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ORDERS FOR THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER IN IRISH PRESBYTERIANISM

ROBERT S. TOSH

Professor John M. Barkley has written: "The first Presbyterians in Ireland accepted as their standard for the ordering of worship and administering the sacraments, the Scottish Book of Common Order (1564)."

(1) The Book of Common Order authorised by the recently reformed Church of Scotland in 1564 had its origins in various continental Reformed Service Books - The Forms of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments etc., used in The English Congregation in Geneva (1556), itself based on Calvin's La Forme des Prières (1542) which drew heavily on Martin Bucer's liturgical usage in Strasbourg where Calvin arrived in 1538, having been expelled from Geneva. (2)

There has been much discussion as to the exact use BCO (1564) was put in Scotland but most liturgists would probably agree with A.C. Cheyne's conclusion that it "was valued as the expression and the safeguard of an actual unity, rather than as the means to be used for the creation of a uniformity not yet in existence. Though men honoured it, they could never regard its authority as ultimate." (3)

The Order for the Lord's Supper is as follows:

Prayer of Confession
Psalm
Prayer - Illumination
Sermon
Prayers - Thanksgiving and Intercession
The Lord's Prayer
The Apostles' Creed
Psalm - with preparation of the elements
Warrant or Institution
Exhortation
Prayer of Consecration
Fraction and Distribution
Prayer - Thanksgiving
Psalm

As Calvin desired to have weekly celebrations of Communion, the Liturgy of the Word was that followed at each Sunday Service. McMillan (4) has pointed out that "Nothing is said about the reading of Holy Scriptures", but arguing from Continental and later Scottish practice, he concludes that this took place before the sermon although it must be remembered that in post Reformation Scotland there had developed the custom of having the "Reader's Service", consisting of Psalms and Scripture readings, before the minister came to the pulpit. In an Irish context, J.S.Reid states that this was "the mode of commencing public worship customary to that period." (circa 1630) (5)

The structure of the Liturgy of the Faithful is identical with that of the Forme of Prayers (1556) as are the contents of the Exhortation which emphasises the benefits of the Lord's Supper, stresses the dangers of unworthy reception, lists those who are not to communicate and, in the final section, while clearly refuting transubstantiation again emphasises the Sacrament's benefit as a "singular medicine for all poor, sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls." No reference is made as to when the elements were to be brought in.

The Prayer of Consecration commences with Adoration, continues with Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption, refers to the Mighty Acts of Christ and to the Institution of the Sacrament, concluding with an Ascription of Glory. Although it contains none of the "time honoured words and phrases of the Western Liturgies", (6) it has a dignified and carefully expressed style.

No precise details are given for the fraction and distribution except that the minister was to break the bread, deliver it to the people who were then to distribute and divide it among themselves. The rubric also suggests that some suitable Scriptural passage, "setting forth the death of Christ", might be read at this point. There is no direction as to when the minister was to communicate. The conclusion to the Order is brief: a two sentence prayer of Thanksgiving, Psalm 103, still traditionally sung in many Irish

Presbyterian congregations, and the Blessing.

So far as practice in early Irish Presbyterianism is concerned, there is clear evidence that parishes often joined together for Communion, the people received the elements seated at tables, there were Table Addresses, the ministers communicated before the congregation and Services of Preparation and Thanksgiving were held. (7)

Little evidence however exists of the actual Order followed. It is quite clear from the writings of ministers like Robert Blair and of their opponents like Bishop Leslie that the Liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer was totally eschewed. It might seem reasonable to assume that as most of the ministers were Scots BCO(1564) would have been used but as Dr.W.D.Bailie points out:"Neither Blair nor Livingstone makes any reference to the Book of Common Order in their writings and any references to pulpit prayers suggests that these were not taken verbatim from it but were of a conceived or even extempore nature."(8) However, it cannot be automatically assumed that the absence of any references to BCO(1564) means that it was not used by other ministers. Nevertheless, whatever use may have been made of it, this would have been modified by at least four factors:

1. The first Presbyterian ministers were in an irregular position within the State Church having no formal supervision by Presbytery. Thus their freedom to order worship was increased.
2. The opposition, and indeed persecution, in the 1630s could have led to an increasing tendency to become more reluctant to use a service book. Just as in Scotland, the attempt to impose the 1637 Book of Common Prayer led in McMillan's opinion to almost total rejection of BCO(1564) for " it led to a prejudice against prayer books of all kinds", (9) so something similar may have occurred in Ireland.
3. During this period of chaos and persecution, leaving the people without ministers, made them, as Robert Bailie wrote resort to private services and meetings with the result that they were open to extreme Separatist influences in worship.(10) J.M. Barkley

qualifies the words quoted at the beginning of this stating that the use of the Book of Common Order was in Ireland "considerably influenced by Brownism". (11) Brownism was an advanced form of English Puritan Separatism and its followers rejected read prayers and the use of The Lord's Prayer and The Apostles' Creed. (12) That these Separatists were present in Ulster there can be no doubt, nor can there be much doubt that they did influence how Irish Presbyterians worshipped. Indeed Scottish writers like G.W. Sprott have tended to blame Ulster Scots returning to their homeland in 1638 for being instrumental in the degradation of worship in Scotland (13) a gross overstatement for as A.C. Cheyne writes: "One cannot help noticing how often Scotland's religious controversialists have played to the gallery of nationalism as a means of commending their case. Episcopacy and liturgical worship are denounced by one party as an English importation or commended as a native growth; and so with Presbytery and extempore prayer." (14) Cheyne's words are perhaps applicable to Irish writers also; for the impression can be given that deviations from the forms of BCO (1564) occurred in Ireland only because of the influence of non-Presbyterians.

