3, but comes into its own with Owen Dudley Edwards’ impassioned refutation of easy stereotypes either of Presbyterianism or of Catholicism. Their shared identity as ‘populist’ churches does not overcome their doctrinal and cultural differences but, he suggests, it does offer a basis for mutual recognition, respect, and joint social action. An earlier contribution from Donald Macleod of the Free Church, an essay on the Scottish Episcopal Church, a study of the impact on worship practices of Vatican II, and a case study of an ecumenical inter-faith event, ensure that the ecumenical strand in this book is a strong one.

While all the essays make their own strong contribution – and the quality is almost uniformly excellent, each in its own field – the arrangement in Part 2, “Theologies of Worship”, is particularly felicitous. David Fergusson’s measured essay gives a useful opening survey of the contribution of history, philosophy, ethics, and ecumenicism, in shaping a dynamic and modern Reformed theology of worship. Notably, Fergusson cautions against attempts to ‘define worship as if it were one single thing’, which ‘essentialist’ approach has a tendency to isolate Scripture and the Sacraments both from one another and from their pastoral and communitarian context. This introductory essay is followed by “A Free Church Perspective” from Donald Macleod, who gives an insightful account of the history of

preaching and sacramental practice in Presbyterianism, clarifying the background to quite a number of modern controversies along the way. He reflects on the theological challenges in particular of home communion, and of the openness or otherwise of the Table: the reader does not have to agree with his conclusions to find the discussion scholarly and stimulating.

The third essay in this section is Paul Nimmo's detailed exposition of "Baptismal Theology and Practice in the Church of Scotland". Again – a hallmark of this volume – a valuable historical survey of church debate is given, right up to the Panel on Doctrine Report to the General Assembly in 2003. This survey highlights once again the constant tension between attempts at a stable 'definition' of doctrine, and the comparative fluidity of actual pastoral practice – to which 'definitions', in their turn, attempt to respond. Coming immediately after Macleod's call for doctrinal stability – 'We are not authorized to invent new ways of making the sacrament interesting' – comes Nimmo's equal and opposite call of *semper reformanda*: 'As the Church of Scotland pursues its mission in the present day, its witness will continue to depend on this ability to continue to reform its theology and practice – of baptism and beyond – in obedience to the Word of God, in dialogue with the tradition, and in service of the world.'

To conclude Part 2, and inserting itself into this dialectic of continuity and change, is David Lyall's often moving summation of the vital relationship between "Worship, Preaching, and Pastoral Care". This contribution serves as a reminder that theology is always a practical discipline, and as such, it forms a most appropriate conclusion to the debate. As a result, the arrangement of this section in particular is an editorial tour-de-force.

The entire volume is concluded by Doug Gay, who reiterates the overarching themes of historical, ecumenical, and cultural context to the theology and practice of worship. Here there is also a welcome admission that, broad as the scope of this book is, it has not succeeded in covering every aspect even of Church of Scotland worship, let alone that of every Christian denomination or movement in Scotland. In particular, there is a disappointing lack of representation from the modern evangelical and/or charismatic movements. This is a serious omission, and while Gay does his best to remedy this, it comes across

as too little, too late. One wonders if it were really so impossible to find a contributor sympathetic to this field – and if so, why?

A more minor complaint would be the editorial decision to do without bibliographies, either at the end of each essay or at the conclusion of the volume as a whole. This rather flattens the reader's initial enthusiastic impulse to read further. Moreover, the footnoting is not individual to each contribution, but is continuous throughout, which becomes rather cumbersome by the time one gets to number 546.

Nevertheless, it is refreshing to come across a collection that is as down-to-earth as it is scholarly, and as impassioned as it is measured. The essays are each in their own way thoroughly accessible, and can be read both as individual pieces, and in provocative juxtaposition. Finely balanced between historical appreciation, theological literacy, and current practice, this volume will underpin debates on Reformed worship and liturgy for some time to come, and offers a model for such reflection far beyond the bounds of this church and nation.

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Growing Citizens: An Interdisciplinary Reflection on Citizenship Education, Alison Elliot and Heidi Poon, editors, Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2009, pp. 216, ISBN 978-0715208724. £9.99

What is a citizen? Who is a citizen? What does citizenship mean today? Or more specifically: who am I? Where do I belong? Can anyone 'belong' to a nation? How can I live my national identity when I travel through different countries? What does it mean to have dual citizenship? How can I raise my children to be good citizens of our nation? Do I even want them to have a strong national identity?

These have been live questions for years, and are especially important today. Nowadays we are living in an age of 'patchwork