ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE WORSHIP OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH: A HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

ELAINE SARAH COLECHIN

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Submitted: August 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking the Revd Dr John Bradbury, who after examining my undergraduate dissertation on the 'Continuity and Change within the worship of the United Reformed Church' encouraged me to think about how I might advance the research. Without his support, advice and friendship over the past six years, this thesis would not have been written. I would also like to thank the Revd Dr David Cornick and the Revd Dr Robert Pope, who with John, have supervised this piece of doctoral research. Their help, insight and encouragement have been invaluable, and it has been a privilege to work with them.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Trustees of St Luke's College Foundation for the financial support offered through their Personal Award scheme from 2015 to 2018. Also, to the Trustees of the Coward Trust who have financial supported me throughout the whole of the undertaking of this piece of doctoral research. Without the support of these two Trusts, I would never have been able to consider taking on this further academic study.

I would like to thank Helen Weller, Archivist at Westminster College, who has helped me locate primary sources and showed me how to work with archive material. And also, Margaret Thompson, who if Helen has not known where something might be, Margaret has been able to point me in the right direction.

I would like to thank the Revd Prof David Thompson who set me off in this field of research when he supervised my undergraduate dissertation.

I would like to thank my family for their continuing love and support, particularly my oldest brother, Mike, who has asked the awkward questions, while sympathising with me over my thesis-writing struggles having once done the same himself.

My thanks also to the Revd Michael Hopkins for advice and help on literature and the Revd Nigel Uden, who has been a conversation partner during this research and has pastorally supported me through some quite challenging times.

And finally, to Luther the Golden Retriever, who has taken me for walks when I have needed space to think and been a distraction when everything has all got a little too much!

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE WORSHIP OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH: A HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

ELAINE SARAH COLECHIN

August 2021

Keywords: Worship, United Reformed Church, Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Freedom, Order, Participation

An examination of the service books of the United Reformed Church might lead one to conclude that the Church's approach to corporate worship follows a fixed liturgy which is uniform across all congregations. Yet, although the liturgies published are complete in form, they were never intended to be the sole sources for corporate worship. In the introduction to each service book, those using the volumes were not encouraged to see them as the only way corporate worship could be approached. In fact, freedom in worship was favoured. But what did this mean? This thesis describes the approach to corporate worship in the United Reformed Church from the perspective of three principles that are evident in the liturgies of the service books: freedom, order and participation. It demonstrates how the Church's understanding of these and their relationship to one another has developed over time. This is achieved through a historical survey of corporate worship in the Church's antecedent traditions, particularly English Congregationalism and English Presbyterianism, both of which were rooted in seventeenth century English Puritanism. This survey shows how the understanding of these principles are both practical and theological. Although the emphasis on freedom implied in the introductions to the service books relates to how individuals or congregations might approach corporate worship, God's place and role in corporate worship cannot be ignored. Corporate worship is not just an offering made by humanity to God; God and humanity both participate, and God too has freedom in that participation. Therefore, through the development of a theological understanding of freedom, order and participation and their inter-relationship, this thesis shows how the United Reformed Church, being attentive to scripture, open to the Holy Spirit, engaging the covenant community (*i.e.* an individual congregation) and in partnership with God, worships in spirit and in truth as is required of the church by God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

The distinctive character of the church that sets it apart from other forms of community in society is its gathering for corporate worship. Many commentators have observed how worship is the definitive and central activity of Christian community.[1] Duncan Forrester suggested:

> Worship expresses and creates community, *koinonia*, and in worship we find an ethic, a lifestyle, embodied and sustained.[2]

Similarly, Christopher Ellis wrote:

> … worship is the place where the Church is gathered by God and becomes *ekklesia*; the place where God's Word is encountered communally and where the Church is confronted by its divine vocation.[3]

Worship is not only an action of the church, it shapes the church's identity: who the church says it is in the world. In worship, Christians learn how to be Christian, exploring the nature and claim of faith.[4] However, despite the essential character of worship in the church, how the church worships is not universal. The approach taken to worship differs between denominations. Through the liturgical and ecumenical movements of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries there has been encouragement for common features and shared language in particular practices that are universal in the church (*e.g.* the ecumenical drafting of ancient liturgical prayer for use in the eucharist). But essentially the identity of the congregation gathered for worship defines how that worship is offered to God. Given the juxtaposition of the human and divine in worship, what effect does this have on how the church understands what it does when it gathers for corporate worship? How does the wider life of the church impact worship? How does worship impact the wider life of the church? This thesis explores these questions from the perspective of one of the British denominations, the United Reformed Church. It will describe the denominational

[1] von Allmen, 1965, p.42; Schmemann, 1966, p.14; Ellis, 2004, pp.1-2; Dyrness, 2009, p.5; Forrester and Gay, 2009, p.3.
[2] Forrester and Gay, 2009, p.3.
[3] Ellis, 2004, p.5.
[4] Forrester and Gay, 2009, p.4.

approach to corporate worship, examining, historically and theologically, the principles that determine the shape and content of the Church's worship.

The United Reformed Church was formed in 1972 when most congregations belonging to the Congregational Church in England and Wales united with the Presbyterian Church of England. Although two relatively small denominations in the United Kingdom, behind their union lay an ecumenical hope for the wider union of the church. This was something that was believed to be 'the will of God' and demonstrated in the inaugural service of the United Reformed Church when the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council greeted the United Reformed Church's first Moderator of General Assembly (an office in which a Minister of Word and Sacraments, a Church Related Community Worker or an Elder spends a period of time as the elected representative of the denomination) with the statement and pledge: 'I give thanks with you for this union, and share your resolve to seek the wider unity which is Christ's will.'[5] Despite this genuine commitment to unity, which was furthered by union with the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ in 1981 and around two-thirds of the churches belonging to the Congregational Union of Scotland in 2000, it has also been argued that the initial motivation was decline.[6] Martin Camroux observed that this was reflected in the structures of the new church, which attempted to achieve, primarily, Congregational-Presbyterian unity rather than enable a church designed for wider unity.[7] Furthermore, the new church's choice of name was intended to show how it would be distinctive among the existing British denominations. The Basis of Union, the foundational document of the United Reformed Church, begins with the acknowledgement there is only one church and that in obedience to God's call, a unity of all people should be the church mandate.[8] Despite this, the Church adopted the

[5] Service booklet for the Service of Thanksgiving for the inauguration of the United Reformed Church, 5 October 1972, pp.12-3; Huxtable, 1977, p.33; Camroux, 2016, p.41.
[6] Camroux, 2016, p.47.
[7] Camroux, 2016, p.61.
[8] The United Reformed Church, 2021, *The Manual,* Section A: Basis of Union, clauses 1-4, 7-8; Thompson, 1996, pp.2-3.

name ‘United’ rather than ‘Uniting’, which might suggest that the process of union was complete. If the vision was of the unity of the whole church, then every union that has occurred in the life of the United Reformed Church should only ever have been seen as a step along the way, and the process of uniting only complete when the one church is a visible reality, which currently is not the case. Alongside this, mention must be made of the significance of being ‘Reformed’, which came from the Presbyterians and Congregationalists recognising themselves as part of the wider Reformed tradition. It should be noted that at the time of union, this was not terminology that was widely used in either denomination except by those who were part of the academy, *i.e.* those engaged with the academic exploration of church history and/or theology and those exploring the context of the new church in the global landscape.[9] In uniting the Congregationalists and Presbyterians there was the hope of creating a strong Reformed church in England and Wales—a church that rediscovered, Camroux suggested, ‘a supposed Genevan heritage’ that would support the Church’s mission.[10]

It is within an understanding of being ‘Reformed’ that the story of the worship of the United Reformed Church begins. The Basis of Union states:

> Christ’s mercy in continuing his call to the Church in all its failure and weakness has taught the Church that its life must ever be renewed and reforming according to Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.[11]

The life of the Church has an order in which ‘the Word must be properly preached and the sacraments properly administered’ to ensure renewal and reform.[12] This bases the ecclesiology of the Church on the foundation of worship as it was formulated by John Calvin (1509-1564) in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559).[13] Calvin was one of the sixteenth century European Reformers who are identified as being foundational for the Reformed tradition. However, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians cannot simply be described as ‘Reformed’. They have distinct histories that relate to national histories and

[9] Thompson, 1996, pp.1-2.
[10] Camroux, 2016, pp.60-1.
[11] The United Reformed Church, 2021, *The Manual,* Section A: Basis of Union, clause 6.
[12] Thompson, 1996, p.5.
[13] Calvin. *Institutes,* 1559, §4.1.9 (Calvin, 1960, p.1023).

different understandings of the relationship between church and state in Great Britain. It is of considerable significance that the United Reformed Church sees itself as one of the Free Churches, as did the Congregationalists and Presbyterians before 1972.

Ellis suggested that 'it is easier to describe the Free Churches than offer a precise definition because the term refers to a stream of disparate groups and not a single organization'.[14] The Free Churches include, foremostly, the churches which would have once been called 'the old dissent': the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers. In addition, there are the Methodists, the Churches of Christ, Brethren, Independent Methodists, Pentecostals, Independent Evangelical Churches, and newer groups that have emerged out of the charismatic and restoration movements of the 1970s and 1980s.[15] All these denominations differ organisationally, in how they approach polity, and are theologically and culturally different. Nevertheless, they all consider themselves 'free' because they speak of having freedom from various authorities. This distinguishes the Free Churches from other strands of the world church, such as Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran traditions.[16]

The theological basis of freedom is the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to the church in Corinth: 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'[17] Ernest Payne, the renowned Baptist historian and defender of the Free Church tradition, interpreted this to mean:

> … freedom of inspiration, freedom from set and uniform liturgical forms in worship, freedom from imposition of binding credal formularies, freedom from any confining of the grace of God to a particular form of Church order, to a priestly succession, or even to the channels of the sacraments, sacred as they are generally held to be. The liberty of the Christian … has meant liberty of conscience. The liberty of the Church has meant an assertion of "the Crown Rights of the Redeemer" against any claim to authority over it by the state.[18]

[14] Ellis, 2004, p.25.
[15] Ellis, 2004, p.25.
[16] Ellis, 2004, p.26.
[17] 2 Corinthians 3.17, NRSV.
[18] Payne, 1944, pp.144-5.

In the worship of the United Reformed Church this is interpreted as 'freedom of local congregations to order their own gatherings for worship', 'the freedom of spontaneity which is open to the extempore guidance of the Holy Spirit', and the freedom of a worshipping community to respond to the reading and preaching of scripture as addressed as the living Word of God, which is very similar to Ellis's observations of Baptist worship.[19] Although the Reformed nature of the United Reformed Church suggests there might be an order to the approach taken to worship, there is a fluidity which it will come to be shown impacts upon the methodology used for exploring the theology of worship in the United Reformed Church. This is because the content of liturgy alone cannot be used to determine how United Reformed Church worship is interpreted.

The study of worship, from both a theological and historical perspective is not uncommon.[20] A number of historical reviews of worship across the centuries have been published including William Maxwell's *An Outline of Christian Worship: Development and Forms* (1936), which went through a number of revisions and considered liturgical forms in worship from the origins of the church to, in the final edition, liturgies of the mid-twentieth century. In succession to this seminal work was Gordon Wakefield's *An Outline of Christian Worship* (1998), which expanded Maxwell's work and included excursuses on the liturgical movement, ecumenical influences and contemporary developments including worship in black churches. Another expansive historic work is Horton Davies' five volumes on *Worship and Theology in England* (first published between 1961 and 1975, and revised in 1996), which describes worship in the churches in England from the mid-sixteenth century to the late twentieth century. These historic discourses trace how worship has developed in the church, demonstrate the variety of forms worship can take, and how the church's worship has been influenced by other influences on the church. Through Davies'

[19] Ellis, 2004, p.27.

[20] There are vast number of publications on worship, more than will be referenced in this literature review. Some examples, of which a number were consulted during the initial phases of this research, are: McLaughlin, 1940; Kay, 1953; Winward, 1964; White, 1990; Jones, et al., 1992; Stringer, 1999; Rice and Huffstutler, 2001; Pecklers, 2003; Stringer, 2005; Van Dyk, 2005; Dyrness, 2009; O'Brien, 2013; Day, 2014; Wolterstorff, 2015; Duck, 2021.

work, it is possible to trace how worship has developed and changed in a given denomination and some of the specific influences on it. Despite this, as Ellis noted about piecing together the Baptist tradition in Davies' work, when read sequentially for a given tradition there are gaps because Davies was relating the narrative to the English church as a whole.[21] For due consideration to be given to how worship is shaped by a tradition and a tradition is shaped by worship, the historical survey has to focus on the tradition in question, not forgetting the wider context but not letting it dictate what evidence is documented.

History alone does not answer the question of how worship is understood in the church. Theology must also be explored. This can, and has, been done through the lens of history, which is evident in the following influential works: *Worship* by Evelyn Underhill (1936) and *The Shape of Liturgy* by Dom Gregory Dix (1945). Underhill explored the fundamental characteristics of worship drawing on the theology of incarnation. How ritual, symbol, sacrament and sacrifice are gathered and expressed in the eucharistic action gave the principles for the illustration of how different denominations respond to God in their corporate worship. Underhill reflects on worship being purely a responsive action of humanity. That response should express what of God is revealed through the expressive and creative acts in the visible world by weaving, Underhill suggested, 'every aspect of … human personality, physical, mental, and spiritual, into [humanity's] adoring recognition of the beauty and perfection of God.'[22] Dix also focused on worship being an action of humanity to glorify God. While Underhill began with a theological concept and illustrated it using examples from history and practice of different parts of the church, Dix began with the eucharistic liturgy. In exploring the structure of actions and prayers that form the eucharist, Dix brought history and theology together to offer an explanation of the liturgy and suggest why it might be important to understand the liturgy better. The original work that the book was based on, Dix said, was 'written by an Anglican for Anglicans'.[23] In the

[21] Ellis, 2004, pp.39-40.
[22] Underhill, 1937, p.343.
[23] Dix, 1945, p.x.

book, Dix does try to expand the analysis to the wider church through historical survey, but only through the patristic and medieval periods in the church leading towards an explanation of the eucharist in the Anglican tradition. However, two observations Dix made about worship and liturgy are of interest to the argument that will develop in this thesis. Firstly, liturgy, as a scripted text that an act of worship follows, offers the familiar to the layperson and, therefore, makes for participation. Secondly, the clergy have a pastoral responsibility 'to help people to worship as well as possible, for the greater glory of God and the profit of their souls'.[24] Despite their different approaches, Underhill and Dix do come to a similar conclusion: the study of worship or liturgy is a study of life and because worship is something done by humanity, it is affected by the ideas and aspirations of those who come to worship.[25]

Underhill's and Dix's work reinforces the centrality of worship in the life of the church and the interconnection between the practice of worship and living out of a Christian life in the world. David Fergusson, however, in an essay offering a Reformed perspective on the theology of worship, suggested that a description of worship cannot be derived only from the theology within the liturgy or interpreting the activity of worship through a theological lens. Both are required as worship is not one single thing.[26] Fergusson observed how 'the honouring of God is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition' for adequately describing worship.[27] This observation is based on the fact that God can be acknowledged and honoured beyond the boundaries of worship and worship involves a wide range of activities, not all of which entirely capture the notion of acknowledging and honouring God.[28] This led Fergusson to suggest that worship creates an exchange between the divine and humanity meaning that God is the subject as well as the object of worship. Fergusson wrote:

[24] Dix, 1945, p.xiv.
[25] Underhill, 1937, p.343; Dix, 1945, p.741.
[26] Fergusson, 2009, p.71.
[27] Fergusson, 2009, p.71.
[28] Fergusson, 2009, p.72.

> Worship might be described as a performative action in which both the Church and God participate. It is not merely a human acknowledgement of who God is or what Christ has done. Worship is an event by which God is known and Christ communicated; it is not of our own making for it is dependent upon the grace of God. In this regard, the act of worship is not merely a human recollection or bearing witness although it includes these. It is also an event in which God's grace works for us in repeated, regular and defendable ways, albeit in a manner that refers us to the once and for all action of Christ.[29]

In trying to expand this in relation to the activity of worship, Fergusson focuses on preaching arguing that it is a key element in worship from the Reformed perspective. Although word and sacrament do both have a role in Reformed worship, Fergusson centres on the word preached for his theology because, he stated, in the Reformed tradition the sacraments are remote and infrequent so of little influence, while the sacraments have also been at the heart of, and therefore changed by, ecumenical conversations.[30] As with Underhill's and Dix's work, Fergusson's commentary highlights interesting ideas but has constrained the discussion of those ideas to a particular aspect of the activity of corporate worship. Just as a discussion on the eucharist does not fully develop worship as an action that both God and the church participate in, neither does preaching. Therefore, the development of a theology of worship has to be based on wider aspects of worship than just specific elements within corporate worship (*e.g.* the sacrament and preaching). This is particularly important in a tradition that can hold both Word and Sacrament in high regard but cannot conceive of the sacraments being shared without the Word first being professed.

These three works have highlighted how when examining the theology of worship, the lens of tradition becomes an essential part of the exploration. It affects both how the practice of worship is approached and the theological understanding of worship. This was demonstrated further by Jean-Jacques von Allmen in his work *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (1965). Von Allmen argued that in the study of the theology of worship there must be the existence of a 'given cult' or tradition.[31] Specialist knowledge is 'necessary for the

[29] Fergusson, 2009, pp.72-3.
[30] Fergusson, 2009. pp.79-80.
[31] von Allmen, 1965, p.13.

critical examination and expert direction of public worship'.[32] From the perspective of the Reformed tradition, von Allmen established the broad outlines of a doctrine of worship and then showed how it worked in practice. This, interestingly, led to a suggestion about how the practice of Sunday worship should change within the Reformed tradition. Von Allmen concluded that the sacraments should be emphasised and there should be a weekly communion service.[33] This is an argument in the Reformed tradition that dates back to John Calvin, who held the sacraments in high regard in the life of the church, supporting that both preaching and the sharing at the Lord's table be practised weekly, as the sacraments could not be administered without the Word first being heard. Although it should be noted that this was also true for the preaching of the Word, Calvin understood that the Word could be preached without the sacraments being administered.

The purpose of this thesis is not to see how theology might adjust the United Reformed Church's perspective on corporate worship, it is to try to understand theologically and historically why the Church's worship takes the shape (or form) that it does. Although Underhill, Dix, Fergusson and von Allmen offer suggestions on how one might approach developing a theology of worship, and Fergusson and von Allmen developed their ideas from the perspective of the Reformed tradition, none of them provide a model that can be used directly and critically to examine United Reformed Church worship.

In consideration of the inter-relationship between theology and worship a discipline has been developed which is known as 'liturgical theology'. It is a method of drawing theological conclusions about the church from how a church worships, predominantly through the analysis of written liturgies that are published in prayer books or missals. Its primary task is 'the elucidation of the meaning of worship'.[34] The discipline focuses on the articulation of the 'theological meaning of the church's symbolic action in various rites, including the interrelation of word and sacramental action, drawing out implications for

[32] von Allmen, 1965, p.13.
[33] von Allmen, 1965, p.313.
[34] Schmemann, 1966, p.16.

doctrine and for faith experience of the church in the world'.[35] This methodology arose from considering whether worship can be understood as a source of theology or whether worship should be considered only as a means of the church expressing its ideas and feelings about God and faith.[36] For many traditions, including the Reformed tradition, worship has, however, come to be understood as 'bestowal of spiritual experience instead of the epiphany of the church's being'.[37] Aidan Kavanagh, who was a Benedictine monk and Professor of Liturgics, argued that this cannot be the case as worship 'transacts the church's faith in God under the condition of God's real presence in both church and world'.[38] Martha Moore-Keish, in her book *Do This in Remembrance of Me: A Ritual Approach to Reformed Eucharistic Theology* (2008), supported Kavanagh's argument, suggesting that even in the Reformed tradition, 'in liturgy, the church [should be] most fully itself, revealing its nature to the world and thus acting as source of all theology'.[39] In a Christian tradition, such as the Reformed tradition, where doctrine can be perceived to be prioritised over practice, Moore-Keish suggested that it should be recognised that 'participation in liturgical action over time deeply forms faith'.[40] A worshipping community that encounters God in Word and Sacrament will be shaped by that encounter, and so the practices of worship should be observed to understand what a community believes about God, themselves and the world.[41] Moore-Keish stated that this formative nature of worship is not an alien concept within the Reformed tradition, Calvin 'hinted at its role as *theologia prima*'.[42]

As a principle, liturgical theology has been predominantly applied to the worship of traditions which have prescribed liturgy. This is because, although it considers the whole rite of worship, the starting point has to be an actual liturgy.[43] This is interesting as

---

[35] "liturgical theology." A. Richardson and J. Bowden, 1983. *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, London: SCM Press, p.336.
[36] Kavanagh, 1992, p.8; Moore-Keish, 2008, p.70.
[37] Schmemann, 1966, p.25; Moore-Keish, 2008, p.83.
[38] Kavanagh, 1992, p.8.
[39] Moore-Keish, 2008, p.83.
[40] Moore-Keish, 2008, p.68.
[41] Moore-Keish, 2008, p.69.
[42] Moore-Keish, 2008, p.84.
[43] Fagerberg, 2004, p.41.

Kavanagh observed in his discourse on liturgical theology how from the sixteenth century with the development of the printing press and the ability to mass produce liturgical texts that could be put into the hands of worshippers, the liturgy became a way of controlling what was believed as it could be used directly to communicate doctrine.[44] This might be true for all liturgies in the vernacular. But for the Catholic and Orthodox traditions where liturgy, which can be in the vernacular, has the ability to be about God, there is the mystery of divine worship maintained in rite and symbol. This means that liturgy is, also, of God, making liturgical theology a possible tool for exploring the meaning of worship.

Given what has been said about the worship of the Reformed tradition, it could be argued that liturgical theology is not a methodology that can be applied to the worship of the United Reformed Church. But as has been shown, Reformed worship is not only a demonstration of theology, it is meant to be a place of encounter. In the United Reformed Church worship this is emphasised in the importance of freedom in worship. In the ways freedom can be understood, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, worship can be seen as both about God and of God. Also, the United Reformed Church might not have a prescribed liturgy, but it does have liturgies upon which the analysis could be based. Additionally, there is provenance for liturgical theology being applied to the worship of a liturgically-free tradition. Christopher Ellis in his book *A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in the Free Church* (2004) employed liturgical theology to study Baptist worship and express the theological meaning of worship in a Free Church tradition. Ellis showed Baptist worship both forms and expresses the Christian faith of those worshipping and that 'there is a recognised "canon" of fundamental elements comprising the church's worship which undergirds all historical development.'[45] Using Alexander Schmemann's approach to liturgical theology Ellis demonstrated how the structure of Free Church worship can significantly inform the meaning of that worship, concluding:

---

[44] Kavanagh, 1992, p.105 and p.109.

[45] "liturgical theology." A. Richardson and J. Bowden, 1983. *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, London: SCM Press, p.337.

> Christian worship occurs when, with attention to Scriptures, in openness to the Spirit of God and in covenant community, disciples gather in the name of Jesus to meet God and to seek [God's] Kingdom.
>
> This model sees the Church as a community of disciples who yearn for the Kingdom of God, seek to express the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their common life and worship with its creative tension between Word and Spirit, between scriptural command and loving encounter.[46]

This conclusion also reflects United Reformed Church worship but what this means in terms of the Church's theology and practice of worship cannot be derived directly from what it means in Baptist worship, despite the similarities. The historical complexities of the Church bring with it different developments in understanding, which are important to emphasise when examining the practice of worship in a church.

Ellis's translation of Schmemann's approach was first to analyse the development of worship in the Baptist tradition, focusing particularly on the pattern or order which corporate worship had taken. He then considered various attitudes to worship and their theological interpretation. Finally, he examined the components of worship and their meanings that had been highlighted in and as part of his previous work.[47] Ellis recognised that unlike in the other traditions where liturgical theology had been used, in Baptist or Free Church worship the dimension of *ordo,* the starting point for the methodology, needed to be understood and explored in two senses.[48] Ellis stated:

> On one hand, [*ordo*] may refer to the pattern of worship services and the meaning implicit in their ordering. On the other hand, it may refer to the overall shape of worship practices and the dynamic interaction between various concerns in the life and witness of a congregation.[49]

From this Ellis explored worship including the relationship of Word and Sacraments, although noting that the most frequent experience of corporate worship in Free Churches is non-eucharistic and this pattern needs to be taken seriously in order to understand the

---

[46] Ellis, 2004, p.256.
[47] Ellis, 2004, p.44.
[48] *Ordo*, in simplest terms, is the collection of rules and rubrics which regulate the church's worship, often understood through how rites and ceremonies are set out in service books *etc.* Schmemann demonstrated that *ordo* was more complex as it involved not only the basic structure of worship, but its origins and how it developed and its theological content as the *lex orandi* (the law of prayer) of the church (Schmemann, 1966, p.40).
[49] Ellis, 2004, p.43.

meaning of corporate worship.[50] Therefore, Ellis explored separately the embodied theology in prayer, preaching, singing, the eucharist and baptism to draw conclusions on how worship informs the understanding of the community of disciples and the living faith.

One approach to the research described in this thesis would have been to take Ellis's work and substitute the discussion on Baptist worship for a discussion on United Reformed Church worship. This would have furthered the work on Free Church worship Ellis began through offering a different perspective, but the conclusion would have been unaltered. Also, to make a significant contribution to knowledge the research in this thesis would need to expand Ellis's consideration of the theology of prayer, preaching, singing, the eucharist and baptism in the traditions of the United Reformed Church. There is already a significant body of work on these and so the contribution made would be the bringing together of what has been written. Although this is important for understanding the worship of the United Reformed Church, it does not advance knowledge or offer a theological view of worship as a whole. Therefore, using some of the principles Ellis developed from Schmemman's approach to liturgical theology, can the questions raised by Ellis regarding Free Church worship through the lens of Baptist worship be explored through United Reformed Church worship from a different angle? Some of the other historical and theological works on corporate worship in the church suggests it can and so the research behind this thesis has brought together elements from the different approaches described in this introduction. This research starts with Ellis's definition of *ordo*, and then concentrates on the second definition of the term: the overall practice of, and dynamic interactions in, worship. It will offer an exploration of the meaning of worship that demonstrates the significance of order, but recognises it is only one part of the foundations of worship in the Free churches. Therefore, although this research relates to the wider field of liturgical theology, it does not specifically apply the methodology. It does, however, seek to show that Reformed worship in the context of the United Reformed

[50] Ellis, 2004, p.43.

Church is not only about spiritual experience of the congregation; it is also a place of epiphany—where God at work can be readily observed.

This thesis will begin as Ellis's work did with a historical enquiry into what worship of the United Reformed Church is and has been. It will use historical and textual evidence to investigate why the congregations in the United Reformed Church worship as they do and then offer a theology of worship drawing on the key aspects of worship identified. Similarly to Ellis, this study will span a history of almost 400 years, which is a very long time. However, to answer the question of why the United Reformed Church approaches worship the way it does, requires the tracing back of the roots of its worship to, at least, the Westminster Assembly and the first official attempt in the English church to move away from a prescribed liturgy and enable freedom in worship which in part is a response to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

The research which this thesis documents has come from an analysis of liturgies, worship-related material, theological and practical writings on worship, church books and minutes from committees and councils of the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions. These sources will be used in order to gain an understanding of the premise of the church's approach to corporate worship. It should be recognised that worship does not only apply to the gathering of church communities in corporate acts. Personal acts of devotion towards God also constitute worship. Although as Christians, members of the United Reformed Church are encouraged to deepen their faith and discipleship through personal engagement with scripture and prayer, it will only be corporate worship that is considered in this thesis. This is because it is in the corporate that particular identities (*i.e.* Reformed) and certain theological claims, notably the participation of both God and congregation in worship, become apparent. An empirical approach could have been pursued in this research. Given the nature of the United Reformed Church, careful selection of a social science methodology would be needed to ensure adequate and useful data was collated. Such methodologies exist that would allow a theology of worship for the United Reformed Church to be determined from the perspective of its

congregations. Nevertheless, the aim of this research is to discern whether a theology of worship can be determined from the decisions and actions of the denomination. The body of evidence available at the denominational level is such that this can be achieved using a historical survey. Therefore, this is the methodology employed in this thesis, recognising that an empirical study may offer a different answer as its focus would be on the decisions and actions of congregations which may not be the same as those of the councils of the Church.

The idea that order and freedom are significant in the worship of the United Reformed Church has already been alluded to in the discussion of the United Reformed Church identifying itself as being Reformed and one of the Free churches. In addition, it will be established in Chapter 1 that in understanding the worship of the United Reformed Church participation is another key factor to be considered. Given that worship is, as already stated, the place where communally the church encounters the Word of God and is confronted by its divine vocation, worship has to be participated in by both those who are gathered and God. How this is facilitated in corporate worship that is text-based with the same words being placed into the hands of the congregation in every act of worship is, on a basic level, easy to examine. But when each service is different and the primary subject matter of most services are the words of the one leading worship with the interjection of the words of others through hymns, the question arises, as stated by Ellis, 'what experience of God is encountered in this worship and how is it to be understood when its expression is so varied?'[51] Therefore, this thesis establishes freedom, order and participation as the principles that determine the shape and context of the worship of the United Reformed Church.

This thesis will begin by exploring what, through its General Assembly and committees, the United Reformed Church has said about worship since its formation in 1972 (Chapter 1). From the evidence gathered, it will be shown how the Church's approach to

[51] Ellis, 2004, p.29.

worship can be expounded through the consideration of the roles of freedom, order, and participation in worship and how they inter-relate. The analysis of sources will also demonstrate the importance of the antecedent traditions of the United Reformed Church on how the Church understands worship. Consequently, Chapters 2 to 4 of this thesis are a historical survey that traces the development of the understanding of freedom, order, and participation in corporate worship and how they were expressed in antecedent traditions.

The United Reformed Church has four antecedent traditions: English Congregationalism, English Presbyterianism, Churches of Christ and Scottish Congregationalism. Although the Churches of Christ and Scottish Congregationalism have impacted the worship of the United Reformed Church, particularly in encouraging the redrafting of service books (Chapter 1), it is English Congregationalism and English Presbyterianism that will be the focus of this research as they are the dominant antecedent traditions in the eleven synods of the United Reformed Church that are in England.[52] The origins of United Reformed Church worship is to be discovered in those founding traditions but, as Ellis showed, comes from before these denominations were fully established. English Congregationalism and Presbyterianism have their roots in English Puritanism. Therefore, their approaches to worship can be traced back to this common origin, especially the argument that led to the writing of the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for Public Worship of God* (1644).

This thesis approaches the historical survey chronologically starting with the Westminster Assembly in 1643 and the drafting of the *Westminster Directory* (Chapter 2) and working forward, examining Congregationalism (Chapter 3) and Presbyterianism (Chapter 4) separately. This method has been taken as it reflects the approach taken by Ellis in his presentation of the story of Baptist worship. It also gives a narrative to the development of

[52] The United Reformed Church is made up of thirteen synods: eleven in England and two national synods which cover Scotland and Wales. A synod is one of the organisation layers in the United Reformed Church which brings together a group of congregations that are geographically related.

worship from the *Westminster Directory* that allows the charting of how perspectives on freedom, order and participation were formulated and advanced as thoughts and ideologies have changed over the centuries, which were influential on how these terms were interpreted and understood. With this in mind, each chapter in the historical survey begins with a short history of the tradition under consideration referencing important aspects that relate to the development of worship in that tradition. This is to give the background from which arguments are then developed.

The final part of this thesis is the development of a theology of freedom, order, and participation in worship (Chapter 5). It theologically develops some of the themes that are highlighted in the historical survey and relates them to the general experience of worship in the United Reformed Church. This will be done through the analogy of traditional jazz music, which draws together the interaction of freedom, order and participation in a way that shows their equal importance. The aim is to present a theology of freedom, order, and participation in which, through the Holy Spirit, corporate worship is a place where the community of believers encounter the Word of God and respond in a manner that glorifies God.

CHAPTER 1. WORSHIP OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1.1. Introduction

The worship of the United Reformed Church can be described as having a generally accepted structure while being liturgically free.[53] Before tracing where such an approach has come from, it should first be determined what that means in the Church. This will be considered according to documents, liturgies and publications from the denomination as a whole noting that what might be experienced at the congregational level in the United Reformed Church could offer a different perspective. Nevertheless, it should not be perceived that there is no connection between the two. It is the aim of the Assembly committees of the United Reformed Church to involve members of local churches who are willing to use their gifts and skills in furthering the work of the wider life of the Church.[54] The consistency or otherwise of denominational initiatives, declarations and publications will be investigated in order to discover if there are any defining characteristics in United Reformed Church worship and how they might be understood historically and theologically. This will be achieved by scrutinising and critically reviewing literature that examines and informs the approach to corporate worship in the United Reformed Church.

The literature to be examined falls into three categories:

- Literature relating to theology and practice of worship in the United Reformed Church;
- Resources for worship that have been published by the United Reformed Church or been written by members of the Church;

[53] Bradbury, 2013, p.188.
[54] Nominations Committee Report, General Assembly Book of Reports 2020, p.204.

- The denomination's approach to worship as described in reports made to General Assembly and Mission Council. [55]

In the rest of this chapter, each of these bodies of literature will be reviewed in turn to establish if they specifically theologise the worship of the United Reformed Church and examine how they add to the understanding of freedom, order, participation and tradition in the worship of the United Reformed Church, the premisses on which this research builds a theology of worship for the United Reformed Church.

1.2. Review of literature relating to the theology and practice of worship

The records of the General Assembly (reviewed in detail in Section 1.4) show that discussion of worship in the Church has been predominantly concerned with the commissioning of resources to assist and enhance worship in local churches. How the Church understands its worship, or its approach to worship, has been little examined by the United Reformed Church's General Assembly. This does not mean that the Church has not considered the theology and practice of its worship. Committees have touched on this issue and encouraged further discussion in order better to resource this central aspect of the Church's life. Therefore, given the aim to outline a denominational theology of worship, it is important to establish what work has been published that considers, in some way, the theology and practice of worship in the United Reformed Church.