4. Early Presbyterian worship in Ireland was influenced by what might be called the spirit of revivalism. The Six Mile Water Revival of 1625 was marked by psychological manifestations, common to such phenomena, and an emotional atmosphere. No service book can be structured for occasions like that; indeed the way is open for the freer, less structured type of worship favoured by Puritan Separatists. W.D. Bailies concludes that the Six Mile Water Revival had "some detrimental effects upon the worship of the Church as set forth by the first Reformers." (15)

Exactly what use was made of BCO (1564) in early Irish Presbyterianism may never be known, in any case it was to be replaced in 1647 by the Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God produced by the Westminster Assembly of Divines under the aegis of the English Parliament.

Professor Horton Davies describes the Westminster

Directory as "a compromise between the three parties, the English Presbyterians, the Scottish Presbyterians and the Independents".(16) Certainly, there was heated debate between the parties about specific points and especially the directions for the celebration of Communion. One of the Scottish Commissioners, Robert Baillie, complained that the Independents "mangled" the Sacrament especially in their lack of preparation and thanksgiving. He criticised the fact that they had "two short graces over the elements, which are distribute and participate in silence". Baillie also objected to the Independent practice of "carrying of the elements to all in their seats athort the church".(17) The Westminster Assembly debated this particular point for a number of days before a compromise formula was reached that the communicants should sit "around" the table or "at it".(18) Significantly in its Act of 1645 adopting the Directory the Scottish General Assembly took pains to insist that the communicants should be seated at the table.(19)

The Liturgy of the Word in the Directory, as in BCO(1564), was identical with the Order of Service to be followed at each Sunday Service:

Call to Worship

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Scripture Readings (from both Testaments)

Psalm

Prayer of Confession and Intercession

Sermon

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The recitation of the Apostles' Creed is not included and the use of the Lord's Prayer was permitted after the Thanksgiving. This was followed by an Exhortation in which the minister was to describe the "ends and uses" of the Sacrament, stress the need for worthiness and to warn of the dangers of eating and drinking judgement. Yet this was to be balanced by an assurance to all who were conscious of their sinfulness that at the Lord's Table they would find "ease, refreshing and strength to their weak and wearied souls." The rubric continue that the minister is to begin the action with "sanctifying and blessing the

Elements of Bread and Wine set before him". The wording gives no indication as to when the elements were to be placed on the table - either at the start of the entire service or carried in at this point. Before the words of Institution, the minister was to state that the elements "otherwise common are to be set apart and sanctified to this holy use, by the Words of Institution and Prayer." Thus no one particular moment could be considered that of Consecration.

The Prayer of Consecration begins with thanksgiving for all God's benefits, for Redemption and for all the means of grace and in particular, the Lord's Supper. An invocation that God would "vouchsafe His gracious presence" is followed by the epiclesis that God's presence and the effectual working of His Spirit might, "sanctify these Elements both of Bread and Wine, and to bless His own ordinance, that we may receive by faith the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, crucified for us, and so to feed upon Him, that he may be one with us and we with Him; that he may live in us, and we in Him and to Him who hath loved us and given Himself for us." (20)

In 1692, the "Father of American Presbyterianism", the Irish born Francis Makemie replied to the charges of the then Quaker, George Keith, that the epiclesis implied a Popish Consecration: "All we do is only pray to God for a Blessing on the Elements: that God would be pleased to vouchsafe His Gracious Presence and sanctify the Elements of Bread and Wine, making His own ordinance Effectual for the Spiritual Nourishment of Believers: and as we eat Bread and drink Wine, so we may feed by faith and spiritually upon Jesus Christ and what Popery is here, let the World judge." (21)

Commenting on this part of the recommendation in the Directory, Dr. W.W. Porter a contemporary Irish Presbyterian writer states: "A close regard to what the Westminster actually said will show that their prayer was for the ORDINANCE i.e., for the use to which the elements would be put and not so much for the elements themselves." (22) Yet the Directory does speak of sanctifying "these elements of Bread and Wine" and so

the prayer does refer to the elements but not in any sense that their substance would be changed. Rather than saying with Porter that the prayer was "not so much for the elements themselves", it would be more accurate to say that the prayer, so far as the elements are concerned, must be seen in the context of the whole service, the grace of God and the faith of the communicants.

After the elements had been "sanctified by the Word and Prayer" the Directory states that the minister was to take the bread and to break it with the following or similar words: "According to the holy institution, command, and example of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, I take this Bread and, having given thanks, break it and give it unto you." He was then to communicate himself, further break the bread and give it to the communicants saying: "Take ye, eat ye: this is the Body of Christ which is broken for you: Do this in Remembrance of Him." A similar procedure was to be followed with the cup. In this sequence the manual actions and the delivery in this sequence are somewhat fused with the fraction followed by the distribution of the bread and then the taking of the cup followed by its distribution. The Service is concluded by a short optional address reminding worshippers of God's grace set forth in the Lord's Supper with an exhortation to them to walk worthily and a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication. No mention is made of singing or the Blessing but their use can be assumed.

That the Directory was followed in Ireland is shown by a summary of the Communion Service given by Robert Craighead, minister of First Derry, 1690-1711. He stated that after the sermon, the Institution was read, followed by an exhortation, "opening the nature and parts of the Sacrament", the "solemn sanctifying of the elements", further exhortations and thanksgivings. (23) From this description, however, it is clear that the sequence of the Directory was not reproduced exactly and it is reasonable to assume that the fact that the volume consisted of recommendations meant that ministers did interpret its rubrics with

some freedom.

According to J.M. Barkley, the Directory "exercised a tremendous influence in Irish Presbyterianism". (24) The General Synod published a Revision in 1825 and the General Assembly four versions 1841, 1859, 1868 and 1887. The structure of the original is followed in each instance although the revisions seem to aim at simplification, omitting the detailed instructions as to the content of prayers and exhortation.

So far as the Lord's Supper is concerned, none of the Irish Revisions give a complete structure for the Liturgy of the Word. In the directions for Communion the Revisions follow the original with some alteration of the structure to Psalm - Prayer - Words of Institution - Exhortation. No detailed directions for the prayer are given beyond stating it should be for "the presence, protection and blessing of God". The Institution is followed by the Exhortation, thus reversing, for no apparent reason, the order in the Directory. The first part of the exhortation, to be given from the pulpit, follows the pattern of the Directory in coupling the benefits of the sacrament with a warning to "the ignorant, the heretical, the scandalous and those who indulge secretly in any known sin not to approach the Table of the Lord." At this point the minister was to leave the pulpit and from the table address the communicants in an attempt "to stir up their hearts to gratitude and love". The possibility of having the elements carried in is removed for Revisions state that these were to be laid on the table "before the commencement of the services of the day."

Writing in 1906, John McIlveen, the minister of Crescent Church, Belfast, expressed particular regret that the setting apart of the elements appeared to receive little attention but was "often slurred over in the mode of administration" although he was careful to point out that declaring that the elements were no longer to be regarded as common implied no change in their substance. (25)

The Revisions beyond, stating that the minister was to "after Christ's example, offer thanks and

implore the blessing of God", give no details as to the content of the Consecratory Prayer or, to be accurate prayers, for despite the Westminster Assembly's rejection, after debate, of the Independent practice of having two prayers - one for the bread and one for the wine, this had become common in Irish Presbyterianism. The practice has however now died out - although Barkley, writing in 1956, mentioned that he knew of one congregation where it still happened. (26)

Again there is no clear separation between the manual actions and the distribution for the minister is directed to break the bread "in full view of the people" with the words: "According to the institution, command and example of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I take this bread, break it and give it to you in remembrance of the body which was broken for you."

Only the first two Revisions make any reference to the minister's communion, stating that after the communicants had received the elements, the minister was to communicate, unless another minister was present, from which it can be inferred that they were to serve each other.

In the conclusion to the service the Revisions follow the Directory's general pattern although with a tendency to pile up words. Before each group of communicants left the table they were to be addressed, the 1859 and subsequent editions suggesting that it should be about the communicants' obligations, the influence the sacrament should have and the need to cultivate a spirit of Christ. Thus the optional address of the Directory becomes compulsory in its Irish Revisions. The 1841 Revision appears to suggest yet another address after everyone has communicated. Later Revisions suggest a reading and a prayer of Thanksgiving. Again, the singing of a Psalm and the Blessing can be presupposed although they are not specifically mentioned.

It is difficult to avoid concluding that the Irish Revisions represent an impoverishment of the rite even compared to that of the Directory. The absence of a formal setting apart, the rejection of the Great

Entrance, the fusion of the manual actions with the distribution of the elements, the duplication of the prayer of consecration and the increased emphasis on exhortation all point to this.

With the Directory as the standard of worship, there was in Irish Presbyterianism from the end of the seventeenth century until the middle of the nineteenth, a long period when worship changed little. It was doubtless at the centre of the life of the church but it was a centre that was firmly fixed; worship happened Sunday by Sunday with minimal alteration in the midst of the great movements within the church or difficulties facing it. References to the Lord's Supper in, for example, the Records of The General Synod of Ulster are comparatively rare.

From about the middle of the nineteenth century one becomes aware of the expression of an increasing dissatisfaction with Irish Presbyterian worship - especially of its prayers and psalmody - but references to the Lord's Supper are few. A work like John McIlveen's The Church's Worship does include a section on the Lord's Supper, but while he calls for greater frequency of celebration, most of his references are to utilitarian aspects of the service and to what might be called the devotional benefits of receiving Communion.

It was 1923 before Irish Presbyterians published a full order for the celebration of the Sacrament. While the 1923 Book may be criticised at a number of points it must be remembered that there was considerable opposition to the whole concept of publishing any sort of service book. This sprung from what J.C. Johnston, the Convener of the Public Worship Committee described as Irish Presbyterians "hereditary hatred of anything in the form of a liturgy" (27) but was also to some extent a by product of the heated controversies about organs and hymns of the late nineteenth century which seem to have left the Church reluctant to appear to interfere too much in worship. The opposition reached its climax when the 1922 General Assembly refused to sanction the Book's publication but after Johnston's threatened resignation from the convenership of the Public Worship Committee,

permission was given to the Committee to publish under its own name, not that of the Assembly. (28) Revisions were issued in 1931 and 1942 - the latter edition "by authority of the General Assembly."