1.2.1. Method and results

A survey of publications using library catalogues and database searches was undertaken to ascertain what material had been published relating to the worship of the Church.

[55] The General Assembly is the decision-making council of the United Reformed Church that directs the life and work of the denomination. It holds the final authority 'in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of [the Church's] common life, (The United Reformed Church, 2021, *The Manual*, Section B: The Structure of the United Reformed Church, clause 2.(6)). Mission Council (now called the Assembly Executive following General Assembly 2021) is an executive body of the General Assembly. It is appointed by the General Assembly to 'act in its name between meetings of the General Assembly and discharge such other functions as the General Assembly may from time to time direct,' (The United Reformed Church, 2021, *The Manual*, Section B: The Structure of the United Reformed Church, clause 2.(6).(n)). It undertakes to enable the Church and General Assembly to take a more comprehensive view of the activity and policy of the Church, (General Assembly Book of Reports 1992, p.57).

Volumes on the theology and history of the United Reformed Church were also cross-referenced to see if they included any exploration of the subject or cited any relevant publications. Very few sources were identified: sixteen in total.

The survey found only one paper that specifically discussed the worship of the United Reformed Church: Sam Richards' and Simon Peters' discussion of 'The United Reformed Church and liturgy' (2018), which was published as part of a collection of papers by the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe on Protestant perspectives on worship. Two papers discussed worship in relation to the first service book to be published for the United Reformed Church: Erik Routley's 'A New Book of Worship for a New Church' (1974) and James Todd's 'Tradition and Change: Worship in the United Reformed Church' (1975). Five books have been published that explore worship with reference to the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions: David Owen's *Sharers in Worship* (1980), Bernard Thorogood's *Our Father's House: An Approach to Worship* (1983), Ernest Marvin's *Shaping Up: Reforming Reformed Worship* (2005), and two collections of essays one edited by Julian Templeton and Keith Riglin, *Reforming Worship: English Reformed Principles and Practice* (2012), and the other edited by John Burgess, *In Word and Spirit: Discussion Papers on the Theology of Worship* (2016). The two collections of essays came from conferences and meetings organised by members of the United Reformed Church. It should be noted that neither the conferences nor the collections of essays were commissioned by official channels, either the central committees of the Church or the Resource Centres for Learning.[56] This was also the case for the books written by Owen and Thorogood, both published independently from the United Reformed Church. Furthermore, references were found relating to the worship of the Church in four books relating to the theology and/or history of the Church: Edmund Banyard's *Straws in the Wind* (1992), David Peel's *Reforming Theology* (2002), Tony

[56] The Resource Centres for Learning are the institutions associated with the United Reformed Church for the provision of theological education in the denomination. At the time of writing this thesis there are three: Westminster College, Cambridge, Northern College, Manchester and Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College, Glasgow.

Tucker's *Reformed Ministry: Traditions of Ministry and Ordination in the United Reformed Church* (2003) and David Peel's *Encountering Church* (2006). There is also a brief description of the practice of worship in the church published in *Tell Me about the URC* (1981), a short booklet on the United Reformed Church written by John Taylor.

In addition to the published works, there have been three pieces of doctoral research completed by ministers in the United Reformed Church which refer to the worship of the Church: David Hilborn's research entitled *The pragmatic of liturgical discourse: with special reference to English Reformed worship and the performative language of doxology of Jean Ladriére* (1994); Catherine Ball's research entitled *Taste and See that the Lord is Good: A programme evaluation of a course seeking to enhance the meaning of Holy Communion* (2010); and Elizabeth Welch's research entitled *The Holy Spirit and Worship: Seeing unexpected congruities from the writings of John Owen (17th century Reformed) and John Zizioulas (contemporary Orthodox)* (2017).

1.2.2. Analysis of literature

The published works do not provide a conclusive definition of the theology of worship in the United Reformed Church. David Peel's exploration of Reformed theology in relation to United Reformed Church thought and practice laid out a set of principal features for the worship of the Church. These included: the Bible, freedom and diversity, simplicity, the centrality of preaching, the Lord's table, prayer, hymn singing, and the search for relevance.[57] These correspond to what John Taylor lists in his brief introduction to the practice of worship in the United Reformed Church.[58] Taylor, in addition, stated that worship is 'the greatest event in the Church's life.'[59] In reviewing the literature, an alternative set of principles became apparent: freedom, order, participation, and tradition.

[57] Peel, 2002.
[58] Taylor, 1981, p.5.
[59] Taylor, 1981, p.5.

1.2.2.1. Freedom

Freedom and diversity are themes that are picked up by other authors regarding both the content of worship and the various approaches to it. On the one hand, diversity is a natural result from the Church being a union of church traditions (see Introduction) particularly when they are traditions which have approached liturgy in an open and diverse manner (see Chapters 3 and 4). Therefore, it is not surprising that both David Peel and John Burgess commented on how across the Church numerous and varied worship styles are found.[60] Burgess anchored this view in defining the United Reformed Church as a 'broad church' being able not only to encompass different church traditions but also 'a range of theological opinion and a variety of worship styles.'[61] On the other hand, diversity in the Church's worship, Peel suggested, cannot only relate to the coming together of the varying congregations in the unions that have formed the United Reformed Church. The diversity of the Church's worship has become more pronounced through ecumenical engagement and the resulting cross-fertilisation of traditions. Peel wrote:

> … As we have learned from other churches, the Reformed have become Catholic; meanwhile, we have not been afraid to take on board resources and styles which have originated in our sister churches around the world, religious communities like those at Iona and Taizé, and the Charismatic Renewal Movement. …[62]

Edmund Banyard suggested that diversity comes also from the Church, through its worship, seeking to engage with different aspects of its own life as well as that of the world. Banyard wrote:

> Wherever we live, we are likely to have neighbours who feel uncomfortable if they need to attend church. They do not easily relate to the worship which they find there, it does little or nothing for them. That doesn't necessarily mean that what we do in our churches is wrong, but if we believe that God has entrusted us with good news to be shared, we ought to understand why we worship as we do and ask whether our worship patterns are appropriate to our day and what we might learn from those who are trying other ways.[63]

---

[60] Peel, 2002, p.269; Burgess, 2016, p.3.

[61] Burgess, 2016, p.3.

[62] Peel, 2002, p.269. *NB*. In this quotation Peel is referring to the church traditions of 'Reformed' and 'Catholic'. Practices in worship that might be associated with rites and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church have percolated into certain aspects of how churches that identify with the Reformed tradition approach worship.

[63] Banyard, 1992b, p.79.

Not defining itself by one fixed liturgy is, therefore, not a weakness of the Church.[64] As Sam Richards and Simon Peters stated, diversity encourages and equips 'people of all ages, status and backgrounds in growing their relationship with God.'[65] These observations on the diversity of the Church's worship are indicative of there being a freedom in how the Church worships. Therefore, one way that freedom in worship can be understood and described is the diverse and the flexible use of a wide and varied selection of resources to shape an act of worship. These resources can come from within the denomination or outside it. This flexibility allows an act of worship to be constructed that meets the needs and demographics of a congregation. Richards and Peters stated that everything in worship 'should be arranged on a case-by-case basis in order to help people in the specific context, place and time where worship is taking place to connect with and respond to God.'[66]

Freedom in worship cannot solely be defined or explained by observing that the worship of the United Reformed Church is diverse in nature. The literature shows that freedom consists also in the ability to have spontaneity. This can and does take different forms in worship. There can be spontaneity in the content of worship, particularly the prayers spoken by those leading the worship. David Owen explained how extemporary prayer in its spontaneous and unpremeditated nature can rise out of the immediate experience of those worshipping.[67] This suggests that spontaneity, although often thought of in terms of the actions and words of the worship leader, goes beyond this particularly when it comes to response. It relates to the participation of a congregation as a whole. Bernard Thorogood wrote:

> 'Spontaneity' means our readiness to include in our worship whatever is most pressing in today's life. It is taking life with seriousness. So if we are caught up in quarrels it may be that true worship means dealing personally with the quarrel before we sing our praises to God.[68]

[64] Peel, 2002, p.269; Richards and Peters, 2018, p.172.
[65] Richards and Peters, 2018, p.172.
[66] Richards and Peters, 2018, p.172.
[67] Owen, 1980, p.33.
[68] Thorogood, 1983, p.95.

This is very biblical. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that no one should bring an offering to God while they were angry with another; if they come to the alter to offer a gift and remember they have something against another, they should leave that gift, go and reconcile with their sister or brother and then return to make that offering.[69] This biblical nature is important as it reflects the centrality of scripture not only in the worship of the Church but the life the Church and the congregation—part of the Church's Reformed identity. This is why in turn, what Thorogood said puts the onus on the congregation and why they should make themselves ready to worship God as they bring to God what is pressing in the world. What Thorogood implied can be interpreted as the minister's ability to draw everyone in through their extemporary prayer by referencing what is pressing in life. However, this does not deal with the personal element that in reality probably does not happen—the people do not come to worship after first making time to sort out any personal quarrels. This was also not the universal view of spontaneity and participation found in the literature. Brian Harley in his essay on 'Making Room for the Spirit in Worship', which is part of the collection edited by Burgess, stated that 'worship flows out of God's activity in [the congregation].'[70] This can be understood as the Holy Spirit guiding and inspiring participation of the congregation, and this is hinted at by others.[71] The Holy Spirit is shown to act within the worship leader, prompting and leading what they say.[72] For the congregation, the Holy Spirit makes God present and brings about encounter with God, which is particularly sought when a Christian community comes to worship.[73] This activity of God through the Holy Spirit related to a point made by Susan Durber in her essay 'Tearing down the Temple: deconstructing worship', which is also part of the collection edited by Burgess. Durber wrote that freedom in worship needs to be

[69] Matthew 5.22-24, NRSV.
[70] Harley, 2016, p.17.
[71] Owen, 1980, p.138; Welch, 2016, p.45.
[72] Todd, 1975, p.17; Burgess, 2016, p.125.
[73] Welch, 2016, pp.43 & 44.

recognised as God's; overemphasis should not be placed on the freedom of the worship leader or congregation in worship.[74]

1.2.2.2. Order

Often considered to be in tension with freedom is order. James Todd wrote: '[the Church cherishes] freedom and variety in worship, and above all liberty to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, too much to allow ourselves to be bound by an invariable order.'[75] Although this could be interpreted as the Church being resistant to order in general, Todd was highlighting that it is a fixed, rigid order to which the Church is averse. It cannot be ignored that without order, freedom can lead to chaos within worship. Harley and Peel both stated this case. Harley explained how freedom, when understood as letting emotions flow or an overemphasis on spontaneity can result in chaos.[76] Harley gave the example of an act of worship created by members of the congregation choosing their favourite hymns, but where there is a disconnect and no flow. It is better that there is a level of control and therefore order. Peel picked up on a point made by Horton Davies in a comparison of the different opinions held about worship in the Church in England between 1564 and 1603: 'form needs freedom to keep it fresh, and freedom needs form to prevent it from turning into irresponsible chaos.'[77] Therefore, worship needs to have both order and freedom. This is demonstrated by the service books that have been published for use in the United Reformed Church since the union in 1972 and exhibited in how worship resources have been written and prepared for the Church (see Section 1.3). After the completion of the first order of worship for use in the Church, Todd wrote:

> …We believe it to be an abiding principle of Reformed Church worship that the minister should never be so confined to any form of prayer that he is not at liberty to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we hope that our worship will always be orderly and in obedience to the Gospel. There are dangers in freedom: there are dangers in fixity of form too. What we have tried to do is to provide our Church with the text of a service which does justice to the traditions which we have inherited, which takes into account the new liturgical insights by which all branches of the Church are being enriched, and which

[74] Durber, 2016, p.113.
[75] Todd, 1975, p.7.
[76] Harley, 2016, p.20.
[77] Davies, 1996b, p.75; Peel, 2002, p.269.

> will enable our congregations to worship God in freedom, with confidence and joy.[78]

Order when understood as form and structure is shown by the literature to have a positive effect on worship. It does not constrain freedom. However, when order is understood in terms of complete liturgies (order and words) there appears to be a contradiction with how the United Reformed Church approaches worship. As already stated, the idea of a fixed liturgy is one that the Church cannot conceive supporting. Nonetheless, the production of full liturgies is a way of putting into the hands of worship leaders the constituents that fittingly express the doctrine of a church that holds the values of unity and being Reformed. Erik Routley spoke of how the approach to writing liturgy in the Church has followed historical principles. In the Presbyterian Church (as will be shown in Chapter 4) 'directories of worship' were not uncommon, and it is this approach which has been applied to the service books and liturgies written for use in the United Reformed Church. As Routley wrote, the liturgies are not to be understood as 'do this', but rather 'do it like this'.[79] Despite this, in the way that each of the service books has been written, it could easily be assumed that the words that are offered are fixed, and the liturgies should be followed as set. The emphasis on flexibility and freedom is made in the prefaces or foreword, which may not be read before looking at the liturgies. Other than giving worship leaders examples of worship relating to the doctrine of the Church, there is no reason offered why the United Reformed Church's service books were written in this way. It was observed that when compared to the later service books of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, they do follow a similar format, which might be the reason—to maintain continuity (Section 1.3.2.2).[80] This has not been further explored as the archives for the relevant committee meetings in the United Reformed Church have been unavailable due

[78] Todd, 1975, pp.17-18.
[79] Routley, 1974, p.415.
[80] The Congregational Union of England and Wales's *A Book of Services and Prayers* (1959); The Presbyterian Church of England's *Presbyterian Service Book* (1968).

to the closure of the Dr Williams Library where the archives are held and that access to certain meeting minutes are restricted.[81]

The connection between order and freedom was further explored by Julian Templeton and Keith Riglin when they suggested that order can be the framework within which there is the freedom to 'encounter and respond to the living God.'[82] David Owen demonstrated this in action when he discussed the forms of prayer that can be used in public worship. When freedom is a strongly held principle for how corporate worship should be conducted, extemporary prayer can be regarded as the only genuine form of prayer. Owen explained that although this has a level of truth, when leading a congregation in prayer the worship leader needs to direct people's thoughts in an orderly way.[83] Extemporary prayer, being spontaneous and unpremeditated in nature, has a tendency to be unordered. Owen, therefore, suggested that a more suitable approach for corporate worship was the preparation of prayers by the worship leader ahead of the act of worship. This is known as free prayer.

1.2.2.3. Participation

Alongside freedom sits the concept of response as an understanding of worship. Worship, in part, should be a response made by the people to God. Every element of an act of worship, Owen explained, should evoke the congregation's response to God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God.[84] This would suggest that any act of worship should contain an element of participation. Tony Tucker recognised that, in general, worship in the United Reformed Church has centred around 'passive' participation of the congregation, a view supported by Thorogood.[85] This means, in Tucker's understanding, that the minister or worship leader, in how they construct an act of worship and through its content, has to

[81] The policy of the United Reformed Church is that material in the archives under 15 years old is closed and not available for study (noted in the catalogue for the archive held at Dr Williams Library, which can be found on the United Reformed Church website).
[82] Templeton and Riglin, 2012, p.4.
[83] Owen, 1980, p.33.
[84] Owen, 1980, p.137.
[85] Thorogood, 1983, p.48; Tucker, 2003, p.119.

convey a sense of worth and purpose upon the congregation so they feel as if they have participated.[86] Alternatively, Peel suggested that the patterns of worship used by the Church needs to be such that the congregation are more actively engaged in worship.[87] This demand for 'active' participation is one of the reasons Routley gave for why, when the first liturgy for a service of Holy Communion was written for use in the worship of United Reformed Church, it contained responsive conversation:

> Our new liturgy has much responsive conversation in it—we have assumed that the demand for "participation," which is to be heard so vigorously expressed in many places, is a demand our own people are anxious to make and to have granted.[88]

This demand has continued to be demonstrated in acts of worship of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church. In all the celebratory services that have marked the unions that form the United Reformed Church, parts of the liturgy (beyond the commitment of the members of the Church to the union) have contained congregational responses.[89] Also, more recent examples can be found in parts of the liturgy for the opening acts of worship for General Assembly and the acts of worship held on the Sunday of the meeting, when local congregations have been invited to join General Assembly for worship.[90] Thorogood argued that even when for the majority of the service the congregation are 'passive' participants, the offertory ensures that the congregation have 'no choice but to be active participants in the action of worship.'[91] He wrote:

> … the offertory is a critical moment in worship. It is necessary for the proper pattern of response. Even if our church should inherit a great legacy tomorrow we shall still take up an offering at each service, for we need to demonstrate that there is a personal response to the gifts of God in Christ. … Then we can indeed come to the offertory with conviction and joy, glad that we can offer

---

[86] Tucker, 2003, p.119.
[87] Peel, 2006, p.65.
[88] Routley, 1974, p.414.
[89] Examples of this can be found in the printed service sheet and programmes for the Service of Thanksgiving for the Inauguration of the United Reformed Church, 1972, (gathering words and Prayer of Thanksgiving); the Unifying Assembly of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church, 1981, (Prayers of Approach and Confession); the Unifying Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, 2000 (Opening responses, a number of prayers and Blessings).
[90] The Opening Worship for General Assembly 2014; The Communion Service for General Assembly 2016; The Opening Worship for General Assembly 2018; The act of worship for Sunday morning, General Assembly 2021.
[91] Thorogood, 1983, p.48.

> some sign of our commitment to the life of the Spirit in the context of our praise.[92]

Another way that 'active' participation of the congregation in worship is encouraged is through the singing of hymns. Thorogood stated that singing praise to God is a key element to worship for most in the Church.[93] It is the means of bringing emotion into worship which might otherwise be lost due to the emphasis on preaching and acts as a counterpoint to that highly cerebral pattern of worship that is found in the United Reformed Church.[94] Peel demonstrated the importance of hymnody in the worship of the Church by acknowledging the contributions made by members of the United Reformed Church to hymnody in general. Peel wrote: 'The fruits of the [United Reformed Church] contribution to hymnody is immediately apparent in any of the recent mainstream hymnbooks.'[95]

The question of participation relates to two questions that four authors raise in their discussion of worship: what does worship seek to achieve and who is worship for? In her essay 'Tearing down the Temple: deconstructing worship', Durber wrote:

> Sometimes we can be beguiled into thinking that worship should be entertaining, popular, and dramatic, partly at least because we want people to be attracted to it. We have come to think of it as the main way in which we draw people to the Gospel. But if worship is actually the staff of spiritual life for those who are part of the Christian community, it is not going to be wonderfully exciting, because the life we are being prepared to live in Christ's name is not like that. Worship is a healing and a re-shaping of our desires. It is spiritual bread.[96]

Durber emphasised the importance of worship on shaping people and communities in their relationship with God. Burgess, in his essay 'Experiencing the Glory: revelation in Worship' published in the same volume as Durber's essay, suggested that worship 'in its entirety is an encounter with God and is a seeking for, recognition of and response to the revelation of God.'[97] Both Durber and Burgess put the people first: worship is to aid the

---

[92] Thorogood, 1983, pp.51-2.
[93] Thorogood, 1983, p.24.
[94] Peel, 2002, p.278.
[95] Peel, 2002, p.278.
[96] Durber, 2016, p.115.
[97] Burgess, 2016, p.126.

people's encounter and response to God. Ernest Marvin, however, argued against this. His view was that God should be the single focus for worship. Marvin does not discount consideration of the congregation; he wrote, 'worship should be able to comfort and reassure.'[98] But the primary purpose of worship is God: 'God is the audience, not the congregation.'[99] Thorogood saw both sides of the argument, worship cannot be only about the people nor can it be only about God. Thorogood spoke of worship as a fusion of heavenly word and human response, which 'makes life worship and worship alive.'[100]

1.2.2.4. Tradition

The literature directly reflecting on the worship of the United Reformed Church connects the approach to worship in the Church to worship of the Reformed tradition. This has been demonstrated in the previous discussion about what the literature has said about freedom, order, and participation in United Reformed Church worship. Templeton and Riglin, however, stated the direct relationship:

> Reformed worshippers have not strictly adhered to a standard written liturgy or prayer book. This is because the Reformed believe that worshippers and presiders at worship should be free to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.[101]

They continue to expound this by saying that it should not be concluded that spontaneity dominates Reformed worship. Instead worship leaders are free to prepare and compose liturgy. Templeton and Riglin also discussed the Reformed nature of freedom and order with regard to scripture. Worship should be free to be shaped by scripture and reflect what is taught in the scriptures about worship. For example, in accordance with the apostle Paul's exhortation to the church in Corinth, our worship should be 'decent and orderly' (1 Corinthians 14.40).[102] This connection between the Reformed tradition and Paul's words was also made by Harley.[103] Also, it was with scripture that the sixteenth century European Reformers started their attempt to reform the worship of the church. From what

[98] Marvin, 2005, p.6
[99] Marvin, 2005, p.6.
[100] Thorogood, 1983, p.11.
[101] Templeton and Riglin, 2012, p.3.
[102] Templeton and Riglin, 2012, p.3.
[103] Harley, 2016, p.20.

might be better described as an ecclesiology in Acts 2.42, both Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and John Calvin (1509-1564) advocated the constituents of worship in the church.[104] This centrality of scripture in understanding the Church's approach to God through worship further demonstrates its rootedness in the Reformed tradition.

There is not one prescribed order of worship in the Reformed tradition or in the United Reformed Church worship. The centrality of scripture implies that any order should relate to hearing and responding to the Word of God. Burgess described how the 'Hymn Sandwich', which is a descriptive term for the order most commonly observed in the corporate worship of the United Reformed Church, is just that: a framework for hearing and responding to God's word.

> The structure of the "Hymn Sandwich" is a litany of hearing the Word of God and responding to the Word. For many, God is revealed (or God's nature or God's teaching) through the reading of scripture, its exposition (in the sermon) and the sacraments (the acted word).[105]

Supporting the Reformed nature of the Church's worship, Peel drew attention to the centrality of preaching in the worship of the United Reformed Church.[106] It is, Peel suggested, the means by which people can be theologically educated or at least given guidance enabling their spiritual journey and their progression to being loyal and devout Christians.[107] As well as being practical, Peel stated that preaching must engage a person's mind, heart and will.[108] Preaching or 'the sermon' is not unique to Reformed worship. Yet, there are certain expectations concerning the purpose of a sermon in a Reformed church. Peel listed them as:

---

[104] Calvin, 1545. 'Epistle to the Reader' in *Psalter*, reproduced in Maag, 2016, p.144; Templeton and Riglin, 2012, p.3.
[105] Burgess, 2016, p.125.
[106] Peel, 2002, p.272.
[107] Peel, 2002, p.272.
[108] Peel, 2002, p.272.

- In keeping the Reformed emphasis on the Bible, [the sermon] represents and attempts to expound the Bible for each age. … This involves exegesis, interpretation and application.
- The preacher should aim for plain style and seek to communicate in a way which is understandable to ordinary folk.
- The sermon should demand the preacher's urgent sincerity. The preacher must first preach to themselves and thereafter the congregation.
- The sermon should be 'courageous and prophetic as it tackles difficult issues, addresses the faults and failings of individuals and communities, as well as confronts the evils abroad in society.'
- The sermon should be 'rooted in pastoral experience.'[109]

These distinctive principles suggest another part of worship where an ordered approach is needed. A spontaneous sermon meeting all these criteria would require a highly skilled and practised preacher. However, freedom is not ignored in this orderliness. Preaching is a sacramental activity: it does not only expound the Word of God, it also acts out the Word of God. Therefore, the presence and freedom of Holy Spirit is essential in enabling the preacher to speak and the congregation to listen. This is why, ideally, the reading of scripture and the sermon should be preceded by a prayer of illumination that is epicletic; something encouraged by the sixteenth century European Reformers.[110]

The Reformed nature of the United Reformed Church's worship is further emphasised by how it approaches Holy Communion. Although the theological understanding of this sacrament in the Church is broad, as Catherine Ball demonstrated in her doctoral research,[111] Holy Communion is seen as an integral part of worship rather than a separate or additional rite. It is observed as the visible Word alongside the audible Word. It should be noted, however, that the liturgies for Holy Communion that have been written since the formation of the United Reformed Church have been influenced by the wider church and not exclusively by its roots in the Reformed tradition. The report by the Joint Liturgical

[109] Peel, 2002, pp.272-3.
[110] Martin Bucer and John Calvin both suggest a prayer of illumination before the sermon in the liturgies they provided for the churches in Strasbourg and Geneva. See Bucer's *Psalter* (Thompson, 1980, p.170) and Calvin's *The Form of Church Prayers* (Thompson, 1980, pp.198-9).
[111] Ball, 2010, pp.77-92.

Group,[112] *Initiation and Eucharist* (1972), which encouraged all denominations to follow a similar structure, was given full consideration in preparing the first order of worship that included Holy Communion.[113] The idea behind this, and the inclusion of common prayers whose words were agreed by an international ecumenical consultation, was to enable any Christian to approach the Lord's table in any church without hindrance of liturgy. Of course, this was not undertaken without reference to the Reformed tradition. Todd explained how the distinctive features of Reformed liturgies were also applied. The sacrament was considered in terms of 'Word and prayer'. This meant that the 'Narrative of Institution' was seen as 'Word rather than prayer', and therefore, read as a warrant. [114] This was the preference maintained in the order of Holy Communion published in 1974. It was noted that the 'Narrative of Institution' could be included in the 'Prayer of Thanksgiving' as in the liturgies of other denominations, and worship leaders were at liberty to vary practice.[115]

None of the literature discussed the Reformed tradition without reference to history. Both Peel and Marvin related the undergirding principles of the United Reformed Church's approach to worship back to John Calvin and his fellow French and Swiss Reformers of the sixteenth century.[116] However, the United Reformed Church cannot define its historical roots and traditions only through the lens of the sixteenth century European Reformation. The events in the church in England through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were instrumental in founding the trajectories of the traditions that united in 1972 to form the United Reformed Church. Peel, Templeton and Riglin spoke of how the worship patterns observed in the contemporary Church can be seen to have roots in the Puritan and Pietist traditions that were prevalent in England during the seventeenth

[112] The Joint Liturgical Group is an ecumenical working group that advises and comments on worship matters that affect the churches in Britain. Formed in 1963 and with a membership that includes all of the mainline denominations in England, Scotland and Wales, it has been concerned with the development of common liturgical thinking and texts.
[113] Todd, 1975, p.7.
[114] Todd, 1975, p.13.
[115] Todd, 1975, p.12.
[116] Peel, 2002, pp.272-274; Marvin, 2005, p.21.

century.[117] The approaches taken to worship in the United Reformed Church, and how freedom, order, and participation are understood are not limited to these historical points. As the United Reformed Church's antecedent traditions developed their understanding of themselves in relationship to other church traditions in Britain, so the understanding of and approaches taken to worship have changed and developed.[118] Peel demonstrated this as he discussed the shift in the practice of Holy Communion and its equality in worship as the visual representation of the Word of God. Peel wrote:

> The twentieth century saw a revival in sacramental practice in all major churches. … First, [our churches] came under the influence of the so-called 'Liturgical movement' sweeping through Western Christianity. This movement caused many Reformed Churches to move in certain clear directions. They started using lectionaries and invited the congregation to take part in responses. Services became less centred on the minister, with congregational involvement overcoming the 'tyranny of the single ministerial voice.' Visual aids in worship were no longer suspected of being idolatrous, sensual distractions but came to be viewed as vehicles for God's presence. And, following on from this, the Liturgical Movement above everything else placed the Lord's Supper at the centre of Christian Worship. The service of Holy Communion increasingly was understood as the source of the Church's life from which all authentic spirituality, mission and evangelism flows. Secondly, and partly influenced by the Liturgical Movement, some important Congregational divines initiated what has been called the Genevan Revival. Nathaniel Micklem, J S Whale and Bernard Lord Manning rediscovered a Calvinistic view of worship which directly countered the prevailing 'low' approaches. Others later added their weight to the movement … Thirdly, the Ecumenical Movement brought churches closer to one another. This resulted in mutual theological correction and greater understanding of liturgy and worship.[119]

The published literature and the evidence in the records of the General Assembly (Section 1.4) demonstrate the point Peel made and suggests an acceptance of this ordered and more formal approach to worship. Nevertheless, as Peel observed, this cannot be described as a universal view in the Church. He wrote:

---

[117] Peel, 2002, p.266; Templeton and Riglin, 2012, p.4.

[118] From 1662 until the early 1800s, the historical church traditions that form the United Reformed Church were nonconformist (i.e. did not conform to the 1662 'Act of Uniformity', but had legal status and protection by the 'Act for Exempting their Majesties' Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certain Laws' (1689)). Although this definition still pertains to the United Reformed Church in its English context, from the early 1800s nonconformist churches formally grouped together and held common identities. This led to the rise of denominations and a change to the overall picture of church life in Britain and worldwide.

[119] Peel, 2002, p.275.

> While a High Genevan sacramental outlook … is an important part of the [United Reformed Church] inheritance, it is not acceptable to many ministers and churches who continue to be suspicious of outward symbols in religion and focus more on ethical obedience than formal sacramental rites.[120]

Routley framed those suspicions, which relate to formal liturgies as much as the Church's approach to the sacraments, in terms of heritage and tradition. He gave a very basic explanation of the Reformed tradition, a cerebral tradition that celebrates 'the right of the believer to understand.'[121] Within such a tradition, Routley explained that 'one tends to suspect what is repetitive and what is too closely structured.'[122]

1.2.3. Analysis of previous doctoral work related to worship of the United Reformed Church

Having ascertained that none of the published literature offers a theology of worship for the corporate worship of the United Reformed Church, the same must be determined for any previous doctoral research undertaken on the worship of the United Reformed Church. David Hilborn, in his research entitled *The pragmatics of liturgical discourse: with special reference to English Reformed Worship and the performative language doxology of Jean Ladrière*, studied the use of language in the worship of the United Reformed Church.[123] Through an empirical study comparing worship on one particular Sunday across ten United Reformed Churches in England, Hilborn drew conclusions on the type of dialogue and discourse that occurred in the worship of the Church. Hilborn observed there was a preference to 'Minister-centred discourse over dialogical, responsive discourses involving the congregation.'[124] Despite the allowance for extemporisation, Hilborn witnessed conventions in the language used and constraints of tradition. Although Hilborn made observations about the practice of worship in the Church particularly in terms of corporate participation, the emphasis was on language and linguistics rather than the development of a theological understanding of worship. Hilborn did, however, remark

[120] Peel, 2002, p.275.
[121] Routley, 1974, p.414.
[122] Routley, 1974, p.414.
[123] Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy degree awarded by the University of Nottingham in 1994.
[124] Hilborn, 1994, p.615.

on how encouraging participation made worship relevant and something in which the congregation could engage with as a whole.

Catherine Ball, in her research entitled *Taste and See that the Lord is Good: A programme evaluation of a course seeking to enhance the meaning of Holy Communion*, focused on practice and how practice can or might inform understanding. [125] As the title indicates, her emphasis was on the sacrament of Holy Communion and so consideration of worship was only in terms of how it was shaped around the sacrament. There were no conclusions reached about worship *per se*, although conclusions about the role of participation and repetition of liturgy could be extrapolated to suggest a broader understanding of the Church's worship. Those who participated in Ball's study found that a set form of words established the verity and authority of the sacrament. When this set form of words was combined with actions participated in by the congregation, there was a sense of a greater capacity for individuals to commune with God within that act of worship.[126]

Elizabeth Welch's research entitled *The Holy Spirit and Worship: seeing unexpected congruities from the writings of John Owen (17th century Reformed) and John Zizioulas (contemporary Orthodox)* considered more directly the question of a theology of worship. [127] But it did not directly reference the worship of the United Reformed Church. Through the analysis of the works of John Owen and John Zizioulas, who were from opposite sides of the east-west divide in the universal church and occupy very different historical points in the life of the universal church, Welch created a quadrilateral framework for how the relationship between the Holy Spirit and worship might be understood. The key conclusion was that a doctrine of the Holy Spirit could be interpreted through worship.[128] This thesis

[125] Thesis for Doctor of Ministry degree awarded by Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey in 2010.
[126] Ball, 2010, p.103.
[127] Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy degree awarded by King's College, London in 2017. This is now published as a book: *The Holy Spirit and Worship: Transformation and Truth in the Theologies of John Owen and John Zizioulas*, 2021.
[128] Welch, 2017, p.185.

does not dispute this conclusion but will show that the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in how the Church worships. It draws together those aspects that inter-relate within corporate worship. Through worship the Church becomes more aware of the Holy Spirit and so worship helps reveal the activity of the Holy Spirit in the wider life of the United Reformed Church (see Chapter 5).[129]

1.3. Review of resources for worship

Although there is no detailed theology of corporate worship in the United Reformed Church, the published literature has demonstrated how freedom, order, participation and tradition might be understood in the Church. Another means of exploring these areas is through the resources that have been published for use by the Church in its worship. The General Secretariat reported to Mission Council in 2018 that the publication of material to resource worship has been prolific.[130] This has been continuous since 1972 and, as will be shown, has not diminished even during the period when the Church had no committee or sub-committee dedicated to exploring and enabling the worshipping life of the Church (see Section 1.4). This supports the nature of freedom in worship being related to diversity, but does it offer evidence for the inter-relationship between freedom, order, and participation? What, if at all, does it add to the argument of how the United Reformed Church approaches corporate worship?

1.3.1. Method and results

From surveying United Reformed Church book collections, which includes the United Reformed Church's History Society and the Worship Resource Centre[131] collections (both housed in the library at Westminster College, Cambridge), webpages dedicated to worship on the United Reformed Church's website and tracing publications of known members of the United Reformed Church who have written resources for worship, a

[129] Welch, 2021, p.225
[130] General Secretariat. Paper M1, Mission Council Reports, March 2018.
[131] The 'Worship Resource Centre' was a library collection begun in about 1992 at Westminster College to bring together books on worship, 'current' music, tapes, videos and audio-visual equipment. (Westminster College Report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1992, p.180; Westminster College Report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1993, p.185).

catalogue of material has been created as part of this research (see Appendix I). The catalogue includes anthologies of prayers, hymns and other resources that could be used in constructing an act of public worship. There are books that offer liturgies or ideas of how to order worship in different contexts. These have all sought to broaden the approaches taken to the design of acts of worship, as well as worship content. Many of the collections draw together material from wider sources than the denomination; including collaborators from the ecumenical and global church. Although the catalogue demonstrates a proliferation of material during the life of the Church, there is no evidence of the impact of these resources detailed in this catalogue or how widely any of these resources are used in the United Reformed Church. To assess their impact lies beyond the bounds of this study but is an avenue for further work if aspects of this research were carried forward.