It must be remembered that the compilers of the book, while eager "to aid those on whom rests the responsibility of expressing the heart of the Church of God" did not possess the same background of liturgical and theological scholarship as those members of the Church Service Society of The Church of Scotland who were responsible for the preparation of Euchologion, first published in 1865 in an attempt to help remedy the state of worship in Scotland. (29) Drawn from a wide variety of sources the various editions of Euchologion were to have considerable influence on subsequent Reformed rites in English, including BPW(1923).

By 1923 various changes in the way the Lord's Supper was administered in Irish Presbyterianism had taken place. After a great deal of controversy non alcoholic wine had generally supplanted the alcoholic variety; with minimum controversy individual cups were replacing the common cup; the practice of receiving the elements at tables was disappearing in many congregations with apparently no controversy at all. (30)

Neither of the two earlier books provides any suggestion about the Liturgy of the Word apart from the inclusion in 1931 of five possible Scripture passages. More serious is the apparent assumption that Communion was to be regarded as an appendage to the ordinary Sunday service. This impression is supported by the wording of one of the rubrics: "When the observance of the sacrament follows the ordinary service, the latter should be shortened." What this shortening means can be seen in 1942 where only one lesson is included with the suggestion that it ought to be "a passage from the Gospels about the death of Christ" which seems to betray an emphasis that the Eucharist is certainly primarily, if not exclusively, about the death of Christ. This order allows for the possibility of an exhortation, a shortened and modernised version of that

in BCO(1564), immediately after the reading and before the prayer of confession and the sermon. There is also some confusion about the content of the sermon as it is suggested that this "may be The Communion Address".

So far as the structure and language of the Liturgy of the Faithful are concerned, the first three editions of Public Worship lean heavily on Euchologion, although with some re-arrangement of the structure which is as follows in 1923 and 1931:

Exhortation - from Euchologion - based on BCO (1564)

Prayer for Pardon and Peace - from Euchologion.

Agnus Dei.

Praise - with entrance or unveiling of the elements.

and collection of the tokens.

Apostolic Benediction (as in Euchologion) or Pax.

Words of Institution

Address) "if thought desirable" or Apostles' Creed.

Setting Apart of the Elements.

Having the address or the Creed as alternatives is somewhat strange procedure although it was probably not intended that only one or the other could be used. The creed is introduced with a short formula "Almighty and Eternal God with Thy Holy Church throughout all the world - We believe" which may have been an attempt to make the recitation of the Creed more palatable to Irish Presbyterians, although the wording is again taken from Euchologion where, however, the Nicene Creed is used. There is in BPW (1942) some confusion between a skeletal order for this part of the service and the more detailed order. The latter follows that of the earlier books although omitting for no apparent reason, the Apostolic Benediction or Pax and the setting apart of the elements - representing some impoverishment. The skeletal order is -

Offering and Dedication

Institution

Collection of Tokens

Psalm

Table Address (if not given in sermon)

It can only be assumed that these were intended as alternatives or that there was carelessness of the part of the compilers. In the three books the double consecration of the elements as found in the Irish Revisions of the Directory is replaced by a single prayer of consecration, described as a "Prayer of Access and Thanksgiving". The wording and content in all three books are virtually identical although in 1931 and 1942 there is some rearrangement of the sequence. The structure in 1923 is:

Prayer of the Veil

Mutilated Sursum Corda

Preface

Thanksgiving - for Creation, Redemption, the Holy Spirit, Sacraments and Ordinances

Sanctus with Hosanna

Benedictus with Hosanna

Thanksgiving - for Redemption and Providence

Anamnesis

Epiclesis

Petition for Pardon.

The structure is generally similar to that in Euchologion which however lacks thanksgiving for Creation, Redemption and Providence along with the Anamnesis - in the Irish Books these appear to be the work of the compilers. The prayer in Euchologion concludes with the Lord's Prayer - absent from the Irish Books at this point. Again much of the wording is taken from Euchologion, but the Irish Books omit or alter references to the concept of sacrifice or offering. Where in the Prayer of the Veil, Euchologion has: "that drawing near unto Thee with a pure heart and undefiled conscience, we may offer unto Thee a sacrifice in righteousness", the Irish Books substitute: "that drawing near unto Thee with a pure heart and undefiled conscience we may offer ourselves, body and souls and spirit, unto Thee a living sacrifice."

The three books maintain a fusion of the fraction and delivery with the result that, as Barkley says, "the breaking of bread and taking of cup" have become "merely utilitarian".(31) After repetition of how

Christ broke the bread it is distributed; a similar procedure being followed for the wine. No reference is made as to when the minister is to communicate. The conclusion of the Service again follows the structure of Euchologion.

In BPW (1923) it is as follows.

Pax

Exhortation to Loyalty and Service

Prayer - Thanksgiving, Petition for unity, self
dedication, optional Intercession,
Thanksgiving for the faithful departed.

Praise

Benediction.

In 1942, the Pax is omitted and the Exhortation is optional.

It is obvious that Euchologion had a major influence both in language and structure on the Communion Services of the first three Irish Books. When other material is inserted it has a somewhat clumsy style and is frequently didactic and repetitive. The inclusion of two addresses - one before and one after the distribution, in addition to the sermon, points to a tendency to mask the central actions of the Sacrament in words- although in all three books the first address is optional and in 1942 both are. It was only to be expected that the compilers of the 1923 Book would lean heavily on Euchologion - what is more surprising is that apart from some changes -mostly minor - the Service remained basically the same in 1931 and 1942.

Stocks of BPW (1942) appear to have sold out sometime by the mid fifties and with no copies available, the Book of Common Order, published by the Church of Scotland in 1940 became increasingly popular and was used by many ministers.

In 1965 the fourth edition of Public Worship was published. It would be no exaggeration to describe it as a tribute to the liturgical knowledge and insight of the Rev. Professor John M. Barkley, the convener of the Public Worship Committee. (In conversation, at least, BPW (1965) is often referred to as John Barkley's Book) whether that is intended as a compliment or an insult

rather depends on who is saying it!)

BPW (1965) is far from being merely a revision of BPW(1942). It signified a serious attempt to return to the principles on which Reformed Worship is based and was not content with simply reflecting what was current practice at the time of preparation. It broke new ground, or perhaps more accurately recovered old ground, in structuring the order for worship along the sequence: Preparation or Approach in adoration and confession; The Word of God in reading and sermon; Response to the Word in thanksgiving, intercession and dedication; Dismissal with God's Blessing. Instead of, as in the earlier Books, printing a limited number of orders of service with full prayers, prayers are arranged according to their type. In the Baptismal Order, a question to the congregation was introduced along with a petition that the Holy Spirit would sanctify the congregation and the water to be used. In the Marriage Ceremony the vows are preceded by the scripture readings "as it is on the basis of their teaching that the marriage covenant is entered into." (32) The Order for Holy Communion to be considered below, while reproducing much of the wording of BCO(1940) and its predecessors, also includes a number of significant alterations and additions.

Not that BPW (1965) was automatically accepted by all members of the General Assembly. Despite the fact that the Public Worship Committee was at pains to point out that The Book was for guidance and help and was "in no way binding on individuals". There was an attempt, defeated by 239 to 164, at the 1964 General Assembly to have the Book rejected. (33)

Before considering the Communion Order, in detail a note of caution should perhaps be sounded! When Canon Alan Harper, then a theological student carried out a survey of eucharistic practice in the Presbytery of Iveagh in 1977, he was surprised to discover that BPW (1965) did not provide the norm in practice. (34) Similarly, when two years later, I sent questionnaires to ministers in the East Belfast and Route Presbyteries, the response indicated that nineteen ministers used BCO (1940); fourteen, BPW (1965); two,

BPW (1942). That however has to be modified by accompanying comments, e.g. "BCO - but not to letter"; "BPW = adapted"; "a wide variety of service material fed into general framework of BPW (1965)". Six ministers claimed that they devised their own order and another that he used the "usual rural order of service". Even, however, when ministers stated that they used BCO (1940) or BPW (1965) the Orders of Service enclosed showed, often considerable, deviations.

BPW (1965) differs from its predecessors in that the Communion Service is considered a unity consisting of the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacrament. Barkley writes: "The Lord's Supper is not an appendix to the Sunday Morning Service, rather the Sunday Morning Service was an abbreviated Lord's Supper (that is the same service without the actual celebration). The Communion Service, from The Scripture Sentences to the Benediction, is a unity, and the actual celebration is a unity within a unity." (35)

Thus the structure of the Liturgy of the Word is similar to that of the Sunday Morning Service, with the omission of the Children's Address.

Scripture Sentences

Psalm or Hymn of Adoration

Prayer; Confession; Pardon; Petitions for purity, faith, hope love; Illumination.

Old Testament Reading.

Psalm, Hymn or Anthem

Epistle and Gospel

Psalm or Hymn

Sermon

Prayer for the right reception of the Word;

Intercessions; Thanksgiving for the faithful departed.

There are three readings, Barkley stating that a Gospel portion should be read at each service as "Christian worship has its whole meaning in the person and work of God in Christ." (36) In practice three readings are not the norm - of 20 orders of service returned from ministers in East Belfast and Route, no fewer than 11 included only one lesson. The desire to

shorten the service still appears to hold sway! Unlike BCO(1940) where the readings and prayers are separated by the Intercessions and the Creed, readings and sermon in BPW (1965) are a unity.

There are also more subtle changes. While, in the Prayer for Pardon, the earlier Irish Books have "partaking by faith of the body and blood of Thy dear Son", BPW (1965) following BCO (1940) has "partaking by a divine mystery of the body and blood of Thy dear Son." - underlining the fact that sharing in the Lords Supper and being able to feed on Christ is a mystery which no formula can satisfactorily explain.

The order for the first part of the Liturgy of the Faithful in BPW (1965) is as follows:

Offerings

Invitation

Comfortable Words - Matt. 11: 28; John 6: 35;
Matt. 5:6.

Psalm or Hymn - with collection of tokens.

Words of Institution

Nicene Creed

Pax

Psalm or Hymn - with entrance or unveiling of the elements.

Taking of elements to be set apart.

Much of the wording of BCO (1940) has been retained but this order has a number of significant features.

1. The Offering is to be taken up immediately after the prayer following the sermon. Yet this is one point where common practice frequently diverges from the recommendation. Out of 13 orders from East Belfast - only four followed this - the remainder had the offering before the sermon. In Route two orders failed to mention the offering at all. This reflects a rubric for the Lord's Supper in The Westminster Directory where it is clearly stated that the "Collection for the Poor is to be so ordered that no part of the public worship is to be hindered." There has been however variety of practice within Irish Presbyterianism. In different districts, it was collected at the Church door, outside, before the service began or at the

table. The Kirk Session then carefully decided where the proceeds were to be sent.(37) This collection for the poor can be traced still in a number of congregations which have offerings, sometimes retiring offerings, for Benevolent Funds. In a number of congregations the offering is still taken at the Church door before the Communion Service for there can be the feeling that material things should not be handled during a sacramental service.

2. The Prayer of the Veil and the Offertory Prayer, both present in BCO (1940) are absent from this rite on the grounds that:"In the primitive rites there was nothing corresponding to an offertory Prayer at the moment of the offertory and the meaning of the offertory expressed in words in the Eucharistic Prayer itself. The Great Entrance and the Unveiling assures the concept of the offertory in action."(38)

3. The Invitation, absent from the earlier Irish Books, is to "all who are in communion with the Church Universal". Members of any branch of the Church "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" are invited to share. Thus it is not a completely open invitation although in practice some ministers do omit thereference to Church members, simply inviting those who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The Comfortable Words are included for the first time in an Irish order.

5. Both the Nicene Creed and the setting apart of the elements use the first person plural to emphasise the corporate nature of the rite. In practice few congregations say the Creed.

6. Unlike BCO (1940) the Words of Institution precede the Creed, thus following the sequence of the earlier Irish Books.

7. The Pax, rather than the Grace, which is found in the Scottish Book is used in order to bring this part of the service nearer to the Kiss of Peace in the early Church.(39)

8. In order to maintain the unity of the Great Entrance, the Unveiling and the Setting Apart, these are not as in BCO (1940) separated.(40) In practice, however, most congregations would have the elements on

the table before the service.

9. There is no place for a Table Address although some congregations do have one. Similarly the Exhortation disappears: Barkley's view being the content of these properly belongs to the Preparation Service. (41)

10. Two items of praise, rather than one are included with the suggestion that during the first, "Those not communicating may leave should they wish to do so". While the dismissal of the catechumens has a long history in general most Irish Presbyterians who are not communicants would absent themselves from the Lord's Supper. It is also suggested that the tokens should be collected during or immediately after this singing. Practice again varies - with tokens often collected as the worshippers enter the Church. The continuing use of tokens may now be anachronistic - as worshippers can communicate without them or have them written before the service. The main purpose of their distribution seems to be to remind people of the service or as means of keeping the Communion Roll up to date. Should Communion become generally more frequent - then tokens may disappear altogether.

Thus, this section of the Liturgy of the Faithful in BPW (1965) represents considerable enrichment as compared to that in the earlier books and also has significant, but theologically grounded alterations from that of BCO (1940).

Of the Orders of Service received only three followed the structure of BPW (1965) clearly but even three was some slight deviation. Others showed evidence of a wide variety of practice and idiosyncratic approach including the following:

- (a) Invitation - Praise - Tokens - Welcome -
- (b) Praise - Tokens - Welcome - Scripture Sentences - Institution - Setting Apart.
- (c) Welcome New Communicants - Invitation - Praise - Institution.
- (d) Praise - Institution - Creed - Tokens - Hymn
- (e) Praise - Tokens - Institution - Exhortation - Praise.

The structure of the Eucharistic Prayer is

virtually identical to that in BCO (1940) as is much of the wording although there are significant additions. It is prefaced by the salutation and Sursum Corda but despite Barkley's comment that he would like to see the Sursum Corda restored to general use, this has not been the case. (427) The structure of the prayer is:

Preface with Thanksgiving for Creation and Providence

Proper Preface

Sanctus Thanksgiving for Redemption

Anamnesis

Oblation

Epiclesis

Petition for the fulfilment of God's purpose.

Ascription of Glory

The Lord's Prayer.

The wording of the Preface is identical with that in BCO (1940) but while BCO (1940) provides eleven Proper Prefaces, BPW (1965) has nine. The Benedictus qui venit is not included on the grounds that its joining to the Sanctus arose from a conflation of texts. (43)

The beginning of the Thanksgiving for Redemption stresses the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ in a way that this part of the prayer in BCO (1940) does not. The Irish text then follows the wording of BCO (1940): "Not as we ought, but as we are able, do we bless Thee for His holy incarnation, for his perfect life on earth." But while BCO (1940) then goes on to speak of Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, continual intercession and reign, BPW (1965) takes a different direction by introducing the Narrative of Institution into the prayer. This is a new feature in Irish Presbyterian Communion Services and one Anglican scholar stated that through its inclusion "Dr. Barkley has brought his Church into the forefront of Presbyterian Liturgical Reform." (44) The words after the Narrative -- "and after He was risen, He was known to His disciples in the breaking of bread" - also represent an important innovation and were included in order to give "a fuller expression of the Eucharist as a festival of the Resurrection" (45)