1.3.2. Analysis of the literature

The breadth of material in the catalogue (Appendix I) demonstrates the capacity of the Church to resource its own worshipping life. It reveals how the Church worships and attests the desire for the Church to worship with integrity. Points highlighted in the literature on the theology and practice of worship, particularly in regard to freedom, order, participation and Reformed tradition, are demonstrated by the material and its variety.

1.3.2.1. Freedom and Order

The need for both order and freedom in worship, identified in the published literature (Section 1.2), is evident. The majority of entries in the catalogue are collections of resources that can be used in an act of worship encouraging variation while providing some form that ensures a degree of order and, on occasion, defines it. There are a small subset of collections that relate material to specific liturgical moments in worship, *e.g.* identifying prayers as ‘adoration’, ‘confession’ or ‘intercession’. There are only a limited number of resources that offer complete liturgies or approaches to ordering worship. These include three dedicated service books for the United Reformed Church (*A Book of Services* (1980), *Service Book* (1989) and *Worship: from the United Reformed Church*

(2003)) and the single order for worship including Holy Communion written with the intention that it be used by congregations of the United Reformed Church (*Book of Order for Worship* (1974)). The other liturgies (or sources of liturgies) in the catalogue are based on themes and/or directed at worship with specific groups in the Church (*e.g.* children and youth).[132] Although most of these liturgies could be used as printed, none describe themselves as prescriptive, not even those written by or on behalf of the United Reformed Church. Some offer choices for prayers, hymns and other content; others actively encourage worship leaders to adapt the liturgy for the needs of the congregation. This encouragement to adapt liturgies is made in forewords and introductions. For example, Michael Forster and Simon Smith wrote of their collection of all-age worship services, *A New Start in All-Age Worship* (2000):

> The services are fully worked out, including, for example, the opening greeting and prayers. You can read these verbatim if you like, but better to regard them as examples, and paraphrase them in words that will sound more natural for you personally. The order is basically the same in each service—its what works for us, but you may need to adapt it to what is appropriate for you. It is something to get you started, not hold you back![133]

Donald Hilton wrote in the introduction to one of the collections of services for Lent and Easter:

> … The service should be altered and adapted in the light of local needs and opportunities. …[134]

The slightly different emphasis of Forster and Smith on adaption to that of Hilton's is worthy of note. Forster and Smith suggested it was down to the preference of the worship leader and their style, whereas Hilton said adaption of material should be in relation to the local environment. Hilton's perspective is much closer to the Reformed principles on the variation and adaption of liturgy. A similar approach can be observed in the liturgies

---

[132] Hilton, 1980; Hilton, 1981; Jenkins, 1983; Hilton, 1983; Hilton, 1987; Hilton, 1990; Banyard, 1992a; Forster, 1993; Forster, 1994; Forster and Smith, 1999; Forster, 2002; Hilton, 2008; Danso, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Reardon, 2009; Humphreys, 2009; Brown, 2009a; Brown, 2009b; Hilton, 2010; Jenkins, 2010; Long, 2011; Morrison and Webster, 2013; Faber, Henderson and Webbe, 2015; Maudsley, Campbell and Campbell, 2016; White, 2017; Kendall, Kendall and Kendall, 2018; The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2019; The United Reformed Church, 2019; The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2020; The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2021; Humphreys, n.d.; Rawnsley, n.d.; Hilton, n.d.a; Hilton, n.d.b.

[133] Forster and Smith, 1999, p.11.

[134] Hilton, 1990, p.3.

published in service books by the United Reformed Church. The service books all contained a note that none of what is found on the pages of the books should be understood as prescriptive. For example, in the notes that accompanied the *Book of Order of Worship* (1974) it says:

> [The Order of Worship] should be regarded as a directory of worship rather than a fixed liturgy. Ministers should feel free to vary the order and to substitute other prayers for those provided here, using if they wish extempore prayer; …[135]

Interestingly, in general, the publication of liturgies has been focused on specific seasons in the Christian year or with the intention of being used in specific settings. Other than the service books, none have been published for use or adaptation at any point in the year or occasion of corporate worship. This relates to the demand for freedom in worship that was highlighted in the theological writings on worship in the Church. It also suggests that it is more acceptable to create formal liturgies for seasons, themes or specific occasions, which may be used infrequently in the worshipping life of the church, than liturgies that could become repetitive and potentially the norm for worship. Either in how the liturgies have been written or the reasoning behind their writing, participation of the whole worshipping body is encouraged. Some liturgies are written using verbal responses, while others promote worship being led by a group of people and not just the minister or a single worship leader.

Given that freedom and diversity in worship is shown by the theological literature to be important and demonstrated in the variety in the catalogue of worship resources, it could be considered to be surprising that the Church has published quite so many resources that suggest a formal liturgical approach to its worship. Richards and Peters observed:

[135] The United Reformed Church in England and Wales, 1974, p.3.

> … the [United Reformed Church] limits prescribed liturgy to very precise moments in the lives of individuals, groups and the Church in order that these most special occasions may be conducted in full, visible unity with the whole [United Reformed Church], using words and practices which are shared across the denomination.[136]

This references the fact that within the United Reformed Church there are set affirmations and promises that must be made in order to enter church membership, when Ministers of Word and Sacraments or Elders are ordained and inducted, and when Church Related Community Workers are commissioned.[137] There is also a statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church that is required to be read by the congregation on certain occasions as part of the liturgy. Therefore, to have some guidance on how to include these in a corporate act of worship endorsed by the General Assembly is not unreasonable, although, the only words that are prescribed in these services are those detailed in the various Schedules appended to the Basis of Union.[138] This does not explain why as a Church, the United Reformed Church has authored a number of service books that contain liturgies for a variety of occasions when the church gathers for corporate worship.

1.3.2.2. Service books in the United Reformed Church

From the outset of the new denomination, it was deemed important for the Church to have its own service book (Section 1.4).[139] The report of the Doctrine and Worship Committee to the General Assembly of 1973 does not communicate the reasoning behind this perspective. The records of the General Assembly only suggest that having its own service book was a widely held opinion within the Church as the committee were instructed to prepare material for a service book.[140] Todd and Routley expressed the

---

[136] Richards and Peters, 2018, p.172.

[137] The Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church states that each of these acts should be presided over using a defined set of affirmations and statements as laid out in the Basis of Union itself. (The United Reformed Church, 2021, *The Manual*, Section A: Basis of Union, clause 21, schedules C and F).

[138] The Basis of the Union of the United Reformed Church the foundational document of the Church which outlines the grounds on the Church exists. It states the beliefs of the Church and defines the different ministries within the Church.

[139] Recommendation of the Doctrine and Worship Committee, General Assembly Book of Reports 1973, pp.24-25; Resolution adopted, General Assembly Record 1973, p.16.

[140] General Assembly Record 1973, p.16.

belief that the need for a new service book came from the two denominations that initially formed the United Reformed Church, (the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England), and where they had moved to liturgically in their worshipping lives.[141] Todd expanded on this by stating that the intention was to provide a text that did justice to the traditions inherited and also took account of the then new liturgical insights from the liturgical and ecumenical movements by which all branches of the universal church were being enriched.[142] Whether this is conclusively the reason is difficult to support with the evidence available. Both the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England had prepared and published new service books of their own just prior to the union (see Chapters 3 and 4). Also, it is recorded in the minutes of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the Presbyterian Church of England in 1966 that a joint liturgy was not necessary. The hope was that the service book of the Presbyterian Church of England would make a 'significant contribution to the united church when it came into being.'[143]

Advocating the ethos and history of the Church through its worship has, it appears, led to revision of the service book of the United Reformed Church. Following the subsequent union with the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ (1981) and the Congregational Union of Scotland (2000), the service book has been revised to incorporate changes related to the Basis of Union with the hope of providing a resource that all constituent parts of the United Reformed Church might own. Interestingly, this might be most evident in how the name of the service book has evolved over its publications. *A Book of Services* as a title reflects where the Congregationalists and Presbyterians had reached in their liturgical development (see Chapters 3 and 4). The title of *Service Book* gives the sense that it was deemed right to define the Church's worship in liturgical terms, which may have been the influence of the Churches of Christ as the

[141] Routley, 1974; Todd, 1975.
[142] Todd, 1975, p.18.
[143] Committee on Public Worship and Aids of Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England, 1966, Minutes from meeting held 14-16 December.

content of the *Service Book* reflects the act of worship the Churches of Christ had previously published liturgies for, but there is no evidence to support this conjecture.[144] The revised title may have also reflected the view that there was a more definable United Reformed Church approach to corporate worship, even if it was not entirely established. Again, there is no evidence to support this conjecture. In the final choice of title, *Worship: from the United Reformed Church*, there is a distinctive move away from liturgical language. The use of the word 'from' in the title also suggests that there is something different about the book, which could be that the book was to be viewed as a resource and not a definitive guide to United Reformed Church worship.[145] This was also demonstrated in its presentation. Rather than being a bound book, it took the form of a ring bound folder allowing the possibility that it could be added to, or services could be extracted or replaced. However, there is no evidence that the change in title relates to the addition of traditions, nor that the evolution of the service book has led to a publication that every strand of tradition in the Church can own. *Reform*, an editorially-independent magazine published by the United Reformed Church, ran an article following the publication of *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* which asked five ministers from different backgrounds to review the resource, none of whom discussed the content with reference to any of the antecedent traditions.[146] An explanation of this could be that, although the content of the scripted liturgy in the service books differed with each evolution, a similar order for corporate worship was maintained and this was consistent with the orders of corporate worship in the antecedent traditions. This is demonstrated in part by Table 1 that compares the orders for a service of Word from each of the United

[144] In the mid- to late-1960s, the Churches of Christ did publish a set of liturgies specifically for the sacraments, the induction of a minister and a service of thanksgiving and dedication for children. They also published an 'approach to worship' but from what perspective this expanded on how the Churches of Christ should worship corporately is unknown as a copy could not be located.
[145] The United Reformed Church, 2003, Foreword.
[146] Mahood, et al., 2003; *Reform* is the magazine published ten times a year by the United Reformed Church offering articles that explore theology, ethics, personal spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs.

Reformed Church's service books,[147] and this point will be explored further in Chapters 3 and 4.

The traditions within the Church that the service books have attempted to honour have wider ecclesiological and historical contexts. In the preface and foreword of the *Service Book* (1989) and *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* (2003) the United Reformed Church is identified as belonging within the Reformed tradition, as indicated within the theological writings relating to the worship of the Church (Section 1.2). [148] As discussed earlier, the United Reformed Church cannot explain its approach to worship by referencing only the Reformed tradition. Routley drew attention to how Reformed theology in England was distilled through the Puritanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries while also highlighting some of the consequences of this on the life of the church in England. Routley observed that the historic events in this era that led to dissent from the state church gave rise to a continued suspicion of the use of service books and set congregational responses in worship.[149] This differentiates the worship of the United Reformed Church from that of other Reformed churches in Europe, who, like the United Reformed Church, 'do not structure their worship around a prayer book or missal' but have never not had liturgy books.[150]

[147] In both *A Book of Services* (1980) and the *Service Book* (1989), there was no separate order for when Holy Communion was not to be part of the act of corporate worship. Therefore, in Table 1 the orders from *A Book of Services* and the *Service Book* have had the elements in their orders relating to the sacrament removed for the purpose of the comparison.
[148] The United Reformed Church, 1989, pp.vi-viii; The United Reformed Church, 2003, Foreword.
[149] Routley, 1974, p.414.
[150] Bürki, 2003; Bradbury, 2013, p.188.

A Book of Services (1980)	**Service Book (1989)** *(NB. Where hymns might come are not noted in order)*	**Worship: from the United Reformed Church (2003)**
Scripture sentences	Scripture sentences	Call to worship
Prayer of approach	Prayer of approach	
Hymn/Psalm		Hymn/Song
Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon	Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon	Prayers of approach, adoration and confession Assurance of Pardon
Gloria or Kyries	Kyries Gloria in excelsis	
		Theme introduction
Prayer for grace	Prayer for grace or collect for the day	Prayer for grace or collect for the day
Theme Introduction	Theme Introduction	
Old and/or New Testament reading	Old and/or New Testament reading	Reading from scripture
Psalm/Canticle/Hymn/Anthem	Psalm/Canticle/Anthem	Psalm/Hymn/Song
New Testament reading (or reading of Epistle and Gospel)	New Testament reading (or reading of Epistle and Gospel)	Readings from scripture
		Hymn/Song
Sermon	Sermon	Sermon or other exposition of the Word
Creed and/or Hymn	Creed/Confession of Faith/Prayer	Hymn/Song
		An Affirmation of Faith *(optional)*
Notices *(or can come after prayers)*	Notices	
Special acts *(e.g. baptism, confirmation, ordination etc.)*	Special acts	
Prayers for the church and the world	Intercessions	Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession
Offering		Offering
Hymn/Doxology		Hymn/Song
Dismissal and Blessing	Dismissal and Blessing	Blessing

Table 1. Comparison of the rubrics for a service of the Word in the service books of the United Reformed Church

1.3.2.3. Tradition

As a whole, the catalogue of worship resources does not clearly indicate that the Church belongs to the Reformed tradition. The centrality of the Word of God which would be expected in Reformed worship is not overtly evident in the collections within the catalogue.[151] There are only limited references made to scripture, either noted as inspiring the content of prayers, hymns and prose, or how anthologies are ordered. Some of the liturgies even appear to be disconnected from the hearing and preaching of the Word, being centred on specific themes rather than scripture. For example, this is evident in some of the approaches taken to all-age worship. Hilton, in the all-age Harvest Festival service published by the Preacher's Press (*Harvest Services*, 2008), included reference to scripture, yet focused primarily on the seasons and used readings which were not from scripture. There was provision for a sermon in the service but Hilton did not encourage the preacher to expound scripture, but instead talk about the seasons and how they relate to discipleship.[152] In the catalogue there are three teaching aids for helping individual congregations develop their skills in leading worship, two emphasise the Reformed nature of the worship in the United Reformed Church, and the other that worship should be related to scripture even if centred on a theme.[153] The thematic approach to organising much of the material identified in the catalogue is demonstrative of the plasticity in the Church's understanding of the Reformed tradition. During the twentieth century, in Reformed circles, the dictum, e*cclesia reformata, semper reformanda*—'the church reformed, always in need of being reformed' became popular.[154] Therefore, in worship how the Word of God is encountered will not be constant. The Word of God can be engaged with and heard through other mediums and not just the reading of scripture and

[151] Rice and Huffstutler, 2001, p.2.
[152] Hilton, 2008, p.7.
[153] The United Reformed Church, 1996; The United Reformed Church, 1999; The United Reformed Church, 2004.
[154] It should be noted that the phrase *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* although now given much prominence in the Reformed tradition, and the United Reformed Church, cannot be found in the work of the sixteenth century Reformers. It was popularised by Reformed theologians such as Karl Barth in the twentieth century.

preaching. The resource *Wholly Worship* suggested these alternative mediums could include drama, discussion, meditation, music, and liturgical dance.[155]

The significant emphasis on theme and limited connection to the liturgical shape of worship within the collection of worship material is indicative of ordered freedom in worship. This is another aspect of the Reformed tradition. The worship of the church goes beyond the act of worship where a congregation gathers as a community. Both the *Westminster Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* begin by establishing that the chief and highest aim of humanity should be the glorification of God and fully to enjoy God forever.[156] Worship resources which encourage this are a helpful tool. Most of the collections of prayers, meditations and prose within the catalogue provide material that crosses the boundary between corporate and personal worship. In doing so, the personal is drawn into the corporate and *vice versa* promoting worship in all aspects of the Christian life. Richards and Peters suggested that this is what liturgy is all about:

> … living out our faith in ways which allows our relationship with God, our worship with God and our response to God's call for our lives to work together in harmonious praxis, with worship encompassing all aspects of life in order to fuel and enable this process.[157]

When it comes to the shaping of acts of public worship, worship resources that incorporate the corporate and personal can cause tensions regarding liturgical order and flow. How does some of the worship material that is available get transcribed into a liturgical order when, for example, a prayer does not fall into a single liturgical category or combines prayer types that might not normally come together in a corporate act of worship?

---

[155] The United Reformed Church, 1999, p.39.

[156] Question 1 in both the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The *Catechisms* were part of the Westminster Standard written by the Divines in the Westminster Assembly (1643-1653). These documents of questions and answers were to instruct people in the doctrine of the church principally in England, but with the hope they would also be adopted by the Church of Scotland. The *Shorter Catechism* was designed to be easier to read and concise for beginners, whereas the *Larger Catechism* was to be more exact and comprehensive. They were completed in 1647. Their impact on the Church in England is unknown, however, they were formally adopted by the Church in Scotland in 1648 and were there after the basis of the Church's manual of instruction.

[157] Richards and Peters, 2018, p.178.

1.3.2.4. Prayer Handbooks

In the catalogue, the *Prayer Handbooks* published by, or in conjunction with, the United Reformed Church are split across nine entries. This demonstrates how the content of the *Prayer Handbooks* has developed and changed. The original intention of the *Prayer Handbooks* was to be primarily a resource for use in personal worship. Over the years, the focus of the content and structure of the resource has moved towards being one for assisting prayer in corporate worship. This is exhibited by how, under the editorship of the Council for World Mission, the *Prayer Handbook* was a daily worship resource, yet when it became a publication of the United Reformed Church, it was related to the Sundays of the liturgical year. With this shift, the material changed from being a source of reflection, which included meditations, short prayers and prayer points, to a book that, in general, offers two scripture-influenced prayers per Sunday. The move from the personal to corporate might be explained by the purpose conceived for the *Prayer Handbook* when its production became the responsibility of the United Reformed Church in 1985. The editorial group believed that the *Prayer Handbook* could be a source for regular prayer in the Church.[158] Despite this, although the prayers have become directed at being of use in corporate worship and based on the lectionary currently in use within the Church, this was not consistent. For example, the 1997 and 1998 *Prayer Handbooks* were thematic—a theme for each Sunday was reflected in the prayers offered. The 1988-89 and 1992 *Prayer Handbooks* were based around scripture, but not the lectionary for those years: the principal author chose the scripture texts for each Sunday for the 1988-89 edition; the gospel of Mark was focused on in 1992.

The type of material and its usability depended on the author's approach and how the editors of each volume gathered the contributions. There may have been committee level views on what the resource should achieve, but what has been in the *Prayer Handbooks* has been predominantly influenced by its editors. For example, when Susan Durber edited the *Prayer Handbook*, although the prayers Sunday-by-Sunday were inspired by scripture,

[158] Prayer Handbook Editorial Group Report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1985, p.59.

there was an overarching theme that was carefully shaped around what was offered by the authors of the prayers. This is particularly apparent in the 2012 *Prayer Handbook, Common Prayers*, where the authorship is ecumenical emphasising how all Christians have prayer in common. In contrast, the 2014 *Prayer Handbook* was a collection of previously published prayers from *Prayer Handbooks* and newly commissioned prayers for that collection. The 2014 *Prayer Handbook* was, like all *Prayer Handbooks*, given a secondary title, but that title does not really relate to the content. Also, in more recent years, the authorship has not been commissioned. Instead, there has been an open invitation to the Church for individuals to submit prayers. This has led to a more diverse and sometimes disjointed collection which is not easy to use weekly within corporate worship. This was highlighted by the editors of the 2020 *Prayer Handbook* who wrote of the collection: 'we have included pieces which came to us rough-hewn, unpolished or quirky …'[159]

The change in content over the years reflects the change in attitude to how the Church should pray when it gathers for worship. At times the prayers have been relatable to a formal liturgical approach (*e.g.* prayer identifiable as 'approach', 'confession', 'intercession', *etc*) and at other times content and structure of prayers have been freer and so relate to less formal liturgical structures and ideas, and possibly inspire alternative ways of approaching liturgy. For example, the following prayer by Vaughan Jones could be used as a prayer of supplication, yet through the choice of theme and language this prayer could be crafted into the opening of worship or be part of drawing worship to a close and preparing the congregation to go out from church. There are no restrictions on how or when the prayer should be used within worship, it simply reflects on a passage of scripture (*i.e.* Mark 5.21-43):

[159] Campbell and Fosten, 2019.

Wake us Lord,
as children who have slept too long.
Wash the sleep from our eyes,
and break our fast with freshly baked bread.

Your church is not dead—
but when responsive to your touch
it is alive.

Lord, don't just wake us from sleep,
shake us up and send us out as healers.
Empower us with the will
to heal the broken hearts
and broken nations;
to break the taboos
which divide women from men
and peoples from peoples,
faith from faith.

Strengthen us Lord,
with a vision of a new world order,
rooted in your love and your gospel.

Lord, let the night be over.
Show us the Day.[160]

Through some of the prayers there has also been the encouragement of congregational participation through verbal response. No editions of the *Prayer Handbook* have particularly emphasised this or considered whether participation may be useful in leading a congregation in prayer beyond the inclusion of the resource itself when offered by the authors of the included prayers.

1.3.2.5. Participation

There is material in the catalogue that encourages 'active' participation of the congregation in worship in three key ways. As already identified, some of the prayer resources in the catalogue include prayers with verbal responses. This method of participation is used in some of the resources that are full liturgies at other points in an act of worship where it is right to make corporate response to God. For example, in the 'call to worship' when the congregation acknowledges their approach to God, or at the end of the service, in what might be termed the 'sending out' or 'dismissal', when the congregation acknowledge that their worship and glorification of God in their lives does not end with that

[160] Duncan, 2008, p.63.

act of worship. Jan Berry in *Naming God* (2011) offered a chapter that included a number of gathering and closing prayers to be used at the beginning and end of worship, some of which included responses. An example of one of the gathering responses that demonstrates the character of a 'call to worship' is:

> We come with our sense of the world's pain,
> **longing for God to bring healing.**
>
> We come with our helplessness and confusion,
> **asking God to give us courage for the struggle.**
>
> We come with our anger at oppression,
> **crying out to God to bring justice.**
>
> We come with our doubts and our hopes,
> **in faith that God can work through us and with us**
> **to bring healing to our broken world.**[161]

The second way that the worship of the Church encourages the congregation to participate is in the singing of hymns. Although hymnody is little discussed in the theological literature, the inclusion of hymns in worship and their importance regarding encouraging the participation of the congregation was highlighted by Thorogood and Tucker.[162] The hymns chosen for an act of worship are not, however, just meant to draw the congregation into the praise of God; they are a tool to enable the congregation to hear and respond to the Word of God. In the notes that accompany the *Order for Worship* (1974), the authors wrote:

> Acts of praise sung by the congregation should be so chosen as to be appropriate not only to the season or other occasion but also to their position in the service.[163]

The collections of hymns in the catalogue (including the two hymnbooks published by the United Reformed Church, *New Church Praise* (1975) and *Rejoice and Sing* (1991)), all include thematic indexes and/or are thematically ordered to enable the appropriate selection of hymns to engage the congregation in worship and to enhance their participation. To help the worship leader more effectively to do this with *Rejoice and Sing* (1991), a further book of indexes, *A Choice of Hymns* (1997), was published that gave a

---

[161] Berry, 2011, p.72.
[162] Thorogood, 1983, p.24; Tucker, 2003, p.119.
[163] The United Reformed Church in England and Wales, 1974, p.5.

wider selection of themes and cross-references to some of these themes. It should also be noted that in both *New Church Praise* and *Rejoice and Sing* words of liturgy are included that be used by worship leaders to encourage the verbal participation of the congregation.

The third way participation of the congregation is encouraged by some of the worship resources in the catalogue is through encouraging the worship to be led by more than one person. Some of the resources in the catalogue that include fully scripted acts of worship suggest that a group of people come together to plan and lead worship. This was a suggestion also made in the *Wholly Worship* resources. Other worship resources in the catalogue include liturgies suggesting that people should be made to feel that they have something to contribute. Forster and Smith wrote:

> The intention … is to engage people of all ages, and all stages of faith, as fully as possible in every service—to include the children and young people, not just to give them something to do, but because they have something vital to contribute, while at the same time engaging adults in meaningful worship that meets their need, …[164]

Donald Hilton suggested that the best way of achieving this is through the worship leader gathering those who work with the various age groups in a church and discussing worship, thereby, encouraging full co-operation.[165]

Approaches to participation in the worship resources reflect, in general, how much the congregation is involved in the voicing of worship, *i.e.* the sharing of verbal responses and singing hymns. Participation in worship, as already described, goes beyond what happens in that corporate gathering and relates to the Reformed principle that the glorification of God should happen in all aspects of life. It is the drawing together of the church's worship and mission. Francis Brienen, in the introduction to her anthology of worship resources, wrote:

> 'What does the Lord Require?' is for people and churches in mission. It is for churches who would like to hold their worship and their mission engagement together. I have been to many churches around the world who were very

[164] Forster and Smith, 1999, Foreword.
[165] Hilton, 1990, p.3.

> active in their communities or very involved in issues of global justice. However, in their Sunday service you would have been hard-pressed to notice that this was the case. Yet, worship is the joyful celebration of life in the world, our response to what God has done and is doing in our lives, our communities and our world. In worship we gather together to be shaped as communities that seek to live out the gospel. In worship we place ourselves within a vision of a different world and make ourselves part of the process that will bring that new reality about. As such, worship is the heartbeat of mission. …[166]

This is demonstrated in the anthologies of prayers, prose and reflections in the catalogue where there are numerous authors who write on themes from life experiences and being a Christian in a secular world. The compilers of these anthologies bring personal and corporate together showing that participation in worship can be expressed in the undertaking of the mission of the church and is not only of concern in corporate acts of worship. This relates to an observation made about the theology of liturgy by Colin Thompson published in *Wholly Worship Too*:

> The liturgy builds up the whole community in its Christian vocation. It belongs to the whole community, to those absent as well as to those present. It forms a privileged time and space for hearing the word and for responding and sharing in communion. Individuals bring their joys and their sorrows but are liberated from absorption in self. The life of a community is nourished by it; mission is enabled. …[167]

1.4. Approach to worship as a denomination

Considering what worship resources have been created by the United Reformed Church or by members of the Church, alongside theological writings on the subject of worship, is one way of comprehending what worship means in the United Reformed Church. This is not the whole story and so what as a denomination the Church says about its worship is also important.

[166] Brienen, 2000, p.xii.
[167] The United Reformed Church, 2004, p.49.

1.4.1. Method and Results

The reports and minutes of meetings of General Assembly and Mission Council, from the inauguration of the United Reformed Church in 1972 to the meeting of General Assembly in July 2021, have been examined. In each set of reports or minutes, a mention of worship or aspects of worship was noted. Forty-nine entries were found.

1.4.2. Analysis

The approach taken to worship in the United Reformed Church was, until 2007, supported by a General Assembly committee, the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee and its predecessor, the Doctrine and Worship Committee. The remit of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee was to listen 'to the concerns of local churches, district councils and synods about public worship and personal devotion and respond to requests for national materials and consultations.'[168] With respect to prayer and worship, it was believed that the committee, through its work, stimulated and encouraged the denomination's prayer and worshipping life. This was primarily achieved through publications such as the service books, prayer handbooks and hymnbooks (see Section 1.3 and Appendix I). Yet, from the reports made to the General Assembly by both the Doctrine and Worship and the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committees, they did attempt to foster and share ideas relating to prayer and worship from within the denomination, the world church and ecumenical contacts.

The main contribution of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee was the development and publication of resources for worship. However, the committee did attempt to engage the church in its understanding of, and approach to, worship. In 1977, the then Doctrine and Worship Committee offered to advise or assist discussion on worship in local churches or in other places, such as conferences.[169] Despite this, in the subsequent reports of the committee to the General Assembly, there is no record that any

[168] Definition of Prayer and Worship in Appendix III: Committees of the General Assembly, General Assembly Book of Reports 1994, p.139.
[169] Doctrine and Worship Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1977, p.36.

such engagements took place. The only record of direct correspondence between either the Doctrine and Worship Committee or the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee and local churches and ministers occurred during the drafting processes of the *Service Book* (1989) and *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* (2003). In the report to the General Assembly made by the Doctrine and Worship Committee in 1989, it was recorded that eighty-eight ministers and congregations sent criticisms and suggestions on draft services that were to be included in the *Service Book*.[170] In the drafting of *Worship: from the United Reformed Church*, the report from the committee to General Assembly suggested that draft services would be made available for experimental use by a number of local churches.[171]

The records of the General Assembly show that the Church's approach to and expression of worship, particularly with regard to the involvement of young people, was explored and encouraged through 'the worship project' led by the Youth Committee in 1983 and 1984.[172] There was limited success as the project encouraged the exploration of worship outside the boundaries of the church, as well as within it, which some ministers and congregations were reluctant to support. Despite this, the project run in 1983 did lead to a private resolution being brought to General Assembly in 1984 that aimed to encourage greater inclusion and, therefore, involvement of children and young people in the worship of the Church.[173]

In 1984, there was a report to the General Assembly from a working party on 'training for worship'. Following a previous working party that had been convened by the Christian

---

[170] Doctrine and Worship Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1989, p.30.
[171] Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 2000, p.59.
[172] Youth Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1983, p.12; Youth Committee Report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1984, p.79.
[173] The following resolution was brought to the General Assembly of 1984 by the Wessex Province, and was carried: 'Believing that children and young people are a natural, God-given blessing to the Christian Church, and that the riches they possess should be fully expressed in the life and worship of the church, Assembly urges all churches a) to provide opportunity and training for children and young people to be actively involved in the planning and conducting of regular worship b) to set aside at least one Sunday a year (such as the last Sunday of February), for services in which young people play a major part in the preparation and leadership of worship.' General Assembly Record 1984, p.22.

Education Committee to consider the training of the Church for worship, this working party sought to explore how to help the Church worship God.[174] They set out three aspects which could lead to achieving this aim:

- Understanding the liturgy and knowing what it is about;
- Helping people to be worshippers;
- Developing the detailed skills of the practice of leading worship.

The report to the General Assembly did not expand on, or attempt to define, any of these factors. A number of points were listed that required attention if planned action was to be taken as well as the suggestion of ways ahead. It was implied that further work would be undertaken but no reference to the working party was made in the records of the General Assembly in subsequent years. In trying to understand the worship of the United Reformed Church, it should be noted how the working party's report highlighted how worship concerns the making of a response to God by individuals and communities. This comes from and is inherent in how Christian beliefs are expressed and practised; the encouragement and nurture of living as disciples of Christ each day.[175] The working party suggested that worship could only be effective if it was a common concern for the community and so required a readiness for freedom and participation, which in turn would encourage growth and spiritual development.

Since the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee was discharged at the General Assembly in 2007, the committee's work has come under the remit of the Mission Committee and the denomination's Mission Department. As demonstrated above (Section 1.3), this has not led to a reduction of resources for worship being published centrally. A report to Mission Council in 2018 by the General Secretariat highlighted that various committees and individual members of the Church have generated new resources which have been published with the help of the communications staff, and these are reflected in the worship resource catalogue in Appendix I.[176] Nevertheless, the

[174] Training for Worship report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1983, pp.16-18.
[175] Training for Worship report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1983, pp.16-18.
[176] General Secretariat. Paper M1, Mission Council Reports, March 2018.

publications have been related more toward the practice of worship than its theology, with very little crossover. The few attempts that have been made to bring the two together include Thorogood's book *Our Father's House: An Approach to Worship* (1983) and the education resource *Wholly Worship Too* (2004). Thorogood discussed aspects of worship and then suggested resources and examples. In *Wholly Worship Too*, the theology of liturgy was explored alongside aids for the preparation of liturgy. Neither of these have completely bridged the gap between theology and practice within the Church which was highlighted by the Working Party on Training for Worship in 1983. This was recognised by the Faith and Order Committee, which in recent reports to Mission Council, encouraged the Church, in some way, to redress this situation.[177]

At the time of writing this thesis, further work on the worship of the Church is underway through the newly formed 'Worship Resource Group'. This group was assembled following a paper delivered to Mission Council in 2019 by the General Secretariat. It was given the remit to facilitate the worship of the Church through responding to requests from local congregations, curating existing resources, and maintaining a regular worship mailing with updates, news, and links to good worship practice, which reflects some of what the Doctrine and Worship Committee and the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee did in the past.[178] From the report presented to Mission Council and the remit then agreed for the group, the focus on practice has continued without due consideration of theology. To seek to support more flexible and diverse corporate worship in the Church without fostering a theological understanding of worship in the Church appears remiss. If good practice is to be encouraged, it is not only the theology of the content that is important but

[177] Faith and Order Reference Group. Paper F, Mission Council Reports, March 2012; Faith and Order Committee. Paper F3, Mission Council Reports, May 2017.

[178] General Secretariat. Paper M1, Mission Council Reports, November 2019; Minutes of Mission Council, November 2019, p.4. Given the crossover between what the Worship Resource Group have been asked to undertake and the substantive work completed as part of my research to curate existing resources, I have made the committee aware of my work and offered to share my findings. It is also of note that there has previously been a 'Worship Reference Group' that was set up by the Doctrine and Worship Committee in 1993, with the remit to encourage the use of modern music and liturgical aids in worship (Doctrine and Worship Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1993, p.34). This group's responsibilities were extended to identifying and publishing worship resources, however, after 1995, their work was no longer mentioned in reports to Assembly and it would appear the group was dissolved.

also the theology of why worship takes the shape it does and holds the position it has in the life of the church.