Christ's Resurrection and Ascension are mentioned in the opening of the anamnesis, unlike BCO(1940) where they are included in the Thanksgiving for Redemption. BCO (1940) has the following wording: "Wherefore, having in remembrance the work and passion of our Saviour Christ and pleading his eternal sacrifice..." The last phrase, "and pleading his eternal sacrifice", is omitted in BPW (1965) although it was included in the original draft. It is not difficult to understand the reason for this in that anything which, even remotely, savoured of the idea of a repeated sacrifice would be anathema to many Irish Presbyterians. Barkley has written: "When we plead His eternal sacrifice, we desire Him to unite our offerings and prayers with His which are eternal and thus memorial in time and share in part of that eternal memorial. His sacrifice is not repeatable, but it is continually renewed; the remembering is not mere commemoration, but a real uniting possible by grace and through faith. This is not mere intellectual assent, but a committal of the whole person to Him, and that not simply as an individual, but also corporately within the Church." (46) Elsewhere, Barkley in his critical analysis of the phrase has shown that it is truly evangelical and in harmony with the thought of both Calvin and Zwingli. (47) The epiclesis is almost identical in wording with that of BCO (1940) and similar to the earlier Irish books but with one significant difference for, while the other books speak of sending down the Holy Spirit, BPW (1965) has "We most humbly beseech Thee through The Holy Spirit" in order "to avoid any suggestion that up to this, the Holy Spirit was absent, being up there." (48)

The prayer concludes with self oblation, a petition that God will fulfil the purpose of His redeeming love, an Ascription of Praise and the Lord's Prayer. Again in practice while many services may omit the Lords Prayer altogether, those that include it may do so in the Liturgy of the Word.

BPW (1965) follows the sequence of BCO (1940) in operating the manual actions of the breaking of the bread and the taking of the cup from the distribution.

The Agnus Dei follows the manual actions and the words used at the distribution are based on those of The Westminster Directory. It is clearly stated that after the Agnus Dei, the minister should serve himself and then distribute to the elders and those assisting him before the congregation is served. In practice evidence suggests that this is largely ignored. Despite the universal usage since the earliest days of the Church that the minister should receive first and that this ensures that the "minister is to set an example of humble obedience to our Lord's commands by receiving what He gives, and to set the example to others he must receive first"(49) it has to be recognised that any attempt on the part of the minister to enforce this is liable to be misunderstood.

The conclusion to the Order is in common with that of BCO (1564) brief and economical:

Ascription of Praise

Prayer - Thanksgiving and Union with The faithful Departed.

Psalm or Hymn of Thanksgiving

Dismissal

Apostolic Benediction.

The Dismissal, not found in BCO (1940) is intended to link worship and service.

The Communion Order in BPW (1965) while clearly drawing much from other Reformed rites and in particular that of BCO (1940) also shows evidence of independent preparation and a willingness to make important changes. For the first time in Irish Presbyterian Service Books a complete order for the Liturgy of the Word is provided; the sequence in the Liturgy of the Faithful has been carefully thought out, the Prayer of Consecration contains new elements for Presbyterians, at least; the Fraction and the Taking of the Cup are separated from the Delivery. As a liturgy it can stand comparison with any even though it has been clearly indicated above that in practice there are deviations, often considerable, from it.

The language is, however, firmly traditional yet BPW(1965) was published at a time when most other churches were giving serious thought to liturgical

revision including the use of contemporary language in prayer and the possibility of incorporating modern Biblical translations. The Liturgical Commission of the Church of England was experimenting with prayers in the "you" form in 1968 - only three years after the publication of BPW (1965) and around the same time it was becoming not uncommon to hear God addressed as "you" in Irish Presbyterian worship. (50) Thus, in some ways, BPW (1965) could be accused of being out of date shortly after its production although, this could certainly be partly explained by the long delay of twenty three years between its appearance and that of BPW (1942).

In 1980 the Public Worship Committee received the General Assembly's authority to publish a series of experimental revisions of the contents of BPW (1965) in order to supplement it by offering services "in both traditional and modern language." (51)

In fact, the revised Communion Service, produced in 1989, is entirely in contemporary language. The structures of the Liturgy of the Word is identical to that in BPW (1965) but with a choice of four prayers of confession and supplication and of two of intercession. Following the prayer after the sermon the sequence is somewhat altered to:

Offerings

Psalm or Hymn - collection of tokens

Invitation

Comfortable Words

Psalm or Hymn - Entrance or Unveiling of the elements

Nicene or Apostles' Creed

Pax

Institution

Taking of elements to be set apart.

The Comfortable Words and the Institution are taken from the New International Version; the Apostles Creed, while strictly a Baptismal formulary is given as an alternative in the hope that the use of a Creed will be encouraged.

Three Prayers of Consecration are provided: the first is essentially a recasting of the prayer in

BPW(1965) in contemporary language although before the Narrative of Institution there is a recitation of Christ's Mighty Acts. The second prayer has a short preface similar to that used in the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England with the thanksgivings for Creation, Providence and Redemption immediately following the Sanctus. Three forms of this Thanksgiving are given along with two forms of the epiclesis and two forms of the concluding self oblation and petition. The intention of providing a large number of alternatives was to encourage thought and increased preparation in the prayer. The third prayer of Consecration is much shorter, "primarily intended for use when children are present, or with the sick", although containing all the elements of the other prayers. The remainder of the order is again identical with BPW (1965) but with a larger choice of post-Communion prayers including one for use at Easter. But as I was closely involved in the preparation of this Order comment might be incongruous.