1.5. Conclusion

From the opening words of the first service book of the United Reformed Church, freedom in worship has taken priority in the Church's approach to worship. No published liturgy by the Church is to be seen as has abandoned this freedom.[179] However, the United Reformed Church having publications that include liturgies for corporate worship bring into question the Church's understanding of freedom. The literature on the theology and practice of worship in the United Reformed Church shows that freedom is understood as worship having the ability to be spontaneous or to include moments of spontaneity. Spontaneity in worship is connected to the activity of the Holy Spirit within worship, although the literature does not suggest that it is only in this situation that the Holy Spirit will act. The Holy Spirit can act in any approach taken to worship, although worship needs to be open to the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit. This relates to the other way freedom has come to be understood in the Church. Freedom in the content and approach to worship allows for worship that is varied and diverse; worship which is responsive to the needs of the worshippers as well as the Holy Spirit. Variety and diversity within worship is demonstrated through how worship is resolved within a framework or order.

Order can be perceived to have no place in worship if that worship is governed by freedom. However, the literature showed that this is not the case. Order and freedom work together, and in understanding this, the approach the United Reformed Church takes to worship becomes more clearly defined. The literature showed that order enables worship to flow and that there is movement and progress from hearing to responding to the Word of God. Order ensures that a community is nourished, and God is rightly praised and glorified. Order can relate to formal complete liturgies, but the catalogue of worship

[179] The United Reformed Church in England and Wales, 1974, p.1; The United Reformed Church, 1980, p.7.

resources demonstrates how the United Reformed Church in its worship only sees these as examples and a means of guiding worship leaders in creating acts of worship.

The form and use of liturgies has raised the Church's consciousness about what it means for congregations to participate in worship. The production of liturgies and prayers including verbal responses suggest an increase in participation. Routley, however, noted that on the publication of the very first order of worship for the United Reformed Church, the requirement for participation was the main cause of resistance to its use by individual churches in the denomination.[180] Participation in worship does not, the literature showed, just have to take the form of verbal responses. The literature and worship resources demonstrate that participation can come from the diverse use of material within an act of worship, a group of people being involved in leading worship instead of a single worship leader, or worship being an active part of the Church's mission. The important point is that worshippers are enabled, and given the opportunity, to make a response to God.

How the United Reformed Church has come to understand its worship in relation to freedom, order and participation is shaped by tradition. Tradition has two definitions in the context of the United Reformed Church: historical and Reformed. The literature shows that none of the ways the Church approaches worship can be determined without looking back at what has been and what may have caused particular views to be held and maintained. The acknowledgement of the Church as being Reformed, as identified in the Basis of Union and its importance stated in the 'Foreword' to *Worship: from the United Reformed Church*, lends historically specific ways of considering worship and freedom, order and participation. Yet the Reformed tradition also encourages the Church to evaluate its understanding of, and approach to, worship and to look towards change so that the Church in its worship glorifies God and enables the glorification of God in every aspect of life.

[180] Routley, 1974, pp.414-415.

What has been found in reviewing the literature related to the worship of the United Reformed Church is that worship can be described in terms of freedom, order, participation and tradition. It is not these four characteristics individually, though, that define the worship of the United Reformed Church. It is how they interact that enables worship to be theologically described. This is demonstrated by the Venn diagram in Figure 1. Given the dominance on history and tradition in the introduction of each of the service books of the United Reformed Church and that the tradition of the Church has a significant historic dimension, this thesis will use the context of historical tradition to chart how the United Reformed Church has arrived at its approach to worship in terms of freedom, order and participation (Chapters 2 to 4). Therefore, the shape of this thesis follows the concept demonstrated in the Venn diagram in Figure 2. This will provide an understanding of the Church's worship from which will be shown how even with ties to the past, the worship of the Church is always re-forming, as evident in the discussions at General Assembly and how worship cannot be thought of without consideration of the inter-relationship between freedom, order and participation.

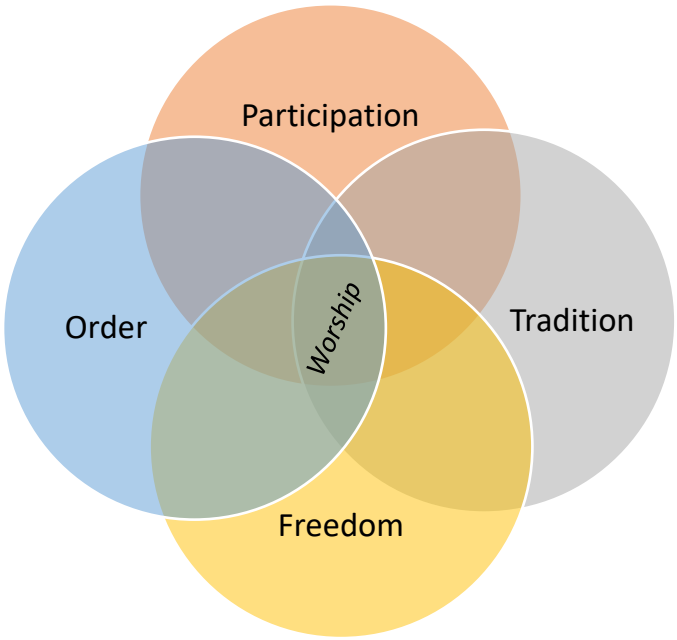

Figure 1. Venn diagram of the characteristics that define worship in the United Reformed Church

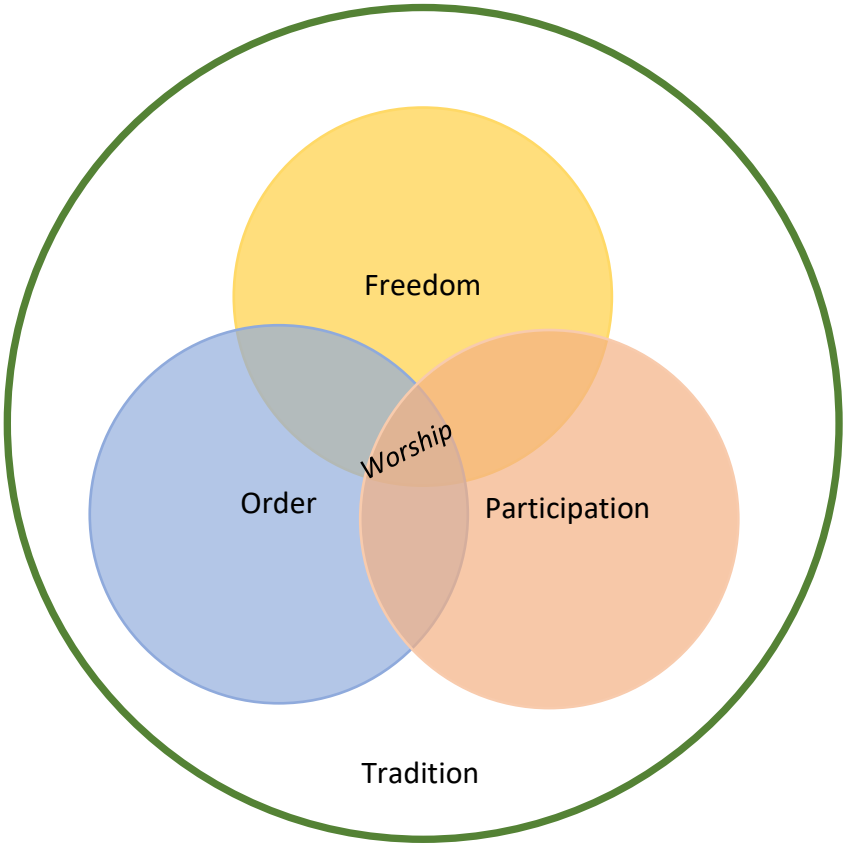

Figure 2. Venn diagram illustrating approach to be taken in this thesis to developing an understanding of worship in the United Reformed Church

CHAPTER 2. PURITAN AND NONCONFORMIST WORSHIP

2.1. Introduction

The worship of the United Reformed Church has been shown to be characterised by the inter-relationship between freedom, order, and participation. Despite this, it is freedom that is usually given priority in explaining the Church's approach to worship. The root of this can be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when, from the perspective of the tradition that would eventually, and after much development, become the United Reformed Church, the ecclesiological landscape dramatically changed in England. This chapter will investigate the understanding and practice of freedom in worship as it developed among Puritan and dissenting groups in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. How that understanding then framed notions of order and participation in corporate worship will be discussed. This will all be set within the historical context that led to two of the main antecedent traditions of the United Reformed Church: English Congregationalism and English Presbyterianism.[181]

The evidence for this investigation comes from consulting primary and secondary sources. The primary sources, including papers, letters and tracts from the period, provide direct evidence to the views held. In developing a historical narrative for understanding freedom, order and participation in United Reformed Church worship, these sources were drawn from the writings of divines who would be seen as leading Puritans and nonconformists, and therefore forebears in the traditions that formed the United Reformed Church. The divines were identified from references in secondary sources and the completion of literature searches. Some of the divines were identified from their association with the Westminster Assembly where, as will be discussed below, the historical context of this thesis begins. Included among these are Jeremiah Burroughs and Thomas Goodwin who were members of the Assembly, and Richard Baxter and John Owen who contributed to

[181] This is not to deny the influence of either the Churches of Christ or the Scottish Congregational traditions on the worship of the United Reformed Church. To examine their influence would be one way in which this research could be advanced in the future.

debates, particularly on the question of worship in the English church, although they did not directly participate in the Assembly. For the eighteenth century, the divines identified included Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge. To support and/or contradict the views of the divines, anecdotal evidence was extracted from Church Books of nonconformist churches with historical ties to the United Reformed Church available in local county archives.

The analysis of the evidence from the primary sources was supported by commentary on the period and traditions in secondary literature. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, important commentators who were consulted included Alec Ryrie, an historian who has written extensively on early Protestantism and devotion in the English church; Neil Keeble who, although a Professor of English Studies, has written on cultural religious history particularly during the English Civil Wars; and Michael Watts, an historian whose three-volume work *The Dissenters* charted the influence of religious dissent from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. In addition, the seminal historic work of Horton Davies on worship and theology in England (discussed in the Introduction) was interrogated. The choice of commentators was based on their work in the discussion on worship in the period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and not whether their perspectives was influenced by connections to nonconformist, now Free Church traditions in England. All secondary sources were considered unbiased, recognising some of the difficulties over historic designations in the church during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A similar methodology was applied to the research discussed in the following chapters considering the history of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism (Chapters 3 and 4). Although not entirely the case for church historians referenced on the seventeenth and eighteenth century, it is of note that the authors of the secondary sources for the later periods of history tend to be directly part of the traditions being analysed in this thesis. This was not intentional; in general, in the study of church history, historians are more likely to commentate on the church traditions with whom they associate.

2.2. Historical context

Prior to 1662, the goal of a unified but reformed church in England appeared to be possible. Notable groups sought reform along lines similar to those found in Continental Europe but firmly from within a national church. However, the events of 1662 brought the vision of a united church for the nation to an end. The antecedent traditions of the United Reformed Church then found themselves outside the Church of England. It is from this shift from being part of a national movement to becoming marginalised groups that the understanding of corporate worship which can be discerned in the United Reformed Church began to take shape. Freedom, order and participation characterised corporate worship before and after 1662, but their inter-relationship and the meaning of the terms were shaped for the United Reformed Church by the development of theological thinking that came as a result of exclusion and ejectment from the Church of England.

It could be argued that the changes in theological thought that are important to how the inter-relationship between freedom, order and participation is perceived in the corporate worship of the United Reformed Church were initiated by the birth of Puritanism in England. Puritanism established itself within the English church during the reign of Elizabeth I. Some of the disputes which ultimately led to dissent and finally nonconformity can be traced back at least to the Elizabethan Settlement in 1559.[182] To describe fully what was taking place in the church in England from the late-sixteenth century until the antecedent traditions of the United Reformed Church began to emerge in the eighteenth century is more than is possible in the scope of this thesis. This period of history is complex with both religious and political pressures influencing the nature of the church in England. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis the historic narrative will start from the convening of the Westminster Assembly in 1643. This is when debate about corporate worship in the church could be distinctly defined in terms of freedom, order, and participation. This historical narrative will be constructed in three parts: the period between the convening of the Westminster Assembly in 1643 to the Great Ejectment in 1662; the

[182] Davies, 1948, pp.57-76; Winship, 2018, pp.9-81; Tomkins, 2020, pp.18-33.

period between 1662 and the so-called Act of Toleration in 1689; and the development of nonconformity in the eighteenth century. In each period the historical context will be described in as much as it relates to the approach in this period to corporate worship. This forms a foundation for a deeper exploration of freedom, order and participation in worship later in this chapter.

2.2.1. Westminster Assembly (1643) to the Great Ejectment (1662)

As the Long Parliament sought to take control of the governance of England, a remodelling of the church in England was sought which would make it a Protestant church that truly reflected Puritan values and theology. Parliament's 'Solemn League and Covenant' with the Scottish Lords in 1643 revealed the desire to reform the English Church 'according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed churches'.[183] The task of reform was given to an Assembly of divines, peers, members of parliament and commissioners from Scotland convened at Westminster Abbey between 1643 and 1652. The intention of what has become known as the 'Westminster Assembly' was to bring together in 'nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of Church government, directory of worship and catechizing' the 'Churches of God in the three kingdoms [Scotland, England and Ireland].'[184] To unite the English church under one confession was not a simple undertaking. There was already a movement of separation from the national church in the country. Dating back to the sixteenth century there was a radical movement, which led to individuals and congregations being labelled as 'Separatists'. Members of this movement were unable to accept the form the established church took as the 'true' church, and consequently chose to separate themselves physically and spiritually from a church they deemed as 'a church of confusion where the Lord's people may not tarry.'[185] Also, there were two streams of thought particularly over church governance, although this did impact other aspects of church life and practice. It

[183] *The Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland*. Edinburgh, 1643; Cornick, 1998, p.51.
[184] Rushworth, 1721, p.197; Warfield, 2015, pp.25-6; Ryrie, 2017, p.114.
[185] Acheson, 1990, p.1.

had been hoped that the 'Solemn League and Covenant' would secure, for the English church, a settlement similar to the Scottish parish-based model governed by presbyteries rather than bishops. However, a minority of the divines of the Westminster Assembly believed that the governance of the church should be led by the congregation through 'law of Christ and by mutual consultation and advice.'[186]

Against this backdrop, a set of documents were presented to the English Parliament and the Church of Scotland for approval and adoption, although it should be noted that, despite the presence at the Assembly of Scottish commissioners, the work of the Westminster divines on church governance was only relevant to the church in England and Ireland. The Church of Scotland subsequently adopted the directory of worship, confession of faith and catechisms. Parliament approved most with some editing, but they were never vigorously applied to the Church of England.[187] This was demonstrated in how Parliament issued an ordinance in January 1645 that the *Directory for the Public Worship of God* be used, but seemingly did not enforce its use, as highlighted in a subsequent ordinance made in August 1645:

> Whereas by an Ordinance of Parliament made the Third Day of *January* last past, and entituled, *An Ordinance of Parliament for the taking away the Book of Common-Prayer, and for establishing and putting in execution of the Directory for the Publick Worship of God*; it was (among other things therein contained) Ordained, That the said Book of Common-Prayer should not remain or be from thenceforth used in any Church, Chappels, and Place of Publick Worship, within the Kingdom of *England*, and Dominion of *Wales*; and that the Directory for Publick Worship in the said recited Ordinance set forth, should be from thenceforth used, pursued, and observed, according to the true Intent and Meaning of the said Ordinance, in all Exercises of the Publick Worship of God, in every Congregation, Church, Chappel, and Place of Publick Worship, within this Kingdom of *England*, and Dominion of *Wales*: Yet nevertheless in regard that in or by the said recited Ordinance, there was no special Direction made or Contained for the speedy dispersing of the said Directory into the several Parishes within the Kingdom of *England*, and Dominion of *Wales*, and publishing of the same Directory; nor any Punishment set down either for the using of the said Book of Common-Prayer, or for the

[186] Ryrie, 2017, p.115.

[187] To achieve the four parts of their work, the Westminster Divines produced five documents that were presented to Parliament for approval: *The form of church government to be used in the Church of England and Ireland* (presented in 1645 and adopted in an edited form in 1648); *A directory for the publique worship of God* (presented in 1644 and approved for use by the church in England and Wales in 1645); *The Confession of Faith* (presented in 1646 and approved in an edited form in 1648); *The Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* (presented in 1648, with the *Shorter Catechism* being approved in 1648 but the *Larger Catechism* never receiving authorisation).

> non-using or depraving of the said Directory; by Means whereof there has been as yet little Fruit of the said Ordinance …[188]

In the decade of the Commonwealth, the English church fragmented due in part to the promotion of relative freedom in religious thought.[189] Despite, or perhaps because of, the ambiguities about his personal religious convictions, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector from September 1651, appears to have been supportive of a comprehensive state church. Nevertheless, with the breakdown of the church authority during the Civil War and the official abolition of bishops in 1645, every parish became *de facto* independent. This led to the increased emergence of a diverse range of theological views and sects, some tolerable and others not. Alec Ryrie observed that the resulting eruption of religious creativity in the 1640s and 1650s left behind a legacy of Protestant identities and suggested that this ended the vision of a national church in England.[190] The further diversification of the Protestant church would have made the realisation of an all-inclusive state church more difficult, but there was a hope, as shown by the Westminster Divines, that there may have been the possibility of a middle way. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), after the events of 1660 to 1662, lamented:

> … God did so wonderfully bless the labours of this *unanimous faithful ministers* that had it not been for the faction of the Prelatists on one side that drew men off, and the factions of the giddy and turbulent sectaries on the other side … England had been like in a quarter of an age to have become a land of saints and pattern of holiness to all the world, and the unmatchable paradise of the earth. Never were such fair opportunities to sanctify a nation lost and trodden as have been in this land of late. Woe to them that were the cause of it.[191]

Baxter blamed the end of the church envisioned by the Westminster Assembly on two distinct groups: those who advocated an episcopal church government; and those who had previously sought to separate from the Church of England and were spoken out against by the Westminster Divines in the pamphlet *Certaine Considerations to Dis-swade*

---

[188] Rushworth, 1722, p.209.
[189] It should be noted that this freedom was limited or restricted. Protestant Trinitarians were tolerated, however, Catholics were not and extreme Quakers still faced persecution.
[190] Ryrie, 2017, p.131.
[191] Baxter, 1985, p.84; Zakai, 1989, pp.29-30.

Men from Further Gathering of Churches (1643). This would have included groups known as Brownists, Barrowists, Anabaptists and Familists.[192]

Parliament, on Cromwell's death, was predominantly Royalist and, with the collusion of the Army which feared unrest as the result of the weak leadership of Cromwell's son and successor Richard, the opportunity was taken to restore the monarchy. But this was a monarchy that was to be controlled by Parliament. So when Charles Stuart promised in the *Declaration of Breda* (1660) that, if made king, he would uphold liberty of conscience in matters of religion, Parliament saw this as a threat to its control of the church and the ability to re-establish an episcopal structure in it.[193] Parliament's solution, citing as justification the security of the realm, was to return the church to full prelacy by passing an Act of Uniformity and other measures which signalled an end to relative toleration and any hope for a comprehensive church settlement.[194] Parliament, therefore, sought to regain control of the clergy and restore both uniformity and conformity in the practice of the church's worship through the imposition of a prayer book. Once king, Charles II attempted to honour his promise in the *Declaration of Breda* by convening the Savoy Conference in 1661 to discuss the revision of the prayer book. This was not a meeting of equals, nor was it conciliatory or constructive. The Puritan divines at the meeting (all of whom envisioned a self-governing English Church under principles that have come to be known as presbyterian) had to defend their perspective on worship, requesting modification of an already assumed order (the *Westminster Directory*).[195] Unbeknown to the Puritans, while they were engaged at the Savoy Conference, in the genuine belief that the form of the Church was a matter of debate, Parliament appointed a committee to review the legislation of 1641 which abolished church courts and law as well as the content of the Church's liturgy.[196] This review led to the *Act of Uniformity*, passed in 1662, by which Parliament attempted to regain control of the English church without taking into

[192] Zakai, 1989, p.13.
[193] Miller, 2000, p.147; Keeble, 2002, p.116.
[194] Miller, 2000, p.148; Keeble, 2002, p.116.
[195] Keeble, 2002, p.116.
[196] Keeble, 2002, p.117.

consideration the views of the Puritan divines on its worship and practices. The Act required all clergy and teachers to give 'unfeigned consent and assent' to the *Book of Common Prayer* (not complete at the time the Act became law), never praying or preaching without it, submitting to episcopal ordination and agreeing not to attempt to change the structure of the Church of England by force. All clergy who occupied a living were also required to declare that the 'Solemn League and Covenant' was illegal and invalid, and that they would not take up arms against the king.[197] Ministers were expected to comply with the requirements of the Act on or before Bartholomew's Day (24 August) in 1662. Those who refused were to be ejected from their livings.

2.2.2. Great Ejectment (1662) to the so-called Act of Toleration (1689)

Through the *Act of Uniformity* and preceding laws, an already divided church became more disparate in England. The potential penalty of imprisonment for openly practising a Christian faith that was unlawful did not dissuade those who dissented from the government's attempts to control the church. This did not mean that those who sought not to conform did not do all they could to elude detection. Meeting times and places would vary, as would the size of gatherings.[198] In terms of worship, there was greater flexibility and a dislike grew of 'all false dignity, pomposity, externality and formality.'[199] What began as a resistance movement of the Spirit became the idea of only worshipping in the Spirit. Horton Davies stated that John Wilson's *Cultus Evangelicus—a brief Discourse concerning the Spirituality and Simplicity of New Testament Worship* (1667) demonstrated this by contrasting spiritual with carnal, corporeal and external.[200] Wilson, Horton recorded, wrote that God could not only be worshipped by 'body or outward man … but with soul or inner man, which is that [God] in all holy addresses mainly looks after.'[201]

[197] Keeble, 2002, p.118.
[198] Watts, 1978, p.230.
[199] Davies, 1996a, p.450.
[200] Davies, 1996a, p.451.
[201] Davies, 1996a, p.451.

When James II came to the throne in 1685, an attempt at religious pluralism and toleration was made. Openly Roman Catholic, James II suspended laws put in place by Parliament during the reign of Charles II and through his *Declaration of Indulgence* (1688) sought to enable those who had not conformed to worship more freely.[202] Given resistance of Parliament to James II's actions, it is hard to say how much freedom there was. Michael Watts suggested that the *Declaration of Indulgence* broke the back of Anglican intolerance and led eventually to the possibility of toleration.[203] This did not facilitate civil equality but it did allow the consolidation of the diverse ecclesiological landscape in England.

2.2.3. English Nonconformity in the eighteenth century

In 1689, with William of Orange and Mary II on the throne, the *Act for Exempting their Majestyes Protestant Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certain Laws* or the so-called 'Act of Toleration' entered into law. This allowed Protestant, Trinitarian nonconformists, who were prepared to 'take an oath of allegiance and supremacy' to the crown and 'make a declaration against transubstantiation', freedom in worship under licence.[204] This Act may appear to suggest that Parliament had accepted that freedom to worship as conscience dictated was incontrovertible. This is not so, the Act constituted an attempt to control religious dissent, as Parliament admitted, begrudgingly, that the attempts to eradicate it had come to naught. In subsequent Acts passed during the reign of Anne, Parliament continued to attempt to return the church back to the control of the State. However, on the day that the *Schism Act* (1714) was to take effect, which would have resulted in the closure of nonconformist academies and ensured that education could be accessed only by those willing to be versed in the worship of the Church of England, Anne died and George I, of the House of Hanover, succeeded to the throne. Through the swift and astute actions of London nonconformist ministers, favour was won with the new royal court, through publicly praying for the new

[202] This act was opposed by the bishops and put James II on a collision course with Parliament which led to his removal from the throne in 1688.
[203] Watts, 1978, p.259.
[204] Thompson, 2018, p.270.

king and then at the earliest opportunity presenting a loyal address to the throne.[205] This and the fact that George was himself Lutheran and Hanover had no parallel to the arguments between the Church of England and nonconformists, meant that the Act was repealed in 1718 by the *Religious Worship Act*. It should be noted that this did not give liberty to nonconformists in aspects of civil life. The *Corporation Act* (1661) and *Test Act* (1673, revised 1678) remained in force.[206] Attempts to persecute nonconformists did subsided as rifts over royal succession became apparent in the Church of England (*i.e.* while some in the Church of England accepted the change of monarch, others saw William and Mary as having deposed James II, the rightful monarch according to succession. Matters were particularly acute given the birth of an heir, James Francis Edward, who was raised Catholic and was seen, by some in the Church of England, as the rightful heir to the throne).

With less threat of suppression from the State, nonconformity developed, and specific denominational identities began to take shape with different emphases in doctrine and varying degrees of loyalty to orthodox teaching. In the early part of the eighteenth century although the strands which are now identified by historians as Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist were developing, nonconformist ministers and laymen met collectively to discuss matters of orthodoxy regarding the free-thinking which became manifest alongside the freedom of religion. A significant debate in these settings in the early eighteenth century was over the doctrine of the Trinity.

The debate over the Trinity was not new within Christianity. In the fourth century Arians had believed that there was a time when Jesus did not exist, specifically before creation.[207] Similarly in the sixteenth century, through the interrogation of scripture

[205] Thompson, 2018, p.274.
[206] These two Acts limited the ability of Catholics and Nonconformists to hold roles of public office without accepting the position of the Church of England in the State. The Corporation Act (1661) required a person to receive communion via the rite of Church of England as a precondition of taking up office. The Test Act (1662), which was primarily aimed at Catholic recusants, required anyone seeking a position in public office to renounce transubstantiation.
[207] Cornick, 1998, p.90.

‘Socinians denied both the pre-existence of Jesus and his divinity.’[208] When such anti-trinitarian views were voiced in seventeenth century England they were stifled by provisions in the *Toleration Act* and the passing of a *Blasphemy Act* in 1698. Although to hold such views remained illegal until 1813 and the passing of the *Doctrine of the Trinity Act*, there was more of an openness to discussion in the eighteenth century. The freedom and encouragement to question received wisdom, which was part of the new age of enlightenment, as well as the ability to do so within nonconformity because of its freedom from the State, meant that all Christian teaching was open for dispute through reasoned and/or enlightened interrogation of scripture. The questioning of the doctrine of the Trinity at this time cannot definitely be argued as an outcome of Enlightenment rationalism, yet it is an example where testing doctrine against scripture could logically lead to invalidation of the concept that the one God is also three persons where neither the necessary singularity compromises the apparent plurality, or *vice versa*. The suspicion of the Trinity, especially in its doctrinal form, came from taking *Sola Scriptura* to its logical conclusion, as the teaching is not explicitly articulated in the scripture. When texts questioning the divinity of Christ and doubting the validity of the Trinity found their way into the dissenting academies, the nonconformist education establishments, concerns within nonconformist communities were raised. In Exeter, this led the Assembly of Devon and Cornwall ministers resolving that their trinitarian faith should be expressed by the formula ‘that there is but one God; and that the Father, Word, and the Holy Spirit, is that One God,’ to which ministers should subscribe.[209] This was in line with statements within the Westminster Catechism and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. However, one of those who was being called out by the Assembly for the unorthodox views in their teaching, James Peirce (1672-1726), refused on the grounds that scripture was the sole test of faith.[210] Unable to resolve the matter locally, advice was sought from colleagues in London who met at the Salters’ Hall. This led to the ‘Salters’ Hall controversy’ of 1719 revealing the theological rifts within nonconformity. To subscribe to any credal documentation was,

[208] Cornick, 1998, p.90.
[209] Cornick, 1998, p.91.
[210] Cornick, 1998, p.91.

Erik Routley wrote, perceived by some ministers as 'an act of treachery to that freedom which [was] enjoyed' because of the previous generations' 'grievous and costly fighting.'[211] Interestingly, when the London ministers met to vote whether they should put their signatures to a trinitarian declaration of faith, the prominent subset in the non-subscribers were those who are described as Presbyterian. As more moderate Puritans, freedom, particularly from government and magistrate, had not been part of their early narrative. John Briggs described Presbyterians as searching for an 'intellectually defensible theology.' [212] This could in part explain why many of the non-subscribers did not at first refute the doctrine of the Trinity, but 'insisted that such matters were to be tested only by the explicit teachings found in scripture.'[213] Eventually, through the development of subordinationist views of the Godhead, the doctrinal position was referred to as Arianism, while scientific inquiry and rational speculation found a Unitarian interpretation best served their expression of faith.[214]

This does not fully explain why Presbyterianism in England diminished during the eighteenth century, or why with General Baptist congregations, many Presbyterians evolved to be Unitarian. However, David Cornick argued that in combination with the lack of structured church governance as Presbyterianism understood it (Trinitarian Presbyterians remained in the north east and Scotland where structures had been successfully established), learned ministers had a freer hand over the direction a congregation might take because, unlike the ministers in Independent chapels, they were not answerable to the Church Meeting.[215] Interestingly, there is evidence that not all Presbyterian congregations became Unitarian through the leadership of the minister. In Bury St Edmunds the Meeting House in Churchgate Street, which at the time of writing is the town's Unitarian Church, was founded by the Reverend Samuel Bury, a Presbyterian, in 1678. Entries in the Church Book of the Independent Meeting House in Whiting Street

[211] Routley, 1961, p.61.
[212] Briggs, 2016, p.8.
[213] Briggs, 2016, p.8.
[214] Routley, 1961, p.61; Cornick, 1998, p.92; Briggs, 2016, p.8.
[215] Cornick, 1998, p.93.

(now Bury St Edmunds United Reformed Church) refer to the Meeting House being Presbyterian until the late eighteenth century.[216] Under the ministry of Evan Johns, there was a shift in the Meeting House towards Unitarianism, but this seems to have been led by the congregation rather than the minister. John Duncan wrote that it may have been the case that Johns left because of the tendency of the people.[217] It is argued that Unitarianism was part of the theology of the congregation from the start under the leadership of Samuel Bury. Unitarian defendants have tried to demonstrate this from Bury's writings. However, E. Lord, in his revision of Alexander Gordon's biography of Samuel Bury, observed from Bury's farewell letter to his congregation in Bristol that he was closer to Richard Baxter's 'middle-way' than to a unitarian faith. Bury wrote, 'I never was prostituted to any party, but have endeavoured to serve God as a catholic Christian', and in the letter spoke of requirements which had no justification in scripture as making 'apocryphal sins and duties'.[218]

With the Age of Enlightenment may have come the supremacy of logic and reason in religion, but this did not negate the importance of deep spiritual encounters with God. Rather, experience as a way to advance an argument became an essential part of the evangelism encouraged by the 'Evangelical Revival', an international movement in the church.[219] Although the notable outcome of the Revival was the establishment of Methodism, the 'Old Dissent' also experienced effects of the movement.[220] The Evangelical Revival addressed some of the foundational elements of the sixteenth century European Reformation: justification by faith and the centrality of scripture. The movement did not simply re-emphasise these central beliefs, it encapsulated a way in which these beliefs could be experienced and communicated.[221] David Bebbington described these as 'conversionism' (the belief that lives needed to be changed) and 'activism' (the expression

[216] Grieve and Marshall Jones, 1946, pp.45-6.
[217] Duncan, 1963, p.107.
[218] Gordon and Lord, 2016.
[219] Ditchfield, 1998, p.33.
[220] The 'Old Dissent' includes the Presbyterians, Independents (subsequently referred to as Congregationalists), Baptists and Quakers.
[221] Ditchfield, 1998, p.27.

of the gospel in effort).[222] In the existing nonconformist churches this meant the release of new energy within their ministry and mission. The Revival encouraged the growth of 'practical' religion, as demonstrated by Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) through his devotional writing and hymns, which impacted the worship particularly of the Independent churches.[223]

2.3. Freedom

The nonconformist churches which existed in the eighteenth century were the product of dispute and strongly held convictions rather than evidence that freedom had triumphed. Nevertheless, central to the argument that led to their presence in the religious landscape of England was the freedom of worship as conscience dictated. How this was understood and demonstrated in the church changed and developed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as shown above (Section 2.2). The foundations of thinking related to freedom of worship were set out in the *Westminster Confession* and shown in the format and content of the *Westminster Directory* (Section 2.4.1) and can be thought of in terms of liberty of conscience and the work of the Holy Spirit. These are not independent of each other; the Holy Spirit, as will be shown, is at work in the Christian conscience.

2.3.1. Freedom of thought and conscience

Edward Andrew wrote that 'Christian conscience presents the capacity for choice as the definitive feature of human beings.'[224] In the seventeenth century, Andrew observed, this meant an individual had the capacity of moral choice to avoid those sins that would consign a person to damnation. Conscience, therefore, was not just the means of determining what was good and what was evil, it was innately linked to God's

[222] Bebbington, 2005, p.16.
[223] Cornick, 1998, p.95.
[224] Andrew, 2001, p.16.

judgement.[225] For John Calvin, conscience enabled humanity to convict itself of guilt rather than be guided by conscience on ways of sanctification.[226] Calvin wrote:

> … to comprehend what conscience is; we must first seek the definition from the derivation of the word. For just as when through the mind and understanding men grasp a knowledge of things, and from this are said "to know," this is the source of the word "knowledge," so also when they have a sense of divine judgement, as a witness joined to them, which does not allow them to hide their sins from being accused before the Judge's tribunal, this sense is called "conscience." For it is a certain mean between God and man, because it does not allow man to suppress within himself what he knows, but pursues him to the point of convicting him.[227]

Therefore, to have a free conscience was to believe the testimony of the Gospel that through Christ there is the forgiveness of sins and peace because of that knowledge of grace.[228] Consequently, a freedom of conscience was the freedom to follow Christ. For Calvin, such conscience was rooted in divine revelation of scripture and informed by the discipline of the church and the relationship of the believer with the church.[229] It was the church that formed the Christian conscience through its proclamation of the Word and the councils of the church. The church, Calvin stated, 'will have much more weight' in the interpretation of scripture than the individual alone.[230]

It is upon this premise of Calvin that the Westminster Assembly established a position on 'liberty of conscience' in the *Westminster Confession*:

> God alone is Lord of conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship ... And because of the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty of Christ have purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation; … are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.[231]

---

[225] Bradbury, 2014, p.34.
[226] Calvin. *Institutes,* 1559, §1.15.2, (Calvin, 1960, p.184).
[227] Calvin. *Institutes,* 1559, §3.19.15, (Calvin, 1960, p.848).
[228] Zachman, 2005, p.2.
[229] Bradbury, 2014, p.35.
[230] Calvin. *Institutes,* 1559, §4.9.13, (Calvin, 1960, p.1176; Bradbury, 2014, p.35).
[231] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 20.2 & 4 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016).

When compared to the *Savoy Declaration* (1658), although much of what is written about 'liberty of conscience' is retained, the accountability to the church was removed.[232] What is known as the *Savoy Declaration* was the outcome of an assembly of mainly laymen from the growing number of Independent churches in England. It was drafted by a committee of six divines led by Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) and John Owen (1616-1683) and based on the *Westminster Confession*. The contrast between the *Westminster Confession* and the *Savoy Declaration* can be accounted for by the difference in view of where authority lay in the church and therefore where discipline was exercised. For the Independents, it was located in the local, gathered congregation of converted and covenanted Christians and so, related to the governance of the church described in the *Institution of Churches and Order in them appointed by Jesus Christ* (1658), which was published as part of the *Declaration.* The difference in the place of the church between Presbyterians and Independents was demonstrated by William Ames (1576-1633) in his discourse *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof* (1630, with the first English translation published in 1639). Ames followed Calvin's general train of thought with conscience relating to God's judgement and requiring the illumination of scripture.[233] However, Ames discussed the church from the point of view of the believer.[234] This understanding was also demonstrated by John Milton (1608-1674) who insisted that 'no man, synod, session of men, though called the church, can judge definitively the sense of scripture to another man's conscience.'[235]

Another change to the perception in conscience was the ascription of it to a natural, moral principal or natural habit, as suggested by Ames.[236] This can be seen in Ames' discussion of the giving of alms:

---

[232] Savoy Assembly, *A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practiced in Congregational Churches in England*, 1658, ch.21 (Matthews, 1959, pp.102-3).
[233] Bradbury, 2014, p.36.
[234] Bradbury, 2014, p.37.
[235] Andrew, 2001, p.54.
[236] Ames, 1639, p.6.

> Not only the will of God revealed in the Scriptures doth require this, but also the law of humane nature. For nothing is more natural then that wee should doe so to another, as wee would bee done to ourselves. And nothing is more humane, than to helpe the necessity of man.[237]

This individualistic and subjective shift by Ames offers some explanation as to what comes to be a rhetoric for freedom of conscience, particularly amongst Independents, in the later seventeenth century. The political liberty gained in the first Civil War accompanied a narrative in the church which was the liberty to worship and govern itself as it believed was right and fitting for God and the gathered community.[238] Although this view could be argued scripturally, it is far removed from Calvin's understanding of conscience being rooted in scripture. What comes to be in the Independent churches of the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century is what Geoffrey Nuttall referred to as the principle of 'voluntarism'. This will be considered again later (Section 2.5.1), but at this point it should be noted what this means and its impact on how freedom comes to be thought about in the life of Nonconformist churches. Voluntarism is the idea that local churches are free gatherings of Christians who covenant with each other to seek the spiritual and moral good of that community and deny the right of government or magistrate to impose religious forms on the people. Although God is understood to be the primary 'gatherer' of those people, 'their response was a free and voluntary response given with a willing mind.'[239] It was not, however, just voluntarism at work; there was also the practice of the requirement that prospective members of a community of believers should be able to demonstrate their conversion and thus also their belonging to the elect.

As the eighteenth century was about to dawn, the nature of the church had significantly changed. John Locke (1632-1704) observed:

> A church appears to me to be a free association of people coming together of their own accord to offer public worship to God in a manner which they believe will be acceptable to the Deity for the salvation of their souls.[240]

---

[237] Ames, 1639, p.258.
[238] Jordon, 1923, p.303.
[239] Nuttall, 2001, p.108; Bradbury, 2014, p.38.
[240] Bradbury, 2014, p.41.

From this definition, the church was no longer primarily a divine institution, it was the product of individual consciences gathered together.[241] Those consciences, when influenced by the divine—interpreted from scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—would have been influenced by morals. These developed from experience and the environment, and would have wanted to see the gathered people living together and flourishing.[242]

2.3.2. Freedom of the Spirit

Of the Holy Spirit, William Dell (1607-1669) wrote:

> Where we learn that the things of the Gospel and of the Kingdom of God, are not known at all, nor discerned in the least measure, but by Gods Spirit. Which Spirit is given to all that believe, and this Spirit alone is sufficient, both to enable us to know clearly and certainly the things of God, and also to publish them unto others, and nothing of Man or the Creature can add to it.[243]

He made the case that all who are in receipt of the Holy Spirit can be ministers of the Gospel, as foretold by the prophet Joel (2.28) and in Jesus' instruction to the disciples (plain men of ordinary employment, as Dell describes them) to stay in Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit, and then to go and teach (Luke 24.49).[244] In doing so he emphasised the role of the Holy Spirit in all things, particularly human understanding of and response to God, which is demonstrated in how collectively the church worships. Dell believed, as did others, in the teaching in John's gospel that worship should be in the Spirit (John 4.24), therefore the Holy Spirit had a controlling influence in public worship.[245] Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) suggested that it was the Holy Spirit that kindled worship in the heart.[246] Baxter went so far as to say that worship is only sufficient when aided by the Holy Spirit.[247] This widely held view among Puritans was reflected in the shaping of the *Westminster Directory*. In practice, how the freedom of the Holy Spirit was interpreted

[241] Bradbury, 2014, p.41.
[242] Andrew, 2001, p.84; Thomas, 2020, p.346.
[243] Dell, 1653, p.25.
[244] Dell, 1653, p.24.
[245] Dell, 1653, p.19; Charnock, 1699, p.87.
[246] Charnock, 1699, p.69.
[247] Baxter, 1830, p.17.

varied and this is demonstrated in the approaches and attitudes taken in regard to the illumination of the Word of God, preaching and prayer in public worship.

2.3.2.1. Illuminating the Word of God

John Milton's acknowledgment of the importance of the Holy Spirit in understanding scripture is evident in the formulations of the *Westminster Confession* and later in the *Savoy Declaration.* Both confessions stated the necessity for the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand what is revealed in scripture as the Word of God.[248] Given the Calvinist base of Puritanism, it is not surprising that this idea followed Calvin's teaching on the Holy Spirit and its witness to the scriptures in the human heart.[249] The *Westminster Confession* clearly stated a belief in scripture as the Word of God:

> The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. [250]

The *Savoy Declaration*, although not denying this understanding of scripture, concentrated on affirming the work of the Spirit:

> …our full perswasion and assurance of the infallible Truth and Divine Authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our heart. [251]

It was the Holy Spirit that inspired the writers of scripture and enlightened its hearers or readers.[252] For most Puritans at this time, dissociation of the Spirit's action from scripture in bringing forth the Word of God was impossible. If worship could not be grounded or found to have authority within scripture it was believed to be 'will-worship' and the product of corrupt human invention and idolatrous.[253] Yet, as John Howe (1630-1705)

---

[248] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 1.6 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016); Savoy Assembly, *Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England*, 1658, 1.6 (Matthews, 1959, p.77).
[249] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §1.7.4, (Calvin, 1960, pp.78-80).
[250] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 1.6 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016).
[251] Savoy Assembly, *Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England*, 1658, 1.5 (Matthews, 1959, pp.76-7).
[252] Nuttall, 1947, p.22.
[253] Ryrie, 2015, p.319.

demonstrated it was not inconceivable that in extraordinary circumstances the Spirit could speak without the written word:

> We speak not here of what God can do, but what he doth. Who can doubt but as God can, if he please, imprint on the mind the whole system of necessary truth, and on the heart the entire frame of holiness, without the help of an external revelation; so he can imprint this particular persuasion also without any outward means? Nor do we speak of what he more rarely doth, but of what he doth ordinarily; or what his more usual course and way of procedure is, in dealing with the spirits of men. The supreme power binds not its own hands. We may be sure, the inward testimony of the Spirit never is opposite to the outward testimony of his gospel (which is the Spirit's testimony also); and therefore it never says to an unholy man, an enemy to God, thou art in a reconciled and pardoned state. But we cannot be sure he never speaks or suggests things to the spirits of men but by the external testimony so as to make use of that as the means of informing them with what he hath to impart; nay, we know he sometimes hath imparted things (as to prophets and the sacred pen-men) without any external means, and (no doubt) excited suitable affections in them, to the import of the things imparted and made known.[254]

This strong doctrine of the Holy Spirit did not mean that moderate Puritans, those who are now described as Presbyterians or Independents, dissociated Spirit and scripture; the Spirit always spoke according to scripture or 'upon some scriptural consideration'.[255] This is shown by what Howe went on to say:

> Nor do I believe it can ever be proved, that he never doth immediately testify his own special love to holy souls without the intervention of some part of his external word, made use of as a present instrument to that purpose, or that he always doth it, in the way of methodical reasoning there from.[256]

Over the two centuries, as nonconformity established itself, understanding the Holy Spirit's freedom to illuminate the Word of God in scripture and away from scripture did develop. This is shown in the confession of faith written for the Independent Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds in 1655 which stated:

> We does believe y^{t} the holy spirit of God dwelleth in all the children of God, to teach, leade and guide them in ye way everlasting, to leade them into all truth…[257]

[254] Howe, 1822, p.64.
[255] Nuttall, 1947, p.33.
[256] Howe, 1822, p.64.
[257] Bury St Edmunds Independent Church, *Church Book (1646-1800)*, Confession of Faith 1655 (Duncan, 1961).

This was a perspective shared by more radical Puritans. Nuttall wrote:

> In his farewell address John Robinson is reported to have said, 'The Lord has more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word'; and those who looked eagerly for more light were in some cases prepared to look for it not only out of but without 'his holy word'. Oliver Cromwell, for instance, a keen believer in 'more light', says, God 'speaks without the written word sometimes, yet according to it'. [258]

In corporate worship this was most prominently observed through the development of preaching as exposition and application of the Word and in how the sermon became established as the central part of the service.

2.3.2.2. Preaching

The *Westminster Confession* and the *Savoy Declaration* made the reading of scripture, preaching and the hearing of God's Word equally important in public worship.[259] Although these statements could be read as God's Word being heard separately through the ordinances of reading scripture and preaching, it was through these ordinances together that God's Word was heard. This came from an emphasis on how the communication of God with humanity was oral. In time, the reading of scripture for hearing God's Word became less important than preaching. Arnold Hunt argued that this was because of the culture of the late sixteenth century, where the voice was associated 'with self-presence, truth, authenticity and an immediate and transparent movement of meaning' which was not found in the written word even when spoken aloud.[260] A reason for this can be found in the works of Thomas Goodwin. Goodwin suggested that scripture expounded rather than read was preferable. His argument was based on the general lack of understanding by the people of what they heard in the scriptures as demonstrated by Philip's encounter with the eunuch (Acts 7); Jesus, as he ascended, giving the gifts of preaching (*e.g.* Ephesians 6 and Colossians 2); and the concept that preaching reveals the spiritual meaning of God's Word. [261] This change from the Word of God in scripture and proclaimed to solely the

[258] Nuttall, 1947, p.24.
[259] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 21.5 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016); Savoy Assembly, *Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England*, 1658, 22.5 (Matthews, 1959, pp.104-5).
[260] Hunt, 2010, p.21.
[261] Goodwin, 1865, pp.363-4.

Word of God through preaching meant the perception of means of grace altered for the Puritans: salvation came from the Word of God preached.[262] From their interpretation of the apostle Paul's theology, it was their belief that the preaching of God's Word was the great ordinance that could not be neglected in worship. Faith came through hearing and the ordinance of preaching was the means by which spiritual good could be conveyed to those who attended to what was spoken.[263] Hunt developed this argument by demonstrating how the early modern sermon was more an aural than an oral phenomenon.[264] The sermon was not an act of speaking, rather an act of hearing due to the importance of the response of the audience, which followed Calvin's view of the sermons being God speaking through the mouths of the preacher.[265] This line of argument can find support from the theological works of the Puritans themselves and will be picked up again later in the chapter (Section 2.5.2.1).

The *Westminster Directory* recommended to the minister that, if it was deemed necessary, the expounding of scripture should occur after the reading of the scripture was ended and not to be made an essential part of the sermon. At the heart of the sermon there was to be doctrine and application for this was the means of edifying the heart in what God's Word was teaching so that all who heard might be saved.[266] What occurred in corporate worship is demonstrated in the diary of Peter Walkden, who wrote that on the 11th March 1733:

> … went into Chappel, and prayed, and read ye 90th psalm and part of ye 15th of ye 1st to Corinthians, and Annalized on it, then we sang 5 verses of ye 90th psalm, and I prayed, then preached Richd Parkers funeral, from ye 73rd psalm 25th and 26th verses …[267]

Similarly, on the 18th March 1733, Walkden wrote:

> … being come to chapel, I went in and prayed for a Blessing and read a psalm, and 12th of ye 2nd to Corinths and Annalized on a few verses: then we sang part of a psalm, and I prayed, then preached, from ye 2nd to Corinths 13th 5th Know ye nor your own selves …[268]

---

[262] Hambrick-Stowe, 2008, p.195; Hunt, 2010, p.21; Nichols, 1968, pp.101–2.
[263] Burroughs, 1650, pp.201-2.
[264] Hunt, 2010, p.59.
[265] Calvin. Commentary on 2 Corinthians 3.6; DeVries, 2004, p.109; Selderhuis, 2009, p.412.
[266] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Publick Worship,* 1644, 'Of the Preaching of the Word' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.33-9).
[267] Walkden and Chipping Local History Society, 2000, p.56.
[268] Walkden and Chipping Local History Society, 2000, p.63.

This separation of exegesis from the main sermon established the concept of a double sermon. This merged two traditions. The first was that of the European Reformers, of expounding chapters of scripture, which can be traced back to the Patristic Age and possibly even to the synagogue.[269] The second was the preaching order of the High Middle Ages where texts were analytically divided and applied to different doctrinal and moral questions.[270] It is not clear how and why this double sermon concept came to be but it is reminiscent of the method detailed in the preaching manual of William Perkins (1558-1602), *The Arte of Prophesying* (1592). Scholars have shown that *The Arte of Prophesying* was influential in the method of preaching until at least the 1660s and possibly beyond.[271] Perkins' method described a pattern based on scripture-doctrine-application whilst making public prayer a key part of the experience. Preaching for Perkins had to come from the heart, hence the importance of prayer and an insistence that sermons should be extempore.[272]

The extempore sermon gave some concern in the mid- to late seventeenth century as what began to count was the earnest dependence on the Holy Spirit rather than education.[273] This was, in part, out of response to the discouragement of the reading of homilies in the church, which subsequently led to the development in some preachers of 'an allergy to reading [one's] own sermons.'[274] Richard Baxter in his pamphlet *One Sheet for the Ministry against the Malignants of All Sorts* (1657) responded to the accusation 'you read your sermons out of paper; therefore have not the Spirit', thus:

> A strong Argument! I pray you take seven years time to prove the consequence. As wisely do the Quakers argue, that because we use spectacles, or hour-glasses and Pulpits, we have not the Spirit. It is not want of your abilities that makes Ministers use Notes: but it's a regard to the work and good of the hearers. I use notes as much as any man, when I take pains: and as little as any man when I am lazy, or busie, and have not leisure to prepare. It's easier to us to preach three Sermons without Notes, then one with them. He is a simple preacher that is not able to preach all day without

[269] Old, 2004, p.29.
[270] Old, 2004, p.29.
[271] Schaeffer, 2004, p.457; Appleby, 2007, p.63.
[272] Perkins, 1592, p.67.
[273] Nuttall, 1947, p.101.
[274] Van Dixhoorn, 2017, p.168.

> preparation, if his strength would serve: especially if he preach at your rates.[275]

Sermons led by the Holy Spirit were not sermons that were not learned or without preparation. Chad van Dixhoorn observed that the preaching of a solid sermon in the eyes of the Westminster Divines required 'a commitment to prayerful dependence on the Spirit who would, in turn, bless the preacher's work at his writing desk and preaching desk—whatever his method of delivery.'[276]

John Howe (1630-1705) and Matthew Henry (1662-1714) both championed systematic doctrinal preaching to teach the congregation.[277] Howe's argument was based on the concept that God's very nature was that of teacher so making teaching the essence of apostolic ministry. A recent commentator, Hughes Oliphant Old, summarised Howe's thinking as meaning 'learning of God and his ways [was] an important dimension of the service God [had] asked of his people.'[278] This was rooted in the general ideas that were developing in the academy of the rational nature of human beings, reason, and logic. Howe developed the thought that if human beings were by nature thinking creatures, this was even more true of God if humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1.27). It was in his doctrine of regeneration, which was based on his understanding of Johannine Wisdom theology, that Howe made the distinct connection between teaching and worship:

> Christian worship takes place when we are regenerated, and as children of God reflect the nature of our Father. This glorifies God. When the divine truth is both proclaimed and received by God's people, then God is glorified.[279]

As already suggested, learned and doctrinal preaching did not mean that sermons could not be extempore. The Holy Spirit still needed the freedom to act on both the heart of the preacher and the hearer. This became more evident in the approach taken to preaching in the eighteenth century as science and religion were allied in the age of reason and logic. Not all doctrine in the Christian faith could be argued through reason and logic. John Jennings (1687-1723), in his discourses on preaching, suggested that in maintaining a

---

[275] Baxter, 1657, pp.13-4.
[276] Van Dixhoorn, 2017, p.169.
[277] Old, 2004, p.14 & p.34.
[278] Old, 2004, p.15.
[279] Old, 2004, p.15.

regard for Christ, divine revelation remained possible.[280] Both Jennings and Isaac Watts (1674-1748) concluded that this revelation was the work of the Holy Spirit. Graham Beynon, in his 2016 commentary on reason and passion in the theology of Watts, stated that Watts 'believed that the use of reason and the work of the Spirit went hand in hand,'[281] and so dependence on the Holy Spirit was essential for preaching. Regarding the preparation and composing of a sermon, Watts wrote:

> … seek the direction and assistance of the Spirit of God, for inclining your thoughts to proper subjects, for guiding you to proper scriptures, and framing your whole sermon both as to the matter and manner, that it may attain the divine and sacred ends proposed.[282]

Philip Doddridge also supported this view. Preaching, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, was the means by which God awakened people's hearts and consciences.[283] To allow for clear, well-reasoned sermons that engaged and taught congregations, preachers had to prepare as instructed in the *Westminster Directory*. Also, it was argued that notes should be followed despite the leaning in nonconformist churches toward extempore sermons. Jennings noted that the preacher's notes would always be imperfect, yet it was the Holy Spirit that would make them applicable to the hearer.[284] Similarly, Watts relied 'on the Spirit for effective preaching that [would] reach the heart.'[285] Watts recommended, therefore, the preparation of headings but speaking extempore, to inform and arouse the 'listeners for the spiritual good'.[286] Doddridge encouraged his students to preach from notes which were more than just a set of brief notes, whilst discouraging them from using fully prepared text.[287] In using detailed notes, Doddridge counselled his students to master them before delivering the sermon:

[280] Rivers, 1991, p.186.
[281] Beynon, 2016, p.133.
[282] Watts, 2015, p.595.
[283] Clifford, 2002, p.159.
[284] Jennings, 1744, p.65.
[285] Beynon, 2016, p.138.
[286] Beynon, 2016, p.130.
[287] Deconinck-Brossard, 2009, p.121.

> Write your notes neatly and distinctly—Rule your paper, with a large margin—Let the heads be written apart, and the enlargement divided into various paragraphs, and each distinct sentence properly pointed, if in long hand—Let the scriptures be referred to in the margin, which will give an opportunity of recollecting much of the discourse, by a transient view,—especially if you write … not only those you professedly design to quote, but others whose phrases you borrow, or to which you only allude. Read over your notes attentively once or more, to fix your sermon in your memory, and to prevent the shame of frequently hesitating.[288]

2.3.2.3. Prayer

By the eighteenth century, the focal point of corporate worship in nonconformity had become the sermon, with all other aspects of worship building up to it (see Section 2.4).[289] This did not mean that prayer was thought insignificant. Matthew Henry described prayer as being a principal part of religious worship as it was the means for solemn and devout offerings to God that both acknowledge God's glory and share the desire that God may bless.[290] The significant role of prayer was evident in the liturgies of the established church from which nonconformists distanced themselves, as well as in the *Westminster Directory*. In the *Westminster Directory* prayer was a means of preparation and response for the congregation.

Prayer was not confined to corporate worship; it was perceived to be an important part of the Christian life as a whole. This led to a number of manuals on prayer being written that encouraged personal, as well as public or corporate prayer. These included *A Method for Prayer* (1710) by Henry and *A Guide to Prayer* (1715) by Watts. The importance of personal prayer was deduced from scripture. Watts wrote:

> Prayer is a part of divine worship that is required of all men … It is commanded to single persons in their private retirements, … and, in the midst of the businesses of life … It belongs also to the communities of men, whether they be natural, as families, or civil, as corporations, parliaments, courts, or societies for trade and business; and to religious communities, as when persons meet on any pious design, they should seek their God in the house of prayer. [291]

Henry shared this perspective. He wrote that prayer must:

---

[288] Doddridge, 1803, p.465.
[289] Watson, 1997, p.55.
[290] Henry, 1772, p.143.
[291] Watts, 1816, p.10.

> … run through the web of the whole Christian life; we must be frequently addressing ourselves to God in short and sudden ejaculations, by which we must keep up our communion with God in providences and common actions, as well as in ordinances and religious services. [292]

Therefore, along with the frequent reading of scripture, prayer was encouraged in nonconformity to be a regular practice of both families and individuals to sustain their communion with God. Doddridge urged those whom he taught carefully to put time aside for private devotion and 'make a serious business of secret and family prayer.'[293] Watts urged Christians to pray always.[294] It was within this wider context that nonconformist divines of the eighteenth century discussed the content and practice of prayer.

The importance of prayer in corporate worship may not have differed much between the established and nonconformist churches, but the method adopted while praying did. By the beginning of the eighteenth-century, extempore prayer was the accepted and most popular method of prayer in nonconformist worship. [295] This was a shift from what would have been the experience of prayer in corporate worship in the mid-seventeenth century, where there would have been a mixture of set forms of prayers read or recited alongside extempore prayer.[296] This is demonstrated from within the pages of the *Westminster Directory* where ministers were encouraged to pray in such a way that would stir up in the congregation's emotions that which would compel evidence of the Holy Spirit and of God's grace:[297]

> … the minister who is to preach, is to endeavour to get his own and his hearers hearts to be rightly affected with their sins, that they, may all mourn in sense thereof before the Lord, and hunger and thirst after the grace of God in Jesus Christ …[298]
>
> … All which he is to endeavour to perform with suitable affections, answerable to such as holy action, and to stir up the like in the people.[299]

---

[292] Henry, 1772, p.143.
[293] Doddridge, 1803, p.467.
[294] Watts, 1816, p.148.
[295] Branch, 2006, p.40.
[296] Ryrie, 2015, pp.214-5.
[297] Branch, 2006, p.43.
[298] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Publick Worship,* 1644, 'Of Publick Prayer Before the Sermon' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.25-32).
[299] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Publick Worship,* 1644, 'Of the Celebrating of the Communion, or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.46-51).

The *Book of Common Prayer* was perceived to stifle genuine, emotional responses and did not let the matters of the heart be brought before and be inspired by God.[300] This was true, Lori Branch suggested in a recent commentary on spontaneity in prayer, for all liturgical prayer. True prayer was that which had an 'emotional authenticity and sincerity' only testified to in 'spontaneous, unwritten and unpremeditated verbal prayer.'[301] Watts wrote:

> … The thoughts and affections of the heart that are truly pious and sincere, are wrought in us by the Spirit of God; and, if we deny them utterance, because they are not found in Prayer-books, we run the danger of resisting the Holy Ghost, quenching the Holy Spirit, and fighting again the kind designs of God towards us ...[302]

Extempore or spontaneous prayer was, for the nonconformist divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, only true prayer when spoken through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah Burroughs (1600-1646) wrote:

> Thus God's name will be sanctified when we put forth the graces of the Spirit in us and the Spirit comes and helps. And what comes from us now comes from the breathing of the Holy Spirit in us, and then God, who knows the meaning of the Spirit, will know the meaning of our sins and groans. Therefore, when you are going to prayer, you are to eye the Spirit of God. You are, by the eye of faith, to look upon the Spirit of God and to cast your soul upon the assistance of the Spirit of God. You are to look upon the Holy Ghost as appointed by the Father and the Son to that office to be a helper to His poor servants in the duties of worship, and especially in that great duty of prayer.[303]

In a discourse on Romans 7.26 and the nature of prayer, John Owen spoke in very similar terms. He expressed the view that humanity could not pray as it ought without the assistance of the Holy Spirit.[304] Owen acknowledged that scripture had its part in what was prayed, but it was only the Holy Spirit that could turn those words into prayer:

> It is true, that whatever we ought to pray for is declared in the Scripture … but it is one thing to have what we ought to pray for in the book, another thing to have it in our minds and hearts,—without which it will never be unto us the due matter of prayer. It is out of the "abundance of the heart" that the mouth must speak in this matter, Matt. xii. 34. There is, therefore, in us a threefold defect with respect unto the matter of prayer, which is supplied by the Holy Spirit, and can be so no other way nor by any other means; and therein is he unto us a Spirit of supplication according to promise. For,—1. We know not our own wants; 2. We know not the plies of them that are expressed in the promises of

[300] Branch, 2006, p.46.
[301] Branch, 2006, p.43.
[302] Watts, 1816, p,43.
[303] Burroughs, 1650, pp.388-9.
[304] Owen, 2012, p.646.

> God; and, 3. We know not the end whereunto what we pray for is to be directed, which I add unto the former.
> Without the knowledge and understanding of all these, no man can pray as he ought; and we can no way know them but by the aid and assistance of the Spirit of grace. And if these things be manifest, it will be evident how in this first instance we are enabled to pray by the Holy Ghost.[305]

These sentiments were reiterated by Doddridge when he reminded his students it was not the words of others but the office of the Holy Spirit that would help them pray:

> Engage in it … in dependence upon [the Spirit of God]; and maintain a continual dependence on the intercession and influence of Christ.[306]

Interestingly, Watts cautioned against over and under relying on the Holy Spirit:

> It is evident … that there is such a thing as the assistance of the Spirit of God in the work of prayer; but how far this assistance extends, is a farther subject of enquiry; and it is very necessary to have a just notion of the nature and bounds of this divine influence, that we may not expect more than God has promised, nor sit down negligently contented, without such degrees as may be attained.[307]

From his study of scripture, he believed that the Holy Spirit assisted in particular ways encouraging and enabling prayer but was not the sole source of a person's prayers. He wrote in his *Guide to Prayer*:

> … in our prayers, the Spirit of God leaves us a great deal to ourselves, to mingle many weaknesses and defects with our duties, in the matter, and in the manner, and in the words; so that we cannot say of one whole sentence, that it is the perfect or the pure work of the Spirit of God.[308]

This did not mean that Watts believed that the Holy Spirit did not provide an individual with the matter and method of prayer.[309] Neither did he believe that at times the Holy Spirit did not provide apt and proper expression.[310] But more often the work of the Holy Spirit in prayer was more subtle: enabling understanding, judgement, confidence; blessing diligence in study, meditation and attempts at prayer while inclining the heart to pray.[311]

When it came to corporate prayer, both Doddridge and Watts championed conceived rather than extempore prayer. Extempore prayer, as Watts and Doddridge defined it, was

[305] Owen, 2012, pp.646-7.
[306] Doddridge, 1803, p.468.
[307] Watts, 1816, p.148.
[308] Watts, 1816, p.150.
[309] Watts, 1816, p.153.
[310] Watts, 1816, p.154.
[311] Watts, 1816. pp.150-1.

observed as prayer without forethought or consideration to matter and expression; conceived prayer came from consideration and meditation on issues prior to the time of prayer, although no prayer was committed to paper such that it was repeated.[312] This was not a new concept, something very similar had been called for by Philip Nye (1595-1672) in the discussion of the *Westminster Directory* at the Assembly (Section 2.4.1). Conceived or studied prayer did not eliminate the work of the Holy Spirit or the passion that the Puritans believed the Holy Spirit gave to extempore prayer.[313] In Watts' and Doddridge's approach there was a refinement which encapsulated the logic and reason of the Enlightenment movement. A more reasoned approach to corporate prayer ensured that those gathered could understand and follow what was being prayed. Lengthy and obscure sentences were avoided and natural connection between petitions attempted to ensure a flowing transition.[314] Henry and Doddridge also encouraged the use of scripture within prayer. It was believed by both that it aided expression and took away the unexpected, which was one of the concerns over extempore prayer. Doddridge wrote:

> Use many scripture expressions in prayer. They are peculiarly affecting and very proper; and the hearers also from the beginning of them will know what they are to expect; and thus one great objection against extempore prayer will be removed.[315]

The evidence shows that prayer was believed to be influenced by the Holy Spirit, but reliance should be restrained. The Holy Spirit would assist; but extempore prayer did not mean that the content and expression of prayers came solely from the Holy Spirit. Extempore prayer was, for the Puritans, as much about passion and freedom of expression as the work of the Holy Spirit, and this was a view that was maintained into the eighteenth century. In addition, scripture, Henry observed, describes prayer as a drawing near to God, the lifting up of souls and the pouring out of hearts.[316] Therefore, in public prayer at least, with reference to scripture, a more reasoned, informed and prepared approach was favoured to aid all that were gathered in worship.

---

[312] Beynon, 2016, pp.176-7.
[313] Beynon, 2016, p.181.
[314] Doddridge, 1803, p.469; Beynon, 2016, p.178.
[315] Doddridge, 1803, p.470.
[316] Henry, 1772, p.143.

2.4. Order

The freedom to worship as one's conscience dictated or in response to the Holy Spirit did not mean that worship was without order. There was a distrust in fixed liturgy and the over reliance on written material, but this did not prevent corporate worship taking an implicit liturgical order. This was centred on the Word of God, originating from the European Reformation's emphasis on the authority of scripture and the need for the church to reform its worship in its light. By the eighteenth century when nonconformist Meeting Houses were being established, a typical order for a morning service on the Lord's Day, as recorded in an entry for 1723 in the Church Book of Bury Street Meeting House, St Mary Axe, was:

> … begin with singing a psalm, then a short prayer follows to desire the Divine Presence in all the following parts of worship; after that, about half an hour is spent in the exposition of some portion of scripture, which is succeeded by singing a psalm or hymn. After this the minister prays more at large, for all variety of blessings, spiritual and temporal, for the whole congregation, with confession of sins, and thanksgiving for mercies; petitions also are offered up for the whole world, for the churches of Christ, for the nation in which we dwell, for all our rulers and governors, together with any particular cases which are represented. Then a sermon is preached, and the … worship is concluded with a short prayer and the benediction.[317]

This basic order is also shown to have been used in meetings other than Sunday worship. Jonathan Adams, minister of Scotts Lane Independent Chapel, Salisbury, recorded in his diary of 1784 that at a ministers' meeting the order of their worship together was prayer and reading, intercessory prayer, sermon, and concluded with a prayer.[318]

What came to be the pattern of worship in nonconformist Meeting Houses, although influenced by the sixteenth century European Reformation, had its roots in some of the Puritan debates of the seventeenth century. Nonconformist ministers did not dismiss all liturgical material, and some of the early nonconformist ministers would have been well versed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. This order and the approach taken to it is consistent with the *Directory for Public Worship* (1644), which was produced by the Westminster Divines as they looked to reshape the Church of England. Given its

[317] Anonymous, 1914, p.334; Cornick, 1998, p.85.
[318] Diary entry for 17 March 1784, Jonathan Adams, Minister of Scotts Lane Independent Chapel, Salisbury.

publication during the first English Civil War, and the fact that it was never endorsed by Parliament in the way that the *Book of Common Prayer* was, there is little evidence to suggest that it was widely adopted. Nevertheless, what was achieved in the *Westminster Directory* has had a long-lasting influence on nonconformist worship, as well as being the standard from which worship in Presbyterian churches developed (Chapter 4).

2.4.1. The Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Public Worship of God (1644)

The breadth within Puritanism in England meant that there was a broad spectrum of views on how public worship should be conducted. Although there was agreement that it should be based on scripture and ruled by the Word of God, its form was a matter of debate. At one end of the scale there were those who conceived pure worship as definable by a prayer book. At the other end, there were those who understood worship as Spirit-inspired and therefore more spontaneous.[319] Consequently, when official reform of the Church of England began in the Westminster Assembly, it was not surprising that a substantial part of the divines' work was the determination of how a uniform approach to public worship could be achieved across a diverse church. The Westminster Assembly, having identified the church in England and Scotland as reformed, saw its main concern as defining church governance and corporate worship.[320] Throughout the meetings of the Westminster Assembly in 1644, following the work of a small sub-committee,[321] the *Westminster Directory* was drafted as a liturgical standard for the church. Some heralded the achievement as a triumph because it conceived a 'mode of worship compatible with the Word of God,' whilst others believed it 'burdensome at best, and repugnant to scripture at worst.'[322] It demonstrated, Ian Breward suggested more recently, 'how reform of liturgy could be profoundly unitive because it was faithfully Biblical.'[323] Yet, the *Westminster*

---

[319] Davies, 1948, p.127; McNally, 1958, p.8.
[320] Warfield, 2015, p.16.
[321] The sub-committee consisted of Stephen Marshall (chair), Herbert Palmer, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Young, Charles Herle and the Scottish Commissioners (Davies, 1948, p.128). Goodwin was the only member of the committee who could have been described as being on the independent end of the Puritan spectrum.
[322] McNally, 1958, p.1.
[323] Breward, 1980, p.3.

Directory was a book of compromise, going too far for some and not far enough for others in its instruction of the worship of the church. Robert Baillie (1602-1662) one of the Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, in a report on discussions of the preface to the *Westminster Directory*, demonstrated the breadth of views on its purpose:

> … one party purposing by the preface to turn the Directorie to a straight Liturgie; the other to make it so loose and free, that it should serve for little use: but God helped us to get both these rocks eschewed.[324]

The shared conviction of the Westminster Assembly was that the 'acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestion of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.'[325] Although this was a response primarily made to the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, it also sets out why the Puritans sought to remove formal ritual of the *Book of Common Prayer* and therefore the worship of the Church of England. In addition, the constraints of set prayers were believed to be devices that made and increased 'an idle and unedifying ministry', suppressing the exercise of the gift of prayer given by Christ to those called to the office of minister.[326] George Gillespie (1613-1648), another of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, raised the point that 'a man does better to stir up his own gifts than use set forms'.[327]

To ensure that worship was sound in doctrine and prayer, and uniform across the church, ministers at least needed to be directed in the administration of the ordinances required of the church by God. Therefore, what was aimed for was a rubric that took the 'merits of a prayer book without its attendant disadvantages.'[328] The *Westminster Directory* was intended to be scriptural, comprehensive and, most importantly, orderly. What the Westminster Divines achieved was an order of directives, some of which were

---

[324] Baillie, 1841, p.242.
[325] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 21.1 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016).
[326] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Publick Worship,* 1644, 'The Preface' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, p.18); Davies, 1948, p.128.
[327] Van Dixhoorn and Wright, 2012b, p.438.
[328] Davies, 1948, p.129.

suggestions, while others were commands: the minister 'may do' something at times and then at other times 'shall do'. Chad Van Dixhoorn and David Wright noted, in their recent transcripts of the Westminster Assembly, that 'practices are variously termed 'necessary' or 'requisite', but also 'expedient', 'convenient' or 'sufficient'.'[329] There is also terminology such as 'is to', 'to this effect' and 'shall judge it necessary'. The 'shall do' elements were related to the general order, the practice of reading scripture and the aspects of the administration of the sacraments. For example, when baptising a child, the *Westminster Directory* stated that the minister 'is to say, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost".[330] The 'may do' elements related primarily to content. Where prayers were given, they were accompanied with the direction 'to this effect'. This suggested that the minister had a freedom of choice over the words used as long as the prayer kept to the purpose described. The expounding of scriptures away from the preaching of the Word was also at the discretion of the minister, although the Westminster Divines did recommend the choice to do so should not be taken without regard to the rest of worship:

> When the minister who readeth shall judge it necessary to expound any part of what is read, let it not be done until the whole chapter or psalm be ended; and regard is always to be had unto the time, that neither preaching, nor other ordinances be straitened, or rendered tedious.[331]

The *Westminster Directory* may have felt like a compromise for the Westminster Divines, not offering an act of corporate worship any of divines could own as fully representative of their position on worship and its practices. It provided a middle way: the combination 'of spontaneity of free prayer with the advantages of an ordered context or framework for worship.'[332] It avoided, as Horton Davies wrote, the 'deadening effect of reiterated liturgy as also the pitfall of extempore prayer—the disorderly meanderings of the minister.'[333] It also allowed for prayers that were not only extempore. Philip Nye, in the discussion over

---

[329] Van Dixhoorn and Wright, 2012a, p.28.
[330] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Public Worship*, 1644, 'Of the Administration of the Sacraments' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.42-51).
[331] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Public Worship*, 1644, 'Of Publick Reading of the Holy Scriptures' (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.23-4).
[332] Davies, 1948, p.141.
[333] Davies, 1948, p.141.

the content of the *Westminster Directory*, argued the case for 'conceived' or, as he called them, 'studied' prayers:

> I plead for neither, but for studied prayers. Those are either such as are made once for all as some men, others attend to suite their prayers to occasions, but studyed and premeditated. If you speake nothing here in way of prevention, I know noe reason if any man thinke upon a studyed forme. I should advise such men rather take of[f] this than any of[f] their owne.[334]

This put the *Westminster Directory* in the lineage of Geneva and the Calvinist liturgies by recognising that the church was not claiming the liberty to worship God as it pleased, rather to worship God according to how God desired to be worshipped as revealed in scripture.[335]

2.5. Participation

Puritan worship was 'above all to be worship of the congregation, and therefore in the mother tongue and in contemporary language.'[336] This reform of the worship of the church, which began in the sixteenth century with the European Reformers, was one that the Puritans ensured would be the case in the Church of England and beyond: 'the right of common people to join in the praise of God.'[337] The vernacular not only permitted a congregation to utter words of praise that might glorify God, it allowed them to be fully part of communion with God that worship intends while enabling the congregation to make responses to God. This in turn solidified the concept of nonconformist churches being communions of saints who tried to make the true church of Christ visible in the world.

2.5.1. Communion with God and of the Saints

In the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, one of the areas the Puritans were at odds over the nature of the true church. Those who were deeply rooted in the theology of John Calvin stated:

---

[334] Westminster Assembly, Session 316, 6 November 1644 (Van Dixhoorn and Wright, 2012b, p.438).
[335] Davies, 1948, pp.141-2.
[336] Wakefield, 1959, pp.64-5.
[337] Davies, 1948, p.162.

> … because a small and contemptible number are hidden in a huge multitude and a few grains of wheat are covered by a pile of chaff, we must leave to God alone the knowledge of his church, whose foundation is his secret election. It is not sufficient, indeed, for us to comprehend in mind and thought the multitude of the elect …[338]

Essentially, this made the true church invisible. Nevertheless, through the visible church the true church could be made manifest particularly where the Word of God was 'purely preached and heard and the sacraments administered according the Christ's institution.'[339] This meant that for Calvin salvation could not occur outside the visible church, although logically some among the elect might well be part of the visible church if the sovereignty of God is upheld fully, as Calvin would insist.[340] But there were those Puritans who saw the true church as being visible. This meant the church had to be separate from the world, governed only by Christ, the true head of the church. The tensions these different perspectives caused were primarily about governance and discipline within the church, not worship. Yet full participation in worship came from the understanding of being the church of God.

The middle ground achieved by the Westminster Assembly was:

> Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ.[341]

The church as a communion of professed saints, those who demonstrated they were converted and properly belonged to the elect, was one that was visible and therefore bound to one another. In nonconformity, particularly in the Independent and then Congregational churches, this was underwritten by individuals covenanting to a way of being the church together in a particular place. Importantly, entering into such a covenant by individuals was voluntary, although it required new members to convince the church meeting that they were fully converted. This is key to why the communion of saints in this

---

[338] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1559, 4.1.2 (Calvin, 1960, p1013).
[339] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, 4.1.9 (Calvin, 1960, p.1023).
[340] Bradbury, 2013, p.42.
[341] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, 26.2 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016).

setting was understood as the true church visible. Dorothea Jordon suggested that that word 'voluntary' was understood in terms of religious liberty or freedom.[342] As discussed earlier (Section 2.3.1), religious freedom was initially understood in terms of knowledge of oneself being bound within the knowledge and judgement of God. Therefore, that communion with the saints related to being in communion with God, which in part was seen as an aim of worship. The concept of local congregations being governed by local covenants was not envisioned by the Westminster Divines for the Church of England. To be a part of a local congregation, an individual was to make a profession of faith. Discipline of that congregation, however, was governed by a scheme for the whole national church with reference to what should happen in local congregations.[343]

John Owen (1616-1683), when addressing the role of the Holy Spirit in public worship in his sermon on Ephesians 2.18, tied together the communion of saints and the communion with God in worship by means of the Holy Spirit. As has been shown in Section 2.3.2, Owen in the *Nature and Beauty of Gospel Worship* reiterated how the Holy Spirit illuminates scripture, assists and gives the necessary gifts for prayer and preaching.[344] According to Owen, this is not all that the Holy Spirit does in public worship. As Ryan McGraw, in his commentary on Owen's theology, summarised, for Owen, 'whenever the church gathers for worship, there the Spirit meets her and ushers her into the Father's presence through the Son.'[345] Owen highlighted the church gathered because in Ephesians 2.21-22 this was the apostle Paul's message to the church in Ephesus: through Christ the church is built into the spiritual dwelling place of God.[346] Owen does not dismiss God's presence with the individual, but as David Clarkson (1622-1686), a contemporary and colleague of Owen, wrote:

---

[342] Jordon, 1922, p.262.
[343] Westminster Assembly, *A Directory for Church Government and Ordination of Ministers*, 1647, 'Of Particular Congregations' (Westminster Assembly, 1647, pp.6-9); Zakai, 1989, p.9.
[344] McGraw, 2014, pp.76-7.
[345] McGraw, 2014, p.79.
[346] Owen, 1721, Sermon VI, (2).3.

> But you will say, Is not the Lord present with his servants when they worship him in private? It is true; but so much of his presence is not vouchsafed, nor ordinarily enjoyed, in private as in public. If the experience of any find it otherwise, they have cause to fear the Lord is angry, they have given him some distaste, some offence; if they find him not most, where ordinarily he is most to be found, and this is in public ordinances, for the Lord is most there where he is most engaged to be, but he has engaged himself to be most there where most of his people are. The Lord has engaged to be with every particular saint, but when the particulars are joined in public worship, there are all the engagements united together. The Lord engages himself to let forth as it were, a stream of his comfortable, quickening presence to every particular person that fears him, but when many of these particulars join together to worship God, then these several streams are united and meet in one. So that the presence of God, which, enjoyed in private, is but a stream, in public becomes a river, a river that makes glad the city of God. The Lord has a dish for every particular soul that truly serves him; but when many particulars meet together, there is a variety, a confluence, a multitude of dishes. The presence of the Lord in public worship makes it a spiritual feast, and so it is expressed, Isa. xxv. 6. There is, you see, more of God's presence in public worship …[347]

Therefore, corporate worship for Owen and Clarkson revealed the true church to the world and what being part of the church was about—part of the one body, Christ's—which was central to the definition of the church in both the *Westminster Confession* and *Savoy Declaration*.[348] How much these ideas translated into the eighteenth century is an area of further research, however, from the Church Book in Bury St Edmunds some of this can be observed in this particular church's thinking in its covenant. When renewing the covenant in 1700, and while speaking of the relationship between themselves at that time, their agreement with a confession of faith written for the church in 1655 was confirmed. In this confession of faith, when discussing the church, allusion was made to Calvin's visible-invisible distinction.[349] Yet, they did believe themselves a true visible church of Christ, which as a communion of saints waited on God through the ordinances brought together in public worship:

> We doe believe y^{t} this particular visible church wch spiritually is called sion, is founded and built upon Christ Jesus the spirituall rock, and y^{t} no stones may be laid in this building but such as are living and spirituall stones, visible saints and faithful in Xt Jesus, according to the promise of the father made unto the gospel and spirituall sion … We doe believe y^{t} this particular visible church consisting of visible saints and of such only, acknowledgeth no other Lord but Jesus Xt and that she lives, moves and acts in all things by influence of life,

[347] Clarkson, 1696.
[348] Westminster Assembly, *Confession of Faith*, 1646, ch.25 (Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016); Savoy Assembly, *A Declaration of Faith and order owned and practiced in the Congregational Churches in England*, 1658, ch.26 (Matthews, 1959, pp.111-2).
[349] Bury St Edmunds Independent Church, Record from 12th December 1700, Church Book (1646-1801) (Duncan, 1961).

> life and grace from him without whom she can doe nothing: And that she acteth according to his laws and institutions and them only rejecting all the prudential decress, Canons, Laws. Constitutions and inventions of men in the matters of worship and discipline as abominable and vile, seeing Gods alter is polluted if mans toole be lifted up upon it …We doe believe y^{t} communion of saints, prayer, hearing the word preached and singing of psalms are ordinances and appointments of It for conversion and edification of souls and for the worship and service of God …[350]

2.5.2. Response and Praise

Participation in the expression of the visible church may have been one way the congregation participated when coming to an act of corporate worship, but it was not all that came to be required of a congregation as a communion of saints. The *Westminster Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* began with the statement that the chief and highest end of man [sic.] 'is to glorify God and enjoy him forever,'[351] and this pertained to the necessity of response and praise in corporate worship. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, how these were approached and developed can be seen in further examination of preaching of the time and discussion over the use of psalmody and later hymnody in public worship.

2.5.2.1. Preaching

If the sermon was an act of hearing rather than an act of speaking, it must have included an element of application to allow, if not ensure, the response of the hearer. In a recent analysis, Charles Hambrick-Stowe stated that:

> the Puritan movement called for exegetical and evangelistic sermons painstakingly prepared for each service of worship by preachers trained in biblical scholarship and delivered in plain language that would connect with the daily lives of ordinary people.[352]

The basic idea of the sermon, as already discussed (Section 2.3.2.2), was to divide it into doctrine, reason, and application. This was to help the listener understand that theology has been actively involved in the practice of faith. Hambrick-Stowe went on to say how

---

[350] Bury St Edmunds Independent Church, Record from 1st January 1655, scribed by Thomas Taylor in the Church Book (1646-1801) (Duncan, 1961).
[351] Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, 1647, q.1; Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 1647, q.1.
[352] Hambrick-Stowe, 2008, p.195.

‘sermons aimed to engage listeners in the biblical redemption narrative and, by the work of the Holy Spirit, empower them for obedient living.’[353] This is demonstrated in the instructions in the *Westminster Directory*:

> In raising doctrines from the text, his care ought to be, First, that the matter be the truth of God. Secondly, that it be a truth contained in, or grounded on, that text that the hearer may discern how God teacheth it from thence. Thirdly, that he chiefly insist upon those doctrines which are principally intended, and make most from the edification of his hearer. [354]

For the Word of God to be heard in the sermon, the preacher could only do so much: the hearer too had their part to play. John Newman (1677-1741) in his Eastcheap lecture ‘On the Nature of Hearing the Word’ (1713) said to those that would be hearers of sermons:

> It is possible that persons may so far attend as to hear every word in a sermon, and yet, through the ignorance and darkness of their own minds, they may understand little or nothing of the heavenly doctrine couched in those words. … you must be very sensible of the ignorance and blindness of your own minds; your very great proneness to fall into mistakes and errors, and of how much you stand in need of the special illuminations and teachings of the Holy Ghost. …[355]

Therefore, it was not only the preacher who was to depend on the Holy Spirit, the ability of the congregation adequately to attend and participate in public worship involved the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah Burroughs encouraged congregations themselves to pray for the aid of the Holy Spirit as they came to listen: ‘Pray beforehand that God would open your eyes and open your heart and accompany His Word.’[356]

Burroughs, in emphasising the importance of the congregation’s hearing God’s Word in the sermon, also emphasised that from hearing the Word the people needed to live out God’s will. He wrote:

---

[353] Hambrick-Stowe, 2008, p.196.
[354] Westminster Assembly, *Directory of Public Worship*, 1644, ‘Of the Preaching of the Word’ (Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645, pp.33-9).
[355] Newman, 1816, pp.23-4. The Eastcheap Lectures were a set of lectures endowed by prosperous dissenting merchants to promote an interest in psalmody and worship (Kaye, 1968, p.26; Wykes, 2004, p.578). They began in 1708 with a series on the duty of singing, but covered other subjects such as the Christian duties of prayer, praise, hearing the Word and reading the scriptures. As well as Thomas Reynolds speaking at the lectures, other notable dissenting ministers and divines of the time were invited to give lectures including Benjamin Grosvenor, Thomas Bradbury, Jabez Earle, William Harris and John Newman.
[356] Burroughs, 1650, p.208.

> … when you come to hear the Word, come with a resolution to yield whatever God shall reveal to be His mind. "I am not going to hear Your Word, O Lord, to wait upon You, to know what You have to say to me, And You who are the Searcher of all hearts, You know that I go with such a resolution to yield up myself to every truth of Yours."[357]

Hearing of God's Word should cause a response in the congregation. Primarily, this was in the way they lived their lives outside that gathering for public worship, but on occasions it would cause a response to be vocalised by members of the congregation within corporate worship.

For those churches that would have identified themselves as Independent in the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, to become a member of a particular church required an individual to make a testimony, either spoken or written. This relates back to the idea of the church being the visible communion of saints, and therefore was made a condition of a church's polity within the *Savoy Declaration*:

> The Members of these Churches are Saints by Calling, visible manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto the Call of Christ, who being further known to each other by their confession of Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves or otherwise manifested, do willing consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.[358]

These testimonies were often related to how hearing the Word of God in a sermon had caused an individual to come to God. Joseph Hussey (1660-1726) records a number of such testimonies in the Church Book for the Great Meeting in Cambridge,[359] and they are also found throughout the Church Book for the Independent Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds. For example on 24th February 1712:

---

[357] Burroughs, 1650, p.206.

[358] Savoy Assembly, *Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ*, 1658, §8 (Matthews, 1959, p.122).

[359] For example, in 1694, Joseph Hussey recorded Goody Lofts 'declared God's work on her soul' and 'Mr Blackly's daughter, a great influence of Free Grace, was admitted then, by confession of the mouth.' Taken from the photo archive of Joseph Hussey's Church Book, which covered his ministry at the Great Meeting, Cambridge, 1691-1791. [Photo archive held by Margaret Thompson; church book part of the archives of Emmanuel United Reformed Church held by the Cambridgeshire Archive Services].

> John Adams single man related the dealings of God with his soul, how he was let to see his condition by Nature under Mr Rawlins ministry from Rom.6 last and was wonderfully comforted by a sermon preach'd by ye Pastor, also at Bansfield-Hall from Gal. 3 13 of Christs redeeming from ye Curse of ye Law. He tho't he saw his miserable Condition by Nature & ye Love of Christ in laying down his Life. And was comforted by a sermon of Mr. Doughty from John 3. 14 15. As also very much from that Text 1 Joh. 1. 7 etc.[360]

And on the 2nd May 1713:

> Henry Last of Chevington a poor Cripple from the Womb, having related how he was convinced of a lost Estate without Repentance with He knew not how to attain & tempted to think He was too old to repent & encouraged by ye Parable Matth. 20.1-7, & from ye Parable of ye Prodigal expounded by Mr Doughty, & a sermon preach'd by ye Pastor from Psalm 66.16 & how Christ was previous to him etc. & was encouraged to leave the World & follow ye Dissenters from Joh. 15.18.19 wth some other Particulars was read with good satisfaction & sat down with us.[361]

2.5.2.2. Hymns

As discussed above (Section 2.4), psalmody was another part of corporate worship that was seen as essential for the praise of God, although not always practised because of the persecution in the late seventeenth-century, when singing could have alerted government spies and informers to the whereabouts of congregations. [362] Not to sing psalms would have gone against the authority of scripture and there was the belief that the only proper words for worship were biblical words. Despite this, in the eighteenth century, theologians such as Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge raised the issue of the relevance of the Psalms to the church and although the Puritans argued that the Psalms were scriptural songs, scripture did not restrict the church to just the singing of Psalms. Doddridge in his hymn writing believed that he was acting in accordance with scriptural teachings, highlighting that the apostle Paul urged the early church to praise God with hymns and spiritual songs and not just psalms.[363] Doddridge interpreted the apostle Paul to be saying that in public worship, along with the Davidic Psalms, other evangelical hymns composed under the

[360] Bury St Edmunds Independent Church, Record made by Mr John Beart, Pastor, from 24th February 1712 in the Church Book (1646-1801) (Duncan, 1961, p.132). The referred to Mr Doughty was the Pastor in Soham.
[361] Bury St Edmunds Independent Church, Record made by Mr John Beart, Pastor, from 24th May 1713 in the Church Book (1646-1801) (Duncan, 1961, p.132).
[362] Kaye, 1968, p.26.
[363] Clifford, 2002, p.195.

influence of the Holy Spirit should be sung.[364] Watts, although taking a very scriptural approach to his hymn writing, argued the need for hymns from the perspective of doctrine. J. R. Watson, in his discussion of Watts' hymnody, wrote that:

> Watts was so concerned about the absence of specifically Christian doctrine in the psalms that he felt it necessary to add some wherever possible, to give what he called 'an evangelic turn to the Hebrew sense', and 'to accommodate the book of Psalms to Christian worship'…[365]

This need for songs that were meaningful to the church was a further interpretation of the apostle Paul's letter to the early church, particularly to the church in Colossae. Not only was the church to sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs, their purpose was both to glorify God and educate the church.[366] To that end, it was important that what the church was singing was understood by those assembled and had meaning in the context of their Christian faith, or as Jabez Earle (1676-1768) put it in one of his Eastcheap lectures:

> A man must understand and actually consider what he says, when he sings the Praises of God … Otherwise what he does is no more an Act of Worship or Devotion, than the Noise of a musical Instrument. …[367]

Therefore, by the late eighteenth century, singing in nonconformist worship had gained a high reputation and significant collections of hymns were being published.[368] Watts was one of the leading figures in this, but others such as Doddridge and Benjamin Beddome (1717-1795) were writing hymns that enabled congregations to make collective responses of praise and thanksgiving to God, as well as providing an additional tool to preaching for edification.

As with aspects of prayer in the worship of the church, the singing of hymns and psalms concerned making worship ultimately about the glorification of God. Congregational singing is another aspect of worship which emphasises that idea of covenant in worship: in this instance, the covenant between God and humanity that all participate in through communion with God. Earle stated that the glory of God was the ultimate aim of Christians

---

[364] Clifford, 2002, p.195.
[365] Watson, 1997, p.153.
[366] Colossians 3.16. The King James version interprets this verse as: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
[367] Earle, 1707, pp.6-7.
[368] Temperley, 2011, p.210.

and their actions and that it is only by praising God that God is acknowledged and proclaimed.[369] For Watts there was more at stake than just the acknowledgment of God. It was in singing praise that the worship of the church achieved its nearest imitation of the worship of heaven.[370] To achieve this, praise had to come from worshippers speaking to God from their hearts.[371] This inference of the aim of singing to be the glorification of God demonstrated a subtle shift in the practice of worship in the eighteenth-century, which some suggest is linked to the rise of reason and the age of enlightenment.[372] This also returns to the ideas of the Westminster Divines contained in the *Westminster Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* that the chief aim of human beings is to glorify God.[373] One way the Divines believed this was done was through God's praises being uttered in worship.[374] So although the Puritan focus for worship had been the downward movement of God through word and sacrament, singing and hymnody reversed this and worship became again an upward movement from the people to God.[375] Therefore, praise had to be about more than just singing the words of scripture in the Psalm; what was sung had to be about the personal experience of God whilst making a response, as Watts put it, as 'a redeemed community.'[376] In this we have participation as the community of saints in God brought together with an expression of participation in corporate worship. The singing of hymns enabling a corporate, ordered response.

It was the need for personal experience and communal response to be reflected in the church's singing that led to Watts' hymns. Although based on scripture, they were representative of the thoughts and feelings of those who were engaged with the philosophical and religious ideas of the age.[377] In the preface to his collection of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Watts wrote:

---

[369] Earle, 1707, pp.9-10.
[370] Watts, 1718, p.iii.
[371] Beynon, 2016, p.155.
[372] Watson, 1997, p.138; Beynon, 2016, pp.151-5.
[373] Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, 1647, q.1; Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 1647, q.1.
[374] Vincent, 1723, p.12.
[375] Beynon, 2016, p.146.
[376] Beynon, 2016, p.156.
[377] Watson, 1997, p.133.

> The most frequent Tempers and Changes of our Spirit, and Conditions of our Life are here copied, and the Breathings of our Piety exprest according to the variety of our Passions, our Love, our Fear, our Hope, our Desire, our Sorrow, our Wonder and our Joy, as they are refin'd into Devotion, and act under the Influence and Conduct of the Blessed Spirit; all conversing with God the Father by the new and living Way of Access to the Throne, even the Person and the Mediation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. To him also, … I have address'd many a Song; for thus doth the holy Scripture instruct and teach us to worship, in the various short Patterns of Christian Psalmodie described in Revelations. I have avoided the more obscure and controverted Points of Christianity that we might all obey the Direction of the Word of God, and *sing his Praises with Understanding*, Psal. 47.7.[378]

To that end, the shift from psalmody to hymnody became about the education of the congregation in the truths of the gospel and the glorification of God.

During the twentieth century, Erik Routley suggested that hymns are not a good source of doctrine, but they provide rhetorical presentations of aspects of faith.[379] Alan Clifford, in his discussion of Doddridge's life and work, shared a similar view saying that rather than theological documents, hymns are 'visions in verse'.[380] While this might be true, the hymns of Watts and Doddridge cannot be described as devoid of doctrine or to be without influence on the theology of the church's understanding of worship. As already highlighted, Watts' first reform to the singing of the church was to recast the Psalms in Christian language and teaching.[381] The hymns of Watts, Doddridge, and others, were not just about turning scripture into the words congregations could use collectively as a response to their faith in a way that was understandable to them. The hymns spoke of the nature of God, of Christ and of the church. Bernard Lord Manning found within many of Watts' hymns a survey of nature and the central role of a crucified and dying creator within it.[382] Watson explained this finding by stating that Watts' hymnody was 'based on a system of belief which he drew from his study of natural philosophy and theology' that insisted on the importance of a 'revealed religion and the saving grace of Jesus Christ.'[383] Routley found examples that spoke of the connection between grace and the providence

[378] Watts, 1718, p.vii.
[379] Routley, 1951a, p.66.
[380] Clifford, 2002, p.195.
[381] Watts, 1722, preface; Watson, 1997, p.153.
[382] Manning, 1942, p.83; Cousland, 1948, p.295.
[383] Watson, 1997, pp.135-6.

of God in the hymns of Doddridge to help expound some of the mysteries of faith.[384] Routley suggested that this not only made the hymns poignant to the collective teaching of the church but also offered a tool for private meditation.[385]

The doctrinal themes that were evident in the hymns of the eighteenth century were very closely tied to the themes that were being preached from the pulpits. Watts to some extent, but Doddridge and Beddome particularly wrote hymns that versified and emphasised what had been taught in the sermon. The idea behind this, Watson explained, was to make the sermon more memorable and help send the congregation out with the Bible message explained and elucidated and with spiritual inspiration and intellectual food for the coming week.'[386] This connection with preaching also allowed for the application of personal feeling and testimony, as the hymn writers applied similar rules to those they used for writing sermons.[387] So, although hymns were designed mainly for congregational singing, as in preaching, the personal, Watson observed, gave an authenticity, which allowed the words of the hymns to be owned by the congregation.[388]

2.6. Conclusion

The understanding of freedom and participation by the end of the eighteenth century was significant in how nonconformists approached corporate worship. Participation was concerned with the formation and fellowship of church communities in worship, rather than actions undertaken by the congregation in worship. This did not mean such elements were non-existent. Hymn and psalm singing was encouraged but spoken congregational responses were largely dismissed by Puritans as they believed it caused chaos and babble. Freedom in worship developed as an expression of freedom of conscience and thought whilst also being an action of the Holy Spirit. In combination with political tension over the governance of the church, this meant that fixed and prescribed liturgies for

[384] Routley, 1951b, p.25.
[385] Routley, 1951b, p.27.
[386] Watson, 1997, p.58.
[387] Watson, 1997, p.57.
[388] Watson, 1997, p.58.

worship came to be disregarded, if not thought of as suspicious. Despite this, worship had an inherent order in which freedom and participation acted to enable the glorification of God and the edification of the people. This inter-relationship between freedom, order and participation was the foundation from which Congregational and Presbyterian worship in England developed, as will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3. WORSHIP IN CONGREGATIONALISM

3.1. Introduction

Ernest Price wrote that Congregationalists cherish freedom 'because it makes for spiritual progress.'[389] Through their belief that Christ leads the church in the way of truth, Price asserted that Congregationalists claim the freedom 'to act in accordance with [Christ's] will,' and 'to shape Christian policy and programme to meet the challenge' of the day and generation.[390] As demonstrated in the previous chapter, this was the premise of freedom established by the Puritans and early nonconformists in England. Yet, Price's assertation shows that freedom works with and in the spheres of order and participation, those conjoined elements that enable and provide a fuller description of corporate worship in the church. Therefore, corporate worship whilst couched in the language of freedom was not for Congregationalists only an action of freedom. It was a blending of order and freedom that enabled churches to worship God with reverence and encouraged the fullest possible participation.[391]

This chapter will show how an understanding of freedom, order and participation can be discerned from the patterns of corporate worship in English Congregationalism, examining how the approach to each developed as a structured denomination established itself. Consequently, the discussion of freedom, order and participation will be preceded by a brief description of how Congregationalism established itself in England as a Union and later, before uniting with the Presbyterian Church of England, became the Congregational Church in England and Wales. This is not an exhaustive history but highlights aspects of the developing ecclesiology important to understanding the relationship of freedom, order and participation in describing the Congregationalists' approach to corporate worship.

[389] Price, 1924, p.37.
[390] Price, 1924, p.37.
[391] Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1936, p.9; The Congregational Church in England and Wales, 1970, p.vii.

The analysis of freedom, order and participation in the context of Congregational worship comes primarily from the writings of theologians and historians of the tradition, with the support of particular examples from Church Meeting Minutes and records of the Union meetings alongside other publications related to the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the preceding Union.

3.2. Brief history of the English-speaking Congregationalism in England and Wales

As shown in Chapter 2, the approach of a church to its worship is connected to its ecclesiology. Congregationalism in England took on the shape of a denomination from the second quarter of the nineteenth century.[392] Being recognised as Congregational was not a new identification, there are instances of people defining themselves as such dating back at least to 1658. However, for the purpose of this thesis, this terminology applies only for the union of churches that established itself formally in the 1830s, acknowledging that much had changed in the meantime in self-understanding and in definition of identity and mission. They continued to develop their ecclesiological understanding to the point of the formation of the United Reformed Church.

Communication and fellowship between local Independent churches was not uncommon from their emergence in England.[393] They would gather for ordinations, inductions, funerals, 'special days of fasting and humiliation or of thanksgiving,' and in some areas for

[392] Congregational churches as part of the Congregational Union of England and Wales would not have recognised themselves to be part of a denomination in the first instance. This terminology is relatively new and used in the discussion of modern ecclesiology. A denomination is a subgroup within a religion that operates under a common name, tradition and identity. It may not have a hierarchical organisational structure, but it will have a governing polity.

[393] Independent churches were the nonconformist churches that advocated local congregational control of religious and church matters without a perceived need for wider ecclesiastical hierarchy. As gathered churches, their roots can be traced back to Robert Browne 'who in 1581 gathered in Norwich a church of like-minded believers, bound to God and each other by mutual covenant.' (Pope, 2016, p.579) This also led to the Separatist movement. Independent churches grew in number on the principle of working for reform of the church in England, and they set out a faith and order in the *Savoy Declaration* (1658). In England, a number of Congregational churches were founded as Independent churches between 1643 and 1660. However, there were also a number that were a result of the Great Ejectment in 1662 when approximately 2500 clergy lost or left their livings because of dissent to or concerns over the demands and constraints placed on clergy by the Act of Uniformity, (Cornick, 1998, p.61). See Section 2.2 for a more detailed description of the divisions within the church in England during the seventeenth century.

lecture series.[394] There was no common organisation among them until the success of the Evangelical Revival which gave rise to radical alteration in Congregationalists' view of the church.[395] At this point it was perceived that the local gathered church of the saved was 'no longer a spiritually self-sufficient unit,' it needed its neighbours to feel stronger.[396] Therefore, Independent churches began to co-operate with other like-minded churches to make the mission of the church successful in cities and countryside.[397] This led initially to the establishment of County Unions or District Associations, where collectively the Independent churches in an area set out their purpose of association. For example, the aim of the Wiltshire and East Somerset Association (formed in 1796) was 'to promote mutual edification by Christian and ministerial intercourse, and to diffuse plans for the spread of the Gospel.'[398] Albert Peel suggested that, in general, the aim of the Wiltshire and East Somerset Association is descriptive of all the County Unions. From the constitution of the Yorkshire Congregational Union (established in 1872), Peel's conclusion holds true as this is the underlying thought behind the more detailed and ordered objects of the Union:

> … to cultivate Christian communion among the churches
> to promote co-operation among the associated churches
> to … promote the formation of Congregational Churches, to give pecuniary aid
> to small or new churches and support evangelists
> to promote Evangelical religion
> to collect and disseminate information
> to … prevent the alienation of trust property
> to obtain and maintain the civil and religious rights of Protestant Nonconformists.[399]

As the churches began to discover the strength that derived from these County Unions, and more were being formalised across the country in England, the argument was made for a national confederation.[400] The proposal for a national union was first made in 1806

---

[394] Brown, 1877, p.187; Wadsworth, 1972, p.13.
[395] Evangelical Revival was a movement in the eighteenth century that emphasised the biblical faith, personal conversion and piety. It was primarily a movement of the Anglican tradition, but the ideas of evangelism, social welfare and mission influenced the nonconformist churches.
[396] Routley, 1961, pp.63-4.
[397] Peel, 1931, p.70.
[398] Peel, 1931, p.70; Routley, 1961, p.69.
[399] Wadsworth, 1972, p.15. Similarly, the Surrey Union described its purpose as being 'to promote the union and efficiency of the churches, and the spread of evangelical religion; to advance the principles of Nonconformity; and to uphold and enlarge civil and religious freedom' (Cleal and Crippen, 1908, p.xiii).
[400] Dale, 1907, p.686.

by the London Board of Congregational ministers but was strongly resisted because of the fear that churches would lose their autonomy.[401] In the formation of the County Unions it was clearly recognised that all the associated churches maintained their independence to manage their own affairs.[402] Inevitably, as the idea of a large, central organisation developed, questions of polity arose, particularly concerning whether the principle of freedom and how much of it could be maintained by affiliated churches.[403] There was also the view held by some that one of the positive features of Independency was that it was not a denomination.[404] Despite the vociferous arguments against a national Union, the need for such a Union became apparent as the number of churches grew, as did practical problems which were difficult to solve in isolation, such as the provision, maintenance and training of pastors. The promotion of publications like the *Congregational Magazine* among the churches began to instil a denominational consciousness.[405] Alongside this, Congregationalists in England believed that the organisation and management of the church should be separate from the government of the state and wanted this principle to be evident in the lives of their churches. This was believed to be best achieved by organisation and structures that allowed the collation of statistical information and brought ecclesiastical principles together for effective public assertion.[406] As Erik Routley observed from an article in the *Eclectic Review* published at the time, such a union was 'a more public recognition of the unity of the Body.'[407] To make an impact Congregationalists needed to appear and act as a united community. This made organisational structures essential.[408] Therefore, twenty-five years after first being tabled, a constitution was finally negotiated and approved by 26 of the 34 existing County Unions/District Associations that would establish a Union of Congregational Churches and Ministers throughout England

[401] Dale, 1907, p.687.
[402] In the constitution of the Yorkshire Congregational Union it states the principle that there was to be 'the clear recognition of the Scriptural right of every Church to maintain Independence in the management of its own affairs,' (Wadsworth, 1972, p.15).
[403] Peel, 1931, p.70.
[404] Peel, 1931, p.70.
[405] Peel, 1931, p.71.
[406] Dale, 1907, p.691; Peel, 1931, pp.72-3.
[407] Routley, 1961, p.75.
[408] Brownell, 1982, p.7.

and Wales. The inaugural meeting was held in 1832 when the decisive motion 'that the Union be now established' was made and the Congregational Union of England and Wales came into being.[409] Initially the Union was to consist only of the County Unions and District Associations. On formation, however, it was agreed that the membership would be 'extended to include ministers and churches recognised by the Associations.'[410]

The general Union, like the County Unions, was founded on the principle that every church that joined would maintain independence in government and administration. Despite this, during the same meeting in which the Union was inaugurated, a declaration on the principles of faith and order for the body was also presented. It was deemed pertinent to ascertain whether the Union should have a public statement that declared the leading articles of its faith and order.[411] The meeting agreed that a document that would communicate information to the public on the doctrines generally held and maintained by Congregationalists be prepared by a committee.[412] Therefore, within a year the *Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters* was written, agreed and adopted. R. W. Dale (1829-1895) commented on the remarkable speed with which the document passed through the Assembly in 1833 given the number of subjects he identified as controversial. Dale's explanation for this was:

> … it was not a creed to be subscribed to by ministers and Churches as a condition of membership of the Union. It was not even a confession of the belief of the ministers and delegates who adopted it. It was simply a statement, "for general information," of "what is commonly believed" among Congregationalists …[413]

As implied by Dale, the *Declaration* (1833) was a list of general statements offering no proofs, reasons or arguments to the doctrines presented. In the 'Preliminary Notes' that prefaced the declaration there was the recognition that there would be differences in opinion held over certain doctrines and practices and each member of the Union had the

[409] Routley, 1961, p.77.
[410] Dale, 1907, p.696; Jones, 1962, p.243.
[411] Dale, 1907, p.700.
[412] Dale, 1907, p.700.
[413] Dale, 1907, p.701.

‘right to form an unbiased judgement of the Word of God.’[414] In this statement was the basis of the understanding of ‘freedom’ central to the practice of Congregationalists in regard to polity and worship. Interestingly, the ‘Preliminary Notes’ also asserted that ‘no minister, and no church among them, … would deny the substance of any one of the [stated] doctrines of religion.’[415] The root of this assumption is not clear in the motions made to the 1832 Assembly recorded by Dale, other than the statement implied there was a looking back to similar statements and declarations of faith and order made by previous generations, for example the *Savoy Declaration* of 1658.[416] Nevertheless, this could be related to the voluntary principle which Congregationalists had begun to perceive as foundational to the identity of congregations. They were voluntary gathered communities of saints. John Pye Smith (1774-1851) is reported to have said true Congregational voluntarism came from members joining through ‘their own deliberate and free choice; and that they continue[d] in membership and in the exercise of their duties with the same freedom.’[417] All this, Smith stated, rested ‘upon the absolute necessity of inward personal godliness.’[418] This suggests that there was thought to be a spiritual characteristic to the voluntarism exercised in the churches, which is important to remember when freedom in worship is discussed later in this chapter.

The production of the *Declaration* (1833) along with the objectives agreed at formation gave the general Union its foundation from which an organised institution emerged. A central fund was created to which all member churches contributed in order to encourage growth and expansion of the activities of Congregationalism. With this ordering of church polity came a tension between the principles of freedom and fellowship. Peel observed that much of the first 100 years of Union could be discussed in terms of the interplay between the ‘independence of the individual churches and co-operation among them’ and

---

[414] Preliminary Note 6, *Declaration of Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters*, 1833.
[415] Preliminary Note 7, *Declaration of Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters*, 1833.
[416] Dale, 1907, pp.699-700.
[417] Brownell, 1982, p.91.
[418] Brownell, 1982, p.91.

finding a balance.[419] Despite the authorship of statements relating to faith and order,[420] the principle that was central to Congregationalism was that the 'church is a free, independent, and legitimate association in spiritual fellowship of those who were "in Christ," deriving its validity and its function from the presence of Christ with the society.'[421] Cecil Cadoux remarked that the 'real differentia of the Congregational polity is a passionate trust in the Christian's freedom from external control and in the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all matters of religion, both for the individual and the group.'[422] Maintaining this ethos became the challenge as circumstances changed in the local churches and there was the need to 'increase efficiency', Peel stated, 'in denominational machinery'.[423]

Alongside this was a sense that Congregationalism had to develop as society changed. Benjamin Millard stated that 'Congregationalism [was] a living thing and wherever there [was] life there must be adjustment to the environment.'[424] Histories of Congregationalism written during the twentieth century showed that adaptation to changing circumstances was achieved and that in certain areas of society (*e.g.* education of children) Congregationalists were pioneers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Congregational churches were busy places as they were hives of all types of social activity. R. Tudur Jones noted that this gave rise to the idea that a busy church was a successful church.[425] Routley wrote:

> No church order imposes on its individual members more athletic demands; none lives more openly 'in the world'; none lives more dangerously; none is farther from the principle of shutting all doors in order to keep the devotional air. Through the open windows the east wind blows now and again, slamming doors and knocking precious ornaments off the mantelpiece. Not all the furniture is in good repair and here and there a light switch is found to be inoperative. But with all that, it is a happy, harum-scarum house, and those who love it best are often heard to say that they do so because it looks more like a church acting in this world and doing the Lord's work here and now than

[419] Peel, 1931, p.78.
[420] There were two statements published in the life of the Congregational Union of England and Wales/Congregational Church in England and Wales: *Declaration of Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters*, 1833 and *A Declaration of Faith*, 1964 (revised 1967).
[421] Millard, 1912, p.55.
[422] Cadoux, 1943, p.149.
[423] Peel, 1931, p.80.
[424] Millard, 1912, p.53.
[425] Jones, 1962, p.297.

> any other institution more powerful, more efficient, more consistent, that they know.[426]

Was the busyness of the Church at the cost of churchmanship? The biblical ethos that the church should be in the world was clearly a strength of Congregationalism.[427] But churches being places for socialising and leisure activity may have been spiritually costly. The language of the church came to mean social occasions instead of times when spiritual enrichment was encouraged, (*e.g.* the woman's fellowship being a social gathering and not a place for spiritual teaching). The sacramentality and solemnity of worship lost to 'chit-chat' and 'communication of domestic intelligence' as spoken against in the 1835 Manual for Carrs Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham.[428] This particular comment raises the conflict which had arisen in Congregational churches between being a covenanted community of believers meeting for worship, instruction and mutual edification, and being a social club open to all. This may be understood as a result of the Congregationalists exploring and developing their mission in the locality of their buildings and seeing them as a place where the wider community could gather. Over a hundred years later, in 1939, in a call for reform drafted by Bernard Manning, John Whale and Nathaniel Micklem, and signed by five other Congregational leaders, the state of the churches in the Union were summarised as follows:

> The condition of our churches, as they actually exist today, in great cities, in country towns and in villages, is itself often almost desperate. ... We are short of [people] and money, but this is not our most serious need, for God is able to take the weak things of the world to confound the strong. Our dreadful weakness is religious. We are not declaring the Gospel with power to a dispirited and disillusioned age; we are not living in the discipline of Gospel fellowship; only in a very imperfect degree are our churches God's resting place and holy habitation.[429]

---

[426] Routley, 1961, p.102.
[427] Routley, 1961, p.90.
[428] Cashdollar, 2000, p.37.
[429] S. Cave, J. D. Jones, H. F. Lovell Cocks, B. L. Manning. N. Micklem, E. J. Price, J. Short and J. S. Whale, (1939). To the Ministers of Christ's Holy Gospel in the Churches of the Congregational Order, a Call to Reformation. A transcript is printed in Routley, 1961, pp.165-6.

This weakness in the churches of the Union was by some perceived to relate to the tradition of freedom in Congregationalism.[430] The answer was not to limit freedom, rather to draw on theology in exploring church order and discipline.

The Congregational Union of England and Wales, from the period of the Second World War onwards, acknowledged that it was suffering decline. Alan Argent stated that in '1949 the General Purposes Committee reported Congregational churches had declined by over 100,000 members in twenty years,' and that this committee sensed 'Congregationalism as a specific and identifiable church order [was] fast disappearing.'[431] A number of initiatives tried to bring about growth while policies were explored that considered denominational unity on the local and national level. At the Union meeting of 1959, a programme of commissions was affirmed to inform the policies of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for what was called the 'Next Ten Years'. One of the commissions reflected on the status of the relationship between the individual churches of the Union. The outcome of discussions was to urge the Congregational churches to enter into a covenantal relationship 'for the purpose of their distinctive Churchmanship and to express in some corporate form their "belonging together" which [was] a fact of their experience.'[432] This became reality in 1966, with the Church's *Declaration of Faith* and *A Short Affirmation of Faith*, being approved at the assembly of 1967.[433] It was at the 1967 meeting that the basis of the union with the Presbyterian Church of England was presented and the vision for wider unity gained support.

The importance of congregational freedom was maintained in managing the proposed union with the Presbyterian Church of England. In 1972 when the churches voted for the scheme of union that would bring about the formation of the United Reformed Church, 465 of the 2,133 congregations of the Congregational Church in England and Wales voted not

[430] Routley, 1961, p.94.
[431] Argent, 2013, p.436.
[432] Argent, 2013, pp.457-8.
[433] Argent, 2013, p.476.

to join.[434] The Congregational churches outside the United Reformed Church did not unify as one body. Some affiliated to the Congregational Federation, others to an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, while still others reverted to independency.[435]

3.3. Freedom in worship

As demonstrated, the heritage preceding the formation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, described in Chapter 2, was defended as the denomination developed. The understanding of freedom, however, morphed. This is of particular importance to the defence of freedom in worship, as will now be discussed, before exploring the influence of order and participation.

As the Congregational Union of England and Wales was established, Congregationalists would likely have framed freedom in worship in terms of the Holy Spirit. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit the will of God through Christ came to be known in the worship of the church and God was glorified in that worship. For Congregationalists, freedom was not just this; it also a response to the recollection of the suffering endured by previous generations. Therefore, worship was to be conducted without the constraint of a prayer book. Then, as the denomination grew the understanding of freedom in worship developed with the freedom the Congregationalists inhabited through the voluntary principle that had become central to their polity, finances and missional activities.

3.3.1. Freedom and the Holy Spirit

The notion of worship having to be free so that the Holy Spirit is free to act came from the idea that worship is only true when it is of the Holy Spirit. In 1957, Raymond Abba wrote:

> Worship, like saving faith, is '[humanity's] response to the nature and action of God.' But the response of worship, like the response of faith, is itself the gift of God. It is evoked … No re-presentation of God's saving acts will in fact draw forth the response of real worship unless their truth 'comes home' to men and women; and that can only happen through … 'the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit.'[436]

[434] Argent, 2013, p.482.
[435] Argent, 2013, p.495.
[436] Abba, 1957, p.7.

In other words, all worship is dependent on God—it comes from God and returns to God through the people. This is enabled by the Holy Spirit and only feasible if the Holy Spirit is free to act. Therefore, freedom in worship is bound to obedience to the will of God made known by the Holy Spirit. As stated by Daniel Jenkins: 'freedom which the Church knows is the reflection of the divine freedom and it is known only through obedience to the will of God.'[437] Perfect freedom is then secured by the Holy Spirit creating 'reverential awe, peaceful trust, the fervour of love and the exultation of hope.[438] This has the effect of taking human freedom out of the equation. In worship, neither the one leading worship nor the congregation are free to do as they please or act according to personal taste. Instead, each person worships in that essential freedom which comes from God's willingness to act and to make God's will known. There is no freedom to ignore or to change that. The thoughts and words of the scriptures have a controlling influence in what is known, yet this knowledge and the church's comprehension of Christ comes only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the scriptures.[439] Abba wrote:

> … The written Word not only testifies to the Word made flesh; it mediates to us His presence and His saving love. Worship, therefore, if it be dependent upon revelation, must have the Bible at its centre. It is through the reading of Holy Scripture from pulpit or lectern that the assembled Church is confronted anew with the biblical revelation, in response to which alone it can offer worship in Spirit and in truth. …[440]

Although spoken of as freedom, the church is captive to the Holy Spirit in every aspect of its life and worship. This was brought into the understanding of the church by nonconformist theologians in explorations of nonconformity (for example in P. T. Forsyth's *Charter of the Church* (1896) and Daniel Jenkins' *Congregationalism: A Restatement* (1954)), yet not likely understood or observed in the worship of the local church. In practice, worship was emotive. Nevertheless, the principle of the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit was central. As Dale stated:

---

[437] Jenkins, 1954, p.68.
[438] Dale, 1869, p.34.
[439] Jenkins, 1954, p.68; Abba, 1957, p.60.
[440] Abba, 1957, p.47.

> It is [the Spirit] who creates in the heart a thirst for communion with God. By [the Spirit] 'we have access to the Father.' [The Spirit] reveals to us what 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard'—the wisdom, strength, and joy 'which God hath prepared for them that love him'—and kindles a vehement desire for all spirit blessing.[441]

There would also have been a somewhat naïve belief that sincerity and spontaneity were an expression of the movement of the Holy Spirit in worship.[442] These understandings are evident in how preaching and prayer was approached in corporate worship.

3.3.1.1. The sermon

Congregationalism inherited the expectation that central to a corporate act of worship was the sermon (see Chapter 2). The Word of God was made fully known through preaching—proclamation and explanation of the Word—and the reading of scripture. The good news of the grace of God had to be declared as well as heard.[443] This meant that the sermon was a means of making the Word of God known while edifying the people in the content of the scriptures, Christian doctrine and right living. This entwinement of proclamation and edification shaped corporate worship and influenced how the congregation participated in worship, which will be discussed later in Section 3.4.3. The centrality of the sermon in the corporate worship of Congregationalists led to preaching being a significant topic in discourses on worship. A number of single volumes on preaching were written as well as being included in works on worship in Congregationalism. Later examples include: P. T. Forsyth's *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (1907), G. Campbell Morgan's *Preaching* (1937) and E. Shillito's chapter on 'The Preaching of the Word' in Nathaniel Micklem's collection of essays *Christian Worship* (1936). Other than what has been stated, this thesis will not offer an analysis on the art of preaching. What is of interest, in the context of corporate worship understood in terms of freedom, order and participation, is how preaching was approached through the lens of freedom in worship.

[441] Dale, 1869, p.38.
[442] Jenkins, 1954, p.90.
[443] Abba, 1957, p.62.

In the nineteenth century, it was common for preachers to enter the pulpit of Independent/Congregational churches without a script or any notes for the sermon. This was because of the belief that the revelation of the Word of God was the operation of the Holy Spirit. The preacher, therefore, had to be free of anything that might impede the work of the Holy Spirit. This was not to say that if a preacher did use notes instead of preaching extemporaneously that their words were any less inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the Lyman Beecher Lectures Dale delivered on preaching at Yale University in 1877, he said:

> … is it fair to say that those who read their sermons show a distrust of the aid of the Holy Spirit. Our self-distrust, our dependence upon Divine teaching and aid, may be just as perfect when we are writing as when we are speaking. I do not accept the superstition which implies that the Spirit of God is with us in the pulpit and not in the study.[444]

In the same lecture, Dale confessed that he lacked courage at times to enter the pulpit without notes and would on occasion 'read every sentence from the first to the last'.[445] The important advantage that Dale points out of the extemporary preacher was the ability to watch the faces of the congregation so that statements that might seem perfectly clear to the preacher could be repeated, illustrated or expounded when they were obviously unclear to those listening.[446] There was more flexibility to be direct and have an ease in speaking which was lost when sermons were read. This did come at the cost of accuracy, according to Dale.[447]

Dale's view of the Holy Spirit being at work in both the pulpit and the study finds support in Joseph Parker's (1830-1902) discussion of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in preparation and utterance. Parker argued that these were separate operations of the Holy Spirit and could not occur simultaneously. Interpretation to allow the scriptures to be expounded upon took time and diligence on the part of the preacher. To enter the pulpit with the expectation that the Holy Spirit would inspire the understanding of the word of scripture allowing the preacher to give the sermon was, in Parker's view, impious and limited the

[444] Dale, 1900, pp.157-8.
[445] Dale, 1900, p.151.
[446] Dale, 1900, p.165.
[447] Dale, 1900, p.165.

'Holy One of Israel under pretence of magnifying His power.'[448] Parker believed that the trust placed in the Holy Spirit in the pulpit was 'for the gift of suitable and efficient utterance.'[449] T. T. James drew this together in stating that if the minister comes to the congregation from 'communion with God, carrying with [them] something of the mystical presence, [the minister's words] will do their work and achieve their end.'[450]

The freedom of the Holy Spirit in worship was not perceived only to impact on the words of the preacher. The Holy Spirit was also understood to be at work in the congregation, if the Word of God was to be heard.[451] William Taylor wrote:

> God prepares preacher and hearer for meeting each other, and by the providence of His Spirit gives the one a message for the other, there would be in them both a devout sense of reverence towards God in the exercise of delivering and listening to a sermon.[452]

The expansion and clarification of thought on how the Holy Spirit related to preaching and the hearing of the Word of God in corporate worship was influential in the attempt to reform the worship of Congregational churches during the life of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. This will be discussed below (Section 3.4).

3.3.1.2. 'Free' or extemporary prayer

In the discussion of freedom in the worship of the United Reformed Church (Chapter 1), spontaneity in worship due to the activity of the Holy Spirit was experienced most readily in extemporary prayer, also known as 'free' prayer. Likewise, it is with regard to 'free' prayer that the Congregationalists discussed the correlation between freedom and the Holy Spirit and its spontaneous nature in corporate worship as well as the worship of the individual. The conviction was held that sincerity in prayer was only achieved when speaking to God in the 'freedom and intimacy of the Holy Spirit'.[453] 'Free' prayer was believed to give the one leading worship the full liberty to respond to the prompting of the

[448] Parker, 1874, pp.88-9.
[449] Parker, 1874, p.91.
[450] James, 1925, p.51.
[451] Taylor, 1876, p.108; Abba, 1957, p.65.
[452] Taylor, 1876, pp.207-8.
[453] Davies, 1996e, p.350.

Holy Spirit relating it to the particular needs and conditions of the worshippers.[454] Prayer arose out of the moment.[455] James described 'free and spontaneous prayer' being in the 'blood of Congregational Churches.'[456] This suggests that 'free' prayer is more than a response to the leading of the Holy Spirit, it is the way by which a people's communion with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is affirmed and expressed. Dale wrote:

> … The Congregational polity is rooted in the belief that the Lord Jesus Christ is personally present with those who are gathered together in His name. He is present, not merely to be the Object of their worship, but to be the foundation of their faith, their devotion, and their joy in God. They are penetrated by His Spirit; they are controlled by His will. Their petitions for themselves and their intercession for others are His as well as theirs. The minister and the people are one in Him. Free prayer seems necessary to the realisation of this great conception. For those who hold this faith it is natural to believe that when a church meets for worship, and realises its unity in Christ, it will receive, direct from Him, the light and life it needs for acts of worship and prayer …[457]

Understanding 'free' prayer as an outworking of a people's communion with God is a concept supported by K. Parry in his chapter on 'Prayer and Praise' in Micklem's collection of essays *Christian Worship*.[458] Parry highlighted that this understanding can fall short in practice depending on the relative emphasis 'given to the content of the prayer and the act of communion with God.'[459]

In the same way as the sermon could be a mouthpiece for a particular view held by the preacher, so could times of prayer.[460] There was every potential that a local church could find the content of extemporary prayer addressed to them rather than God.[461] John McClure (1860-1922), Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1919, noted in his Spring Address that some of the 'free' prayer experienced in the

---

[454] Abba, 1957, pp.111-2.
[455] Parry, 1936, p.235.
[456] James, 1925, p.50.
[457] Dale, 1884, p.164. What Dale meant by 'Free Prayer' in this quotation is not entirely clear. Dale may be defining 'Free Prayer' in this context as prayers not restricted by a set liturgy rather than as extemporaneous prayer. However, even if Dale does mean 'conceived prayer'—prayers prepared in the study for an act of worship—this quotation still demonstrated the direct link between the communion of the people with Christ and the Spirit's inspiration of their prayers.
[458] Parry, 1936, pp.225-42.
[459] Parry, 1936, p.235.
[460] It should be noted that this would never have been the expectation of the sermon or prayers, nor would it have been what ministerial educators would have taught.
[461] Parry, 1936, p.235; Abba, 1957, p.112.

churches could be better described as 'preaching with eyes shut.'[462] Raymond Abba observed that prayer at times could 'be more concerned with edification than with adoration.'[463] This was because these prayers could be born out of the communion between the minister and the congregation—the pastoral relationship. The freedom to pray extempore meant that the minister could gather up and express the feelings of or about the congregation as were discerned in the moment.[464] This was a flaw with 'free' prayer in corporate worship that was recognised by John Spencer Pearsall in his address to the meeting of the Union in 1866. The spontaneity of 'free' prayer, whether it was believed to be conceived through the Holy Spirit or not, meant there was no preparation. Pearsall suggested that public prayer should be prepared in some way, like sermons. He wrote:

> The extent of preparation for public prayer we venture not to prescribe. Some ministers will, by devout meditation, seek the spirit of prayer; others will not only *feel*, but *think out*, the burden of their supplications; others will make brief notes; others will occasionally write out a prayer, not to be read, but as discipline for the mind in attaining and preserving the style of composition suitable for *public* prayer; all will, if true ministers, try to pray *from the heart*, and rely on the *prompting of the Spirit*.[465]

This led to Pearsall calling for a shift in the approach taken to prayer in corporate worship. As will be seen in Section 3.4, his view was shared by others.

3.3.2. Freedom from the prescribed

The argument for spontaneity in the worship of the Church was rooted in a theology of the Holy Spirit and the principle of the rule of Jesus Christ in the Church. Routley wrote:

> A 'free' form of worship—with nothing prescribed—implies a conviction that in worship the human imperative has no place. It implies that [humanity] are walking with God as friends, and can speak to [God] without formality or ceremony.[466]

Yet, although there is a sense of this in the understanding of freedom in worship in Congregational churches, it is not the only governing factor. There was a historical

---

[462] Sir John D. McClure, Chairman's address to the 1919 Spring Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 'The Public Worship of God', published in the 1920 Congregational Yearbook, p.55.
[463] Abba, 1957, p.112.
[464] Parry, 1936, p.235; Abba, 1957, p.112.
[465] Pearsall, 1867, pp.14-15.
[466] Routley, 1962, p.104.

element which specifically related to the proscription of a set liturgy. From early in the seventeenth century, as demonstrated in the debates about worship at the Westminster Assembly (see Chapter 2), there was an aversion to fixed liturgy that filtered into what became nonconformist churches and was subsequently *de rigueur* throughout the life of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. [467]

In any discussion on the public worship of Congregationalism, the Church was reminded of its heritage. The Annual Report to the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1863, while reflecting on the bicentenary of 1662, reminded those gathered of the 'right of free, open speech on platform and in pulpits' which came as the result of the stance by nonconformists in 1662.[468] As shown in Chapter 2, the reasons for the events of 1662 were not as simple as freedom of speech, freedom of religion or even freedom of worship.[469] Despite this, it was within this view of history that reform of corporate worship in Congregationalism was argued and this led to question of liturgy.

On the matter of liturgy Dale wrote:

> … Discussions about the mere arrangement and order of our services may be very necessary; it is inconsistent with our faith in the living presence of the Spirit of God in the church to regard with distrust and resentment every departure from the customs of our fathers. …[470]

McClure in his 1919 Spring Address also said:

> I realize that there are many objections to the use of a liturgy. What was best for the sixteenth century may not be best for the twentieth; and yet it is hard to change forms which are hallowed by so many sacred associations. There is a very real danger lest we cling too closely to the past, and forget that the Church must satisfy the spiritual needs of the present. We ought not to seek to pledge our descendants either as to forms of worship or articles of faith. Revelation has not come to an end: for "the Lord hath more light and truth yet, to break forth out of His holy Word."[471]

---

[467] In this instance 'liturgy' should be understood as ordered public worship with set words and prayers.
[468] Annual Report in the Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, published in the 1863 Congregational Yearbook, p.30.
[469] Thompson, 2012b, pp.13-4.
[470] Dale, 1869, p.36.
[471] Sir John D. McClure, Chairman's address to the 1919 Spring Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 'The Public Worship of God', published in the 1920 Congregational Yearbook, pp.55-56.

Despite being tackled by figures such as Dale and McClure, the historically rooted suspicion of fixed liturgy continued to affect discourse on corporate worship and liturgy well into the twentieth century. John Huxtable, John Marsh, Romilly Micklem and James Todd wrote in the 'Preface' to their *Book of Public Worship*:

> Congregationalists …although they love freedom … are not liturgical anarchists, … their ancestors were convinced that 'standards of worship could not be fixed by the State; they had been determined by the Gospel.'[472]

As stated by Huxtable *et al*, the historical concern over liturgy did not mean Congregational worship was without liturgy. It is evident from early in their history that the churches that became Congregational held a loose but nonetheless discernible liturgy to their worship. There were common, expected elements in corporate worship although the order may have differed from church to church. While these were developed during the eighteenth century (see Chapter 2), they were rooted in the perception that how the church should worship collectively was prescribed in the scriptures. The Common Close Congregational Church in Warminster published a 'manual' in 1865 which stated:

> In Divine Service, scripture prescribes the parts, as praise, prayer, lessons from God's Word, and preaching the Gospel, but leaves the order and the hour of Public Worship undetermined.[473]

For a church that had a strong belief in freedom this is interesting as it demonstrates that there were boundaries to that freedom, as previously discussed in Section 3.3.1. How this affects the understanding of freedom in worship can only be fully realised by considering how the Congregational churches engaged with the concepts of order and participation in worship.

3.4. Development of public worship in Congregationalism: the question of order and participation

In exploring how Congregationalists understood freedom in worship, it is evident that inadvertently the individual could become central: members of the congregation feeling individually moved by an act of worship; worship being so minister-centric that it appeared

[472] Huxtable, et al., 1949, p.vii; Davies, 1996e, p.373.
[473] From the 'Manual of Common Close Church, Warminster', 1865, inserted in the Minute Book of Common Close Congregational Church.

as if the congregation were looking on instead of participating. This was not the intention. The whole gathered congregation was to be led in worship, as demonstrated by William Taylor in a lecture he delivered to theological students on the subject of conducting corporate worship in the nineteenth century:

> … public prayer should be common, and not minutely individual. The preacher should not obtrude his own personal experiences and necessities, and ignore the great general wants of the congregation as a whole. His prayers should not be a pious soliloquy which he simply permits his people to overhear. Neither should it be a highly-wrought rhapsody in which the imagination of the speaker soars to such a height that the average worshipper cannot accompany him. He must lead the people to the throne of grace, and give utterance for them there to the desires which in them are yearning for expression.[474]

As demonstrated by Taylor, in advice offered by theologians and ministerial educators suggestions were made for how corporate worship could be developed to ensure participation of the whole gathered congregation. This will be discussed in more detail below (Section 3.4.3). However, at this point it should be noted that it was the singing of psalms and hymns that was the feature of worship in churches which came to make up the Congregational Union of England and Wales, which encouraged some corporate engagement. Although, this was not always perceived as fulfilling the concept that worship was the communion of people with God.[475]

These models of corporate worship were not 'sufficient for the spiritual life of the Church.'[476] Change was brought about primarily through the exploration of liturgy in its simplest form—ordered corporate worship—and in its widest sense of being an almost fully scripted act of worship including prayers and congregational responses. As will be discussed, the publication of liturgies for use in corporate worship was a product of the reform encouraged in the worshipping life of Congregational churches. Although not dismissing the importance of freedom and the unease with fixed liturgy dictating corporate

[474] Taylor, 1876, p.245.
[475] Thomas, 1865, p.9.
[476] Revd G. S. Barrett, paper on 'Congregational Worship', published in the 1897 Congregational Yearbook, p.83.

worship, order and participation were both encouraged by re-examining how liturgy was understood, approached and used.

3.4.1. Order

The inherited suspicion among Congregationalists of prescribed liturgy and the conflict that can arise in considering corporate worship as having both order and freedom was summed up by G. S. Barrett in his paper on *Congregational Worship*, presented to the Union meeting of 1896: 'Form, it is said, is nothing in the worship of God, but spirit is everything, and attention to form is sure to degenerate, sooner or later, into formal worship.'[477] By its very nature corporate worship has to have a form—some ordered structure—to enable it to be corporate and collective. As has already been demonstrated in Section 3.3.2, Congregationalists knew this and did have an order to their public worship or at least a sense of what should be included. The fear was that overemphasis of order could lead to a fixed liturgy that would suppress the worship of a church, particularly its prayer. Thomas Binney (1798-1874) noted this concern in his imagined conversation in the Milton Club entitled 'Touching the Question, "Are Dissenters to have a liturgy?"' which was included as an appendix to the volume he edited of Charles Baird's *A Chapter on Liturgies*.[478] In the conversation, one of the participants stated the opinion: 'the effect of a Liturgy is to quench and restrain, —to depress and deaden the spirit of prayer.'[479] The resonance of this uneasiness around liturgy in Congregational churches in the mid- to late-nineteenth century is evident in an exchange recorded in the church meeting minutes of Sanford Street Congregational Church, Swindon. In the January and February church meetings in 1884 there was a discussion about the use of set prayers after it was found that such prayers were being read in the Sunday School. After considerable discussion across two church meetings, the resolution was unanimously passed 'that no set forms of prayer, taken from a liturgy, be publicly used in either … chapel or school without first

[477] Revd G. S. Barrett, paper on 'Congregational Worship', published in the 1897 Congregational Yearbook, p.84.
[478] Baird and Binney, 1856, pp.285-328.
[479] Baird and Binney, 1856, p.305.

being approved by a church meeting.'[480] In the February church meeting, having agreed the resolution, the prayer which had sparked the debate was read to the meeting. The following outcome was recorded as:

> Mr Thompson then moved, and Mr Williamson seconded, 'That the form of Prayer which had just been read to the meeting, and which has recently been in use in the children's morning service be not permitted in the conduct of our Sunday School.'
> Mr George Stone moved and Mr Longman seconded, as an amendment, 'That the use of said form of prayer be permitted in our School, and that the Church hereby expresses its full confidence in the Superintendent and teachers of the School.'
> A long and exhaustive discussion followed, a resolution moved and seconded, that the vote be taken by ballot, was lost. The chairman then put the amendment, which was carried by 13 to 9; and the original motion, was lost by 9 to 15.[481]

Although the congregation was clearly of the mind that it should be consulted on the use of set prayers in its worshipping life, it appears that the majority did not oppose their use. If appropriate and used in the right manner, set or liturgical prayers had the potential to enhance worship especially in the corporate setting. This is a sentiment which finds support in the writings of Binney and others, such as David Thomas (1813-1894), who explained in the introduction to his *Biblical Liturgy*, a work in which he sought to improve the quality of worship,[482] that he did not see liturgy as superseding 'free' prayer, instead considering it to be a means to stimulate and direct the prayers of the people.[483] Liturgy as a way of ordering and providing content for worship, as it was accepted and/or explored by Congregationalists, came to offer a method of ensuring corporate worship was a true expression of the congregation. It was a means of moderating the situation that has already been described as having taken place in corporate worship where it was the congregation addressed by the minister in prayers not God (see Section 3.3.1.2). Nathaniel Micklem made the case for liturgical forms which would 'rescue both ministers and congregations from being at the mercy of ministerial moods.'[484]

---

[480] Resolution put to the church meeting of Sanford Street Congregational Church on 30 January 1884 and 27 February 1884 as recorded in the Church Meeting Minutes 1877-1895.
[481] Minutes of the church meeting held on 27 February 1884, Sanford Street Congregational Church.
[482] Jones, 2004
[483] Thomas, 1881, p.ii.
[484] Davies, 1996e, p.355.

The shift in parts of Congregationalism over the nineteenth and in the twentieth century towards corporate worship using liturgical forms was not solely about its corporate nature. It also related to aesthetics and enlivening those gathered in their worship of God. Barrett, in his paper, reminded Congregationalists that the 'only worship acceptable to God is worship in spirit and truth.'[485] This scripture-based concept was not just about the freedom of the Holy Spirit in worship, it concerned the attitude of worshippers. Barrett spoke of the reverence of the worshippers and how form, be it a full liturgy or worship that had an order, played its part:

> Form counts for something even in relation to the spirit of worship. It helps to preserve and sometimes to intensify that spirit, for it is not more true to say that undevoutness of spirit often leads to irreverence of manner than it is to say irreverence of manner frequently lead to undevoutness of spirit.[486]

This perspective was supported by Christopher Newman Hall (1816-1902) and John Hunter (1849-1917). In the 'Preface' to the *Free Church Prayer Book* (1866), Newman Hall wrote:

> It is often urged in opposition to form that *worship should be spiritual.* But the spirituality of worship depends on the state of the heart, the on the style of its expression. There may be true worship with forms, and more formality with none.[487]

Hunter, in his seventh edition of his *Devotional Services for Public Worship*, acknowledged how liturgy can cultivate 'reverent habits' and 'form may be the vehicle and helper of the spirit.'[488]

Worship that was aesthetically more pleasing and that emotionally moved the congregation developed across the ecclesiological landscape. The Oxford Movement in the mid-nineteenth century sought to reinvigorate, in a very particularly way, the spirituality and religion of the Church of England through returning to the Church Fathers and recovering the Church's catholic and apostolic inheritance.[489] Although it was a movement that was intended to challenge ecclesiology and theology, its ideas and views impacted

---

[485] Revd G. S. Barrett, paper on 'Congregational Worship', published in the 1897 Congregational Yearbook, p.83.
[486] Revd G. S. Barrett, 'Congregational Worship', p.84.
[487] Hall, 1866, p.v.
[488] Hunter, 1903, p.325.
[489] Brown, Nockles and Pereiro, 2017, p.1.

approaches taken to worship and liturgical innovation.[490] Following this, while not directly connected, in the early twentieth century the Liturgical Movement emerged from the Roman Catholic Church. This was a movement that was concerned with the 'decline of interest in institutional religion, the tendency to minimize supernatural religion as a religion of grace and to lay the whole emphasis on the practical expression of Christianity in its bearing on the problems of the day.'[491] Its main influence was on corporate worship, drawing the devotional life of the individual into what the church does corporately when it comes to worship God. These movements might have begun in certain church traditions, but their theories and ideas crossed denominational boundaries, although it should be noted that nonconformists were universally suspicious of the Oxford Movement. The Liturgical Movement, however, through the Ecumenical Movement has been shown to be influential.[492] In Congregationalism this is evident in the papers on worship that were presented at annual meetings of the Union over its lifetime, as well as in the writings and use of books of prayer and liturgy in corporate worship.[493] This will be discussed later in the chapter (Section 3.4.2).

Not all the responses to the changing patterns of worship in Congregationalism, because of these various movements, were positive. In 1873, Septimus March gave a paper that warned against the rise of sensuousness in worship, making the case for aspects of Congregationalism that should not be ignored when considering its corporate worship. He wrote:

---

[490] Brown, Nockles and Pereiro, 2017, p.3.
[491] Srawley, 1954, p.7.
[492] The Ecumenical Movement began in the nineteenth century seeking to reunite the body of Christ through theological dialogue, collaborative mission and other expression of ecumenical life. It sought to bring about renewal and transformation of the church universal by bringing together common priorities for the life and worship of the church.
[493] Revd S. March, 'Sensuousness in Worship', 1873; Revd J. P. Allen, 'The work of the Churches in preaching and otherwise promoting the gospel', 1875; Revd G. S. Barrett, 'Congregational Worship', 1896; Sir J. D. McClure, 'The Public Worship of God', 1919.

> … Under colour of the modern cant phrase of "keeping abreast of the age," it is now and then urged that, if our youth is to be retained amongst us we must go as far as may be toward increasing sensuousness and symbolism in our worship. The chapel must be Gothic and cruciform, regardless of comfort and acoustic properties; a chancel is indispensable; the pulpit must be put on one side, to give a good view of the coloured window and the table draped like an altar; the prayer, if still extemporaneous, must be mainly composed of memoriter repetitions from the Church of England liturgy; and choral must supplant congregational singing. This sort of thing is consistent with High Church doctrine and sacramentarianism, but is absurd, meaningless and dishonest in connection with the tenets of Evangelical Nonconformity.[494]

March did not discount all that was happening in the worship of Congregational churches regarding ordered worship. For him, the Holy Spirit was still the primary agent for engaging a church in worship:

> But let us bear in mind that spirituality is the true converse and counteractive of sensuousness, and if this does not accompany the simplicity of our service it is poor indeed. If in our sanctuaries the Scriptures are languidly read; if the prayers are theological discourses, … if our preaching is only a Biblical dissertation, lacking all religious fervour; the people may well leave us for Ritualistic celebrations. But if there be the indescribable glow pervading all that comes from the presence of God's Spirit; if men and women with aching hearts, and many cares, and longings after something this world cannot give, hear one speak who has come from communion with Christ, who feels that heaven and hell are real as day and night, who really does plead and pray for those he seeks to save, the attractions of scenic display and richest music will be all outdone …[495]

As Congregational churches shifted to embrace liturgy more in corporate worship and to have worship, which Charles Cashdollar described as being about head and heart, and eye and ear, then a delicate balance between order and freedom had to be observed.[496] This was especially important if worship was to be in and of the Holy Spirit. Dale wrote:

> The problem solved by those who are interested in the aesthetics of public worship is singularly delicate. They have to consider how they can secure perfect freedom for the highest activities of our spiritual nature; but they must not attempt to stimulate and intensify these activities. Reverential awe, peaceful trust, the fervour of love, the exultation of hope, can be created only by the Holy Ghost; all that Art can do is to provide for these supernatural affections a just and adequate expression. It may provide the instrument for the Divine hand, but must not attempt itself to strike the chords.[497]

Dale went on to express the view that there could never be one liturgical order to fit all times and context. He also believed that the simpler the order the more likely it would

---

[494] Revd S. March, paper on 'Sensuousness in Worship', published in the 1874 Congregational Yearbook, pp.116-117.
[495] Revd S. March, 'Sensuousness in Worship', pp.117-118.
[496] Cashdollar, 2000, p.36.
[497] Dale, 1869, p.34.

bring worshippers to a point of true worship of God.[498] Given the number of books of liturgies and prayers, and approaches taken to their use (see Section 3.4.2), these principles of Dale's rang true as order and freedom married in Congregational worship through the development of liturgies which responded to schools of thought in the Free Churches and movements of the church universal.

3.4.2. Worship books

As already stated, the worship of Congregational churches was never without order. William Hale White (1831-1914) remembered in his childhood a service consisted of 'a hymn, a Bible reading, another hymn, a prayer, the sermon, a third hymn, and a short final prayer.'[499] Yet, using that order to enhance corporate worship and develop its corporate nature gained impetus in the lifetime of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. That order as described by White remained relatively unchanged. This is shown in Table 2 which compares the orders for a service of the Word detailed in three of the four service books that were published by the Congregational Union of England and Wales (Appendix II). *A Manual for Ministers* (1936) is not included in Table 2 because it was only a collection of prayers and other resources to help ministers in their preparation for worship, it did not offer any examples of how corporate worship might be ordered. The most significant difference is with the order from *An Order of Public Worship* (1970) where there is no provision for a 'children's address' and 'Intercessions' come after the sermon. Although in the notes on the order children were still expected to be present in the early part of the service, there is no evidence to suggest why this element was removed.[500] The relocation of the 'Intercessions' made these prayers part of the congregation's response to God's Word than as part of the preparation to hear God's Word. The reason for this shift could have been the influence of the Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements, but the same shift happened in the order of corporate worship outlined by the Presbyterian Church of England at a similar time (Chapter 4). This occurred around the time when the

[498] Dale, 1869, p.34.
[499] Rutherford, 1881, p.7; Spinks, 1984, p.87.
[500] The Congregational Church in England and Wales, 1970, p.29.

Congregationalists and Presbyterians were in conversation about possible union and were working more closely on the question of worship of the church. It seems, then, that the two denominations may have influenced each other as they moved towards a union which would be supported by corporate worship.

Book of Congregational Worship (1920)	**A Book of Services and Prayers (1959)**	**An Order of Public Worship (1970)**
Sanctus/Hymn of adoration		
	Call to worship Scripture sentences	Call to worship Scripture sentences
Prayer of approach *(and confession)*	Prayer of adoration and invocation	
Canticles *(or just a hymn and the canticles can come after 2nd reading or children's address)*	Hymn	Hymn/Psalm
	Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon *(Prayer for grace)*	Prayer of approach Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon
		Prayer for grace
Scripture reading	Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading
Psalm or other passage of scripture *(chanted or read responsively)*	Psalm/Canticle	Psalm/Canticle/Hymn
Scripture reading or Children's address	New Testament reading	New Testament readings (Epistle and Gospel)
	Children's address	
Hymn	Hymn *(suitable for children)*	Hymn
Prayer and Lord's prayer	Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, and Lord's prayer	
	Notices	
Hymn	Hymn	
Sermon	Sermon	Sermon *(followed by collect or doxology)*
	Offering	
	Prayer of thanksgiving for the Word of God, with supplication for grace and remembrance of the church of Christ *(and dedication of offering taken beforehand, the Lord's prayer might come here too)*	Intercessions *(could be followed by Lord's prayer)*
Offering		Offering
Hymn	Hymn	Hymn/Doxology
Benediction	Blessing	Dismissal

Table 2. Comparison of rubrics for a service of the Word in the service books of the Congregational Union in England and Wales

As discussed above (Section 3.4.1), consideration of order, under the influence of the Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements, led to an increased interest in printed liturgies and their use within Congregational churches. Despite this, there is no substantial evidence that any of the liturgies developed were regularly used in churches or that they were welcomed by churches. This is demonstrated by letters published in *The Christian World* in the 1920s, where dissatisfaction with both bare chapels and free worship was expressed, while the shift towards more liturgical worship was also noted.[501]

Appendix II lists books of liturgies and prayers identified as being written by Congregationalists or commissioned by Congregational churches for use in worship from the mid-nineteenth century until just before the formation of the United Reformed Church. This list may not be exhaustive as Bryan Spinks identified a small number of liturgies based on the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*, not noted in Appendix II, which were potentially used in the mid- to late-nineteenth century by churches in his book on the *Eucharistic liturgy of English Congregationalism (1645-1980)*.[502] Also, as demonstrated in Appendix II, other Congregational churches may have produced independent service books for sole use in their congregations but copies of which have not been collated in the library collections interrogated as part of this research. Although not as extensive as the list of worship resources identified as authored by or with the United Reformed Church (Appendix I), to contain twenty-two volumes is significant given the concern over prescribed liturgy and the cherishing of freedom in worship by Congregationalists. Notwithstanding this, since most of the volumes were written by individuals or for use in particular churches (only four volumes were commissioned by the Congregational Union of England and Wales or the Congregational Church in England and Wales), freedom in how corporate worship was approached across Congregational churches can still be concluded as an important principle. Christopher Newman Hall

[501] Argent, 2013, p.245; Letters published in *The Christian World*: 13 Jan 1927, p7; 20 Jan 1927, p.11; 27 Jan 1927, p.11; 3 Feb 1927, p.7; 10 Feb 1927, p.7; 17 Feb 1927, p.7.
[502] Spinks, 1984, pp.91-105.

observed that the promotion of form did not limit freedom, but instead extended it.[503] The 'Foreword' to the liturgies compiled for use at Derby Street Congregational Church, Bolton, expressed the view that 'the spirit of the devout and intelligent worshippers is greatly helped when a clear understanding obtains as to the plan and sequence of the service.'[504] Most of the books identified stated that there was a place for extemporaneous or 'free' prayer within the written services. Others talked of the liturgies and orders being aids for the preparation of worship and not intended to be used verbatim. This all builds freedom into worship while constraining but not limiting it by order. Horton Davies observed that liturgy as an aid 'provides a theological structure for worship with an abundance of alternative prayers so that familiarity cannot breed contempt, nor capriciousness lead to congregational confusion.'[505]

In addition to demonstrating an understanding and embracing of liturgical order in worship, the service books listed in Appendix II illustrate how liturgy came to be seen as a way of reaffirming the corporate nature of public worship. Many of the liturgies encouraged participation of the congregation through audible response. W. E. Orchard (1877-1955) stated that as well as securing 'comprehension and order in our prayers,' liturgy 'enables the congregation to follow with greater ease' and through 'frequent audible response' make 'the prayers their own.'[506] The Liturgical Movement encouraged churches to address the issue that congregations were being perceived by some as audiences, an argument also made repeatedly by Thomas Binney.[507] Worship was not there to entertain people, rather people should be 'actively engaged in the corporate worship of God.'[508]

---

[503] Hall, 1866, p.ii.
[504] Jones, 1943, p.3.
[505] Davies, 1996e, p.374.
[506] Orchard, 1926, p.4. This view was also expressed in the 'Introduction' to the *Prayer for Public Worship*, published for use by Kingston Congregational Church, 1957.
[507] Baird and Binney, 1856, p.292; Morgan, 2017, p.513.
[508] Jones, 1943, p.3.

3.4.3. Participation

McClure, in his Chairman's address to the Union in 1919, observed that public worship was the seeking of communion with God and with fellow-worshippers and 'neither communion can be fully realised without the other.'[509] This translates into the concept that worship should be the responsibility of all those in attendance and not rest simply with the minister. James explained this as worship being the 'conscious and deliberate co-operation of all,' and illustrated it as follows:

> The service of praise belongs not only to the choir, but to all God's people. The prayer made in the pulpit will find prevailing power as it is backed by the earnest and passionate sympathy and petition of those who occupy the pews. The sermon has been made in the study, but it will be re-made by a [minister's] people if they meet with the keen desire to see it fashioned into an instrument of divine energy.[510]

This might have come to be the view of some Congregationalists by the 1920s. But as has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, this shared responsibility was not the lived experience of all at corporate worship. Given one of the aims of the final order of service published by the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1970 was 'to encourage the fullest possible congregational participation,' attitude, at least at a denominational level, does appear to have changed.[511]

Early in the life of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, there were two schools of thought on corporate worship and the role of the congregation. Joseph Parker wrote in a sermon on Isaiah that, 'worship is an experience of entering into the refining, purifying presence of God. Worship is communion with God.'[512] However, the communion of the people with God, David Thomas observed, was solely the responsibility of the minister.[513] By the mid- to late-nineteenth century, there was a sense that the lived reality of Congregational churches when they came to worship was not something that always brought congregations into the presence of God. Ministers and educators such as

---

[509] Sir John D. McClure, Chairman's address to the 1919 Spring Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 'The Public Worship of God', published in the 1920 Congregational Yearbook, p.45.
[510] James, 1925, p.52.
[511] The Congregational Church in England and Wales, 1970, p.vii.
[512] Old, 2007, p.422.
[513] Thomas, 1865, p.9.

Thomas Binney, David Thomas and William Taylor recognised that the role of the minister in worship needed to change subtly, even if there was not a revolutionary reimagining of worship itself in Congregationalism. Ministers needed to be reminded that they should be acting with the people and not for them.[514]

A governing principle within Congregationalism is the 'priesthood of all believers.' The apostle Paul spoke of the Holy Spirit giving gifts to the whole church to be used in the church's discipleship and mission (Ephesians 4.11-13). Although published not long before the union with the Presbyterian Church of England, the Congregational Church in England and Wales reflected on what this means in the life of the Church in its *Declaration of Faith* (1967):

> Men and women, called in Christian discipleship to share the corporate life of God's faithful people, receive power, each according to his [sic.] need and opportunity: power to love God in response to his own loving, power to obey him, power to learn from him and hold fast to his ways despite external and internal dissuasives. There is power for each as all participate in the worship of the Church and in its local and world-wide life and mission …[515]

Therefore, worship being minster-centric feels at odds with the principles of Congregational polity. What appears evident from studying what was written on corporate worship in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century is an awakening of Congregationalists to the principle of the 'priesthood of all believers' being more fully emphasised in worship. As has already been discussed, this was thought out in the writings of leading Congregationalists from early on, yet what this meant in practice for local congregations took longer to discern and varied from place to place.

The minister-centricity of worship in Congregational churches was in part due to the central place of preaching in public worship inherited from previous generations. McClure observed that this took away from worship what should have made worship a common act. He wrote:

---

[514] Binney, 1849, p.72.
[515] The Congregational Church in England and Wales, *A Declaration of Faith*, 1967, p.46.

> … For whatever preaching may do to exhort, rebuke, direct, enlighten, edify, or inspire, it should do so through the feelings awakened in the congregation by their acts of common worship. Only as it speaks to souls uplifted and purified can it exercise its true function, and fulfil its purpose; only thus can it become what it is meant to be—an act of worship for all and by all. Because we have failed to realize this, our assemblies for worship are too often looked upon as mere public meetings, and our churches as the lecture-rooms of popular speakers. …[516]

The redressing of this came through changing a congregation's perspective on prayer and praise. As has been demonstrated, worship in Congregationalism was not devoid of elements that encouraged the people corporately to praise God; the singing of psalms and hymns was practised. The content and use of hymns became a focal point for participation, especially as the organ and choir came to be used to enhance the musicality of hymnody. Henry Allon (1818-1892) wrote that 'church song is the only congregational act,' and was, therefore, cautious over how choirs were being used:

> … We do not sing when we merely listen to a choir, any more that we preach when we merely listen to a sermon: the song or the sermon may affect us, but it is the act of another, and not our own. God cannot be worshipped vicariously …[517]

In the annual report to the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, it was noted that while the human spirit sings 'it can soar up into the beatific vision of the pure in heart who see God,' and such 'communion in spiritual song is true worship.' [518] As Allon wrote, 'poetic song is the natural expression of praise, the spontaneous form of adoration, thanksgiving, and joy.'[519] Hymnody in Congregationalism did develop into corporate expressions of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and intercessions.[520] Hymns became a primary vehicle for Congregationalists to participate in worship. In the 'Preface' to *A Book of Public Worship*, the compilers acknowledged the importance of psalms and hymns in public worship and how they can be the only means of the congregation vocally entering into the service and recommended that these considerations be kept in mind when choosing a psalm or a hymn include 'its place in the

---

[516] Sir John D McClure, Chairman's address to the 1919 Spring Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 'The Public Worship of God', 1920 Congregational Yearbook, p.53.
[517] Allon, 1862, p.11.
[518] From the Annual Report to the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1863 Congregational Yearbook, p.61.
[519] Allon, 1862, p.8.
[520] Morgan, 2017, p.519.

service, the capacities of the choir and congregation, familiarity of words and tunes, [and] the subject of the sermon.' [521] Given this emphasis it is no surprise that Daniel Jenkins observed that the psalms and hymns constitute those aspects of worship where 'active interest in and understanding of' was greatest.[522] It should be noted that in the life of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, five hymn books were compiled and published: *Congregational Hymn Book* (1836); *New Congregational Hymn Book* (1859); *Congregational Church Hymnal* (1887); *Congregational Hymnary* (1916); *Congregational Praise* (1951).

Bernard Lord Manning made the claim that the hymn book was the liturgy of Congregationalists, Jenkins, however, stated that this remark 'displays a misleading conception of the nature of liturgy and probably exaggerates the influence' of hymns.[523] As Appendix II shows, liturgy was not only used to order Congregational worship, it was used to encourage participation and enable congregations to make prayer as well as praise common. The scepticism of past generations was never lost, but, as McClure noted, the advantages of a liturgy came to outweigh its potential defects. By 'enabling all to join more heartily and more intelligently in common worship, [written liturgy] provides a much needed means of grace for both minister and congregation.'[524] In some churches, this was shown to be true. In the 'foreword' of the revised edition of the *Rodbourgh Bede Book* it stated that the first edition was found to enable the 'congregation to participate vocally in the worship.'[525] Despite this, the widespread use of responsive liturgies in Congregational churches cannot be assumed, especially as it was not until the publication of *An Order of Public Worship* (1970) that a service book was published by the denomination that included prayers with congregational responses. All the other service books published by the Congregational Union of England and Wales, as noted in Appendix II, were designed as directories and the prayers offered were examples for use by the minister or worship

[521] Huxtable, et al., 1949, p.xv.
[522] Jenkins, 1954, p.92.
[523] Jenkins, 1954, p.91.
[524] Sir John D. McClure, 'The Public Worship of God', 1920 Congregational Yearbook, p.56.
[525] Chapman, 1971, Foreword.

leader in preparing to lead a congregation in prayer not to be prayed with direct congregational participation. Although Davies saw the silence of the congregation in public prayer as restricting full participation, the absence of responsive prayers suggests that congregations may not have felt participation required audible response beyond the singing of hymns.[526] This is demonstrated by the early attitudes taken to praying the Lord's prayer in unison and ending prayers with a collective 'Amen'. Although neither of these actions were remarkable in Congregational worship by the mid-twentieth century, these easy ways of encouraging congregational participation in prayer and making prayer corporate did meet resistance, particularly in the late nineteenth century.[527] Barrett observed:

> … any change that tends to make our worship unministeral and more congregational would be gladly welcomed by our people, but it is a curious anomaly that the very churches most fiercely intolerant of sacerdotalism in this country should be so unwilling for any voice to be heard in public prayers other than that of the minister who leads those prayers.[528]

An example of these can be found in the church meeting minutes of Fisherton Street Congregational Church, Salisbury, where in 1873 and again in 1875, the pastor proposed that the people responded with 'Amen' at the close of prayers and said the Lord's Prayer in unison with him during worship. On both occasions the church meeting was divided, so the pastor withdrew his proposal.[529] When presenting the case for repetition of the Lord's Prayer and the saying of 'Amen' by the people for the second time, the pastor reassured those present at the church meeting that 'these changes were perfectly consistent with … nonconformist principles, maintaining that the real question was whether or not the adoption of these two … alterations were conducive to more or less spirituality in worship.'[530] Around the same time, similar discussion occurred in the church meeting of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge. The Church was divided over the audible

---

[526] Davies, 1996e, p.377.
[527] Cashdollar, 2000, p.41.
[528] Revd G. S. Barrett, paper on 'Congregational Worship', Congregational Yearbook (1897), p.87.
[529] Church meeting minutes for 2 October 1873 and 5 January 1875 recorded in the Scott's Lane Chapel and afterwards at Endless Street, and afterwards at the new Congregational Church in Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Church Book (1852-1895).
[530] From church meeting minute for 5 January 1875 recorded in the Scott's Lane Chapel and afterwards at Endless Street, and afterwards at the new Congregational Church in Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Church Book (1852-1895).

reciting of the Lord's prayer in worship. The minutes of the church meeting held in October 1874 masterfully resolved:

> … the right of every member of the congregation to repeat the Lord's Prayer with the minister if he [sic.] be so inclined.[531]

Ian Randall noted that although this resolution received unanimous approval, when asked if 'the Church desired members to exercise this liberty,' no consensus was reached.[532]

The influence of the Liturgical Movement was the perception of worship as the communion of all with God and with each other through the inclusion of audible, common responses as part of liturgy in which all actively participate. However, if a congregation is led in a way that is about the fellowship worshipping God, then even an 'Amen' may not be necessary. Although written by Taylor in the late nineteenth century, participation in worship in Congregationalism could be described in this way throughout the twentieth century too:

> It is alleged … by many that we who have no formal liturgy, exalt the sermon at the expense of the worship. But they who speak in such a fashion, forget that preaching and hearing from the Word of God, when they are engaged in by the pastor and people out of love to Christ, and with a desire to honour Him, are as really worship as praise and prayer.[533]

Freedom in worship is, therefore, the ability for people to participate freely in the communion with God and with each other as part of corporate worship. The one tension in this is the acknowledgement that not all people will want to make that participation in the same way. This is when taking a directory approach to liturgy benefits public worship.

3.5. Conclusion

The principles of freedom, order and participation in approaching corporate worship that were established by the end of the eighteenth century in nonconformity were upheld in how Congregationalists viewed corporate worship. As might be expected, there was also development of thought and different perspectives taken. In practice, freedom in worship, one of the most crucial principles for Congregationalists, has been observed to have

[531] Randall, 2018, p.75.
[532] Randall, 2018, p.75.
[533] Taylor, 1876, p.207.

become more about choice and a sense of upholding a historical convention. The Holy Spirit still played a role in why freedom was emphasised in the worship of the Congregationalists, but the work of the Holy Spirit was perceived to be in inspiring and giving revelation primarily to the words of the minister. If worship was completely open to the action of the Holy Spirit, then worship cannot be understood as free in the human sense of the term. Worship free to action of the Holy Spirit would be entirely controlled by God. Although this ideal may have been believed in early Congregational worship, what has become evident is that human freedom—the right to choose and participate as one felt appropriate—was primarily how freedom in worship was interpreted. Divine inspiration may have been sought as part of that freedom but this was the limit of divine freedom.

With the elaboration of what freedom in worship actually meant for Congregationalists came the need to balance order and freedom in worship. This was to ensure that worship both glorified God and edified the congregation, which is an essential purpose of the church gathering for worship. Although, as with the worship of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Congregational worship was never without order, what that order incorporated and what it meant to the overall action of corporate worship was more purposefully considered. Neither the Congregational Union of England and Wales nor the Congregational Church in England and Wales ever prescribed a set liturgy. But attempts were made by the denomination and individuals to suggest patterns and contents that would enhance the worship of the church. In the twentieth century this reflected what was happening in the wider church through the Liturgical and Ecumenical movements.

The more active consideration of the inter-relationship of freedom and order also developed the understanding of what it meant to participate. The introduction of written liturgies began to encourage the use of other verbal responses by congregations in addition to the singing of hymns and psalms. As identified in the exploration of worship in the earlier centuries, participation was not only about the outward action of the congregation within an act of corporate worship. In Congregationalism, participation began to be seen as the development of the communion of the congregation with God as

well as with each other as they gathered for that corporate act of prayer, praise and listening. The important emphasis on the hearing of the Word of God, enabled by the Holy Spirit, was maintained in what it meant for the congregation to participate.

CHAPTER 4. WORSHIP IN PRESBYTERIANISM

4.1. Introduction

The Basis of Union, agreed by those who came together to form the Presbyterian Church of England in 1876, stated that 'the Westminster Directory of Worship generally [exhibited] the order of public worship and of the ministration of the Sacraments in this Church.'[534] It seems remarkable that after 231 years the *Westminster Directory* would be the document that the re-emerged tradition of Presbyterianism in England would turn to for guiding the corporate worship of the Church. In the nineteenth century, as a tradition whose re-emergence was due to primarily Scottish migrants, but added to by Irish and Welsh migrants, it might be expected that their worship would be predominantly influenced by the tradition these migrants brought with them. Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that there continued to be deep-seated suspicions in English nonconformity of Catholic influence. Therefore, this prevented wider exploration of how corporate worship might be ordered and conducted. Horton Davies in his commentary on Presbyterian worship stated, the principle of 'a form of worship which would combine the advantages of common order with the freedom of the Holy Spirit,' established in the seventeenth century in the *Westminster Directory*, was the natural anchor for the worship of the English Presbyterians.[535] This meant that from the outset corporate worship in English Presbyterianism was understood in terms of order and freedom, where order was the guiding hand that would ensure freedom did not lead to chaos. As found with the blending of freedom and order in the worship of the English Congregationalists (Chapter 3), the inter-relationship of order and freedom enabled the participation of Presbyterian congregations in corporate worship. This was important for Presbyterians because the *Shorter* and *Longer Westminster Catechisms* remained instrumental in the conduct of one's religious life and the first

[534] The Presbyterian Church of England, 1877, pp.181-182.
[535] Davies, 1996d, p.91.

statement of both was '[Humanity's] chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'[536]

As in Chapter 3, this chapter shows how freedom, order and participation can be discerned from the patterns of corporate worship in English Presbyterianism, examining how the approach to each developed as a denomination was established. Given that English Presbyterianism emerged predominantly from Presbyterianism being re-introduced into England by Scottish and Irish migrants, discussion of freedom, order, and participation will be preceded by a brief history of Presbyterianism in England. As in previous chapters, this is not an exhaustive history but highlights aspects of ecclesiology that relate to how the relationship of freedom, order, and participation came to be understood in describing the Church's approach to corporate worship.

The analysis of freedom, order, and participation in the context of Presbyterian worship comes primarily from the minutes and reports of Synod and later the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England. Supporting evidence was gathered from the writings of theologians and historians of the tradition, as well as publications relating to the Presbyterian Church of England.

4.2. Brief history of the Presbyterian Church of England

The Presbyterianism, formational in the United Reformed Church, has roots in migrant, dissenting Scottish traditions. As discussed in Chapter 2, during the first half of the eighteenth century much of what could be described as English Presbyterianism lost its Trinitarian moorings, adopting Arian and Socinian views as congregations migrated towards Unitarianism. It should be noted that this was not the case for all congregations who at the beginning of the eighteenth century identified themselves as Presbyterian. At this point in history two-thirds of nonconformists in England would have identified themselves thus, although it cannot be claimed that they all intended the same thing by

[536] Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, 1647, q.1; Divines of the Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 1647, q.1.

the term.[537] Therefore, not everyone who described themselves as Presbyterian became Unitarian but the title of Presbyterian generally fell into disuse. Small pockets of Presbyterians did survive in the north of England, around Newcastle and Northumberland, and in London. These congregations maintained doctrinal orthodoxy by securing ministers from Scotland.

The expansion of Presbyterianism in England gained momentum in the nineteenth century with Scottish migrants forming their own churches. The primary locations for these churches were Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and London. Around Liverpool, in Lancashire, and in other pockets around England, there were also Irish influences on Presbyterianism due to the Irish migrants found in that area of the country.[538] As the number of churches grew, they organised themselves into presbyteries, foundational for Presbyterian governance. Carnegie Simpson, in a lecture to the Presbyterian Historical Society of England given in 1936, said: 'Presbyterianism is the form of church government which was adopted—or rather was reverted to—at the Reformation by churches which were free, in matters of polity, to follow what they believed to be New Testament direction.'[539] In this definition, Simpson did not intend to suggest that 'Presbyterianism was an exact replica of the system of the New Testament churches' but it followed a conciliar model of church government.[540] Conciliarity ran throughout the organisation of the Church. To demonstrate this, Simpson said:

---

[537] Smith and Kemeny, 2019, p.122. It is of note that at this point in Church History the term 'Presbyterian' was almost synonymous with the terms 'Puritan' and 'Precisian'. Although there were differences, they were to all intents and purpose nicknames. Presbyterianism was linked with a particular understanding of Church governance that was observed in the Reformed churches in Europe and hoped for in the English church (Drysdale, 1889, pp.4-8).

[538] Buick Knox in his paper on the links between Irish and English Presbyterianism gave examples of how both Irish migrants led to the planting of churches and became influential characters in English Presbyterian churches. In Plymouth, the influx comprised soldiers, sailors and shipwrights from Belfast suggesting the need for a Presbyterian church and through support from the Presbytery of Belfast, a church was founded in 1857 (Knox, 1979, p.8). Although often observed as being a 'Scottish' church, two of the earliest elders of St. Columba's Church in Cambridge came from Irish Presbyterianism and subscriptions to raise money for the building of the church also came from a number of Irish contributors, (Knox, 1979, pp.8-9). Knox also noted that when the Presbyterian Church in England lost ministers back to Scotland, ministers from Ireland came initially to fill the gaps in the ministry of the Church (Knox, 1979, p.4).

[539] Simpson, 1936, p.4.

[540] Simpson, 1936, pp.4-5.

> It is government not by one man but by *brethren conferring and acting together*. The congregation is under, not an individual minister (or priest or rector), but a 'session'; and ecclesiastical district is under, not a bishop but the 'presbytery'; the church as a whole, in a national or other large area, is under, not a primate but a general 'synod' or 'assembly'.[541]

These councils, although they imply a democratic ideal were essentially theocratic.

Simpson stated:

> It is that the church is composed of the people of God; and this supernatural society governs itself in His Name. This … is agreeable to the New Testament, where the Apostles—whatever their special function in regard to ordination—acted with the body of the people in matters of church legislation and government. The Church of Christ is a self-governing society; and its members are not to be put under a ruling any more than under a sacerdotal order, but are—in New Testament language—'kings' as well as 'priests unto God'.[542]

The conciliarity of Presbyterianism was different from the polity of Congregationalism. Congregationalism was governed by the church meeting and, therefore the focus was on single, local congregations even when they participated in wider unions. Presbyterianism understood the 'visible church of Christ,' being 'more than the local congregation.'[543] Consequently, as Presbyterian churches were founded in areas of England, it was important for their ecclesiology that they organise themselves into presbyteries and ultimately a synod.

Given the primarily Scottish core in the churches, individual presbyteries initially approached the Church of Scotland to establish a connection to a synod. All these applications were refused. Yet, in 1835, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, S. W. Carruthers recorded, recommended to all the presbyteries in England that they 'form one or more synods, and promised that [the Church of Scotland] would then enter into such a communion with them as may distinctly mark their recognition of them as a branch of the Church of Scotland.'[544] In accordance with this advice, the presbyteries of Lancashire and the North-west of England formed a synod in 1836, adopting the 'Westminster Standards in doctrine, discipline, government and worship.'[545] The synod

[541] Simpson, 1936, p.5.
[542] Simpson, 1936, p.6.
[543] Simpson, 1936, p.8.
[544] Carruthers, 1944, p.4.
[545] The Presbyterian Church of England, 1877, p.23.

grew by incorporating the presbyteries of London and Newcastle in 1839, adopting the title of 'the Presbyterian Synod in England in connection with the Church of Scotland.'[546] This synod was never received into the Church of Scotland and it dropped the words 'in connection with the Church of Scotland' in the title in 1844 as a result of the 'Disruption' of the previous year.[547] In 1843, ten years of conflict in the Church of Scotland (hereafter referred to as the Kirk) came to a head. There were two factions in the Kirk: the Evangelicals who wanted the Kirk to be free of patronage and free to purify itself through mission and Bible circulation; and the Moderates who accepted oversight by the state and found 'missioning suspicious and vulgar.'[548] As the Evangelicals became more influential in the Kirk's General Assembly and started to try to bring about changes in the relationship between the Kirk and the State, tensions with Parliament in Westminster increased. After drawing up a *Claim of Right* in 1842, leaders of the Kirk's General Assembly attempted to convince Parliament they did so as an act of integrity and on the principle that Jesus Christ, and not the State, was the head of the church.[549] However, their actions were seen as putting the Kirk above the law of the land. In protest of Parliament's rejection of the *Claim of Right*, the retiring Moderator of the General Assembly walked out of the General Assembly in 1843 taking with him 'over one-third of the Kirk's ministers to form the Free Church of Scotland'.[550] With this split in the Kirk any aspirations held by the Presbyterians in England to be formally recognised as part of the Church of Scotland were lost, not only because of the political issues related to the Church of Scotland having churches south of the Tweed but also because predominantly the English Synod sympathies were with the Free Church of Scotland.[551] This did not prevent continued division among English Presbyterians on their identity as there were those who still considered themselves as 'the scattered sheep of Scotland in the difficult pastures of the English cities,' and those 'charged with an English mission and in

[546] Carruthers, 1944, p.4; Smith and Kemeny, 2019, p.127.
[547] Carruthers, 1944, p.4.
[548] Wallace, 2018, p.6.
[549] The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 'The Claim Declaration and Protest', 1842.
[550] Wallace, 2018, p.7. 'The Protest' made by the General Assembly Moderator in 1843.
[551] Knox, 1979, p.3; Sell, 2012, p.18.

consequence wanted