It is impossible to gauge the precise use made of any of the Orders discussed above. Barkley has written: "Presbyterianism has always been opposed, and rightly so, to a fixed Liturgy...allowing no variation. On the other hand, the use of a Liturgy which allows freedom is in harmony with Presbyterian tradition."(52) It is perhaps unfortunate that in a determined, and correct, attempt to maintain its heritage of free prayer, Irish Presbyterianism has often failed to recognise that distinction. The results can be lack of careful preparation for worship, carelessness of expression, the maintenance of idiosyncratic customs and a failure to draw from the centuries old experience of the Christian Church at worship.

NOTES

1 A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Belfast, 1963) 113

2 For the background to BCO(1564), see J.M.Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church (London, 1966) 10-25; W.D.Maxwell, An Outline of Christian Worship (London,

1936) 87-124

3. "Worship in the Kirk" in Reaction and Reform ed. D. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1967) 73

4 The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1550-1638 (London, 1931), 120.

5 History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ed.

Killen (Belfast, 1867) Vol. I 118-119

6 W.D. Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556 (Edinburgh, 1931) 134

7 See W.D. Baillie, Worship in Ulster prior to the Introduction of the Westminster Directory in 1647 (Belfast, 1987) 11-16

8. op.cit. 6

9. op.cit. 72

10 Letters and Journals ed. Laing (Edinburgh, 1841) Vol. I 249

11 Short History 113

12 See Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, Vol. I From Cranmer to Hooker (Princeton, 1970) 257-269

13 The Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1882) 8

14 loc.cit It is perhaps unfortunate that Cheyne has linked presbytery and extempore prayer over against episcopacy and liturgical worship - the lines of demarcation were never as simple as that!

15 The Six Mile Water Revival of 1625 (Newcastle, 1976) 22

16 The Worship of the English Puritans (London, 1948) 157

17 op.cit. Vol. II 195, 149

18 John Lightfoot, Works ed. Pitman (London, 1824) Vol. XIII 286-289

19 Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842 ed. Pitcairn (Edinburgh, 1843) 115-116

20 One of the objections to the Book of Common Prayer by the English Presbyterians after the Restoration was that the manner of consecrating the elements was "not explicit enough" (Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church 50-51)

- 21 Answer to George Keith's Libel in The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie ed. Schlenther (Philadelphia, 1971) 82
- 22 Presbyterian Worship (Belfast, n.d.) 13
- 23 An Answer to the Bishop of Derry's Second Admonition (Dublin, 1696) 56
- 24 The Westminster Formularies in Irish Presbyterianism (Belfast, 1956) 30-31
- 25 op.cit. 225-226
- 26 op.cit. 58
- 27 Irish Presbyterian, August 1923
- 28 Minutes of the General Assembly 1922 32-33, 42
- 29 For the origins of the Church Service Society, see W.D. Maxwell, A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland 176-180
- 30 See R.S. Tosh, The Origins and Development of Irish Presbyterian Worship (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 1983) 225-230, 240-242
- 31 J.M. Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church 51
- 32 J.M. Barkley, "The Theology of Liturgy" in Liturgical Review Vol. III.1, May 1973, 9
- 33 Minutes of the General Assembly 1964, 23
- 34 The Current Eucharistic Practice of the Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of Iveagh (Unpublished Typescript) 1 I am grateful to Canon Harper for permission to quote from this.
- 35 The Book of Public Worship. An Open Letter (Belfast, 1965) 11 This pamphlet was intended for those conducting worship. The title page has the invitation, "Please read, then, if you wish"- (with an arrow pointing towards the waste paper basket) "On the other hand, you may prefer to keep it." Barkley in his Worship of the Reformed Church makes frequent reference to the theological aspects and emphases of the Order.
- 36 ibid. 3
- 37 See J.M. Barkley, "The Evidence of old Irish Session Books on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" in Church Service Society Annual, 1952, 29-30
- 38 J.M. Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church 48
- 39 ibid.

- 40 ibid.
41 op.cit . 57
42 Presbyterianism (Belfast, 1956) 55
43 J.M.Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church
49
44 Dean Charles Gray-Stack, Focus, July 1965,
161-162
45 J.M.Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church
50
46 ibid. 87
47 "'Pleading His eternal sacrifice' in the Reformed
Liturgy" in The Sacrifice of Praise ed. B.D. Spinks
(Rome, 1981) 123-140
48 J.M.Barkley, The Worship of the Reformed Church
51
49 W.D.Maxwell, A History of Worship in the Church of
Scotland 62 n.1
50 See R.C.D.Jasper and P.F.Bradshaw, A Companion to
the Alternative Service Book (London, 1986) 25-27
51 Minutes of the General Assembly 1980, 63
52 Presbyterianism (Belfast, 1956) 51

Rev. Robert Samuel Tosh, B.Sc., B.D., Ph.D. was student of Dr Barkley. He is editor of Religious Programmes for the BBC in Northern Ireland. His doctoral thesis was entitled "An Examination of the Origins and Development of Irish Presbyterian Worship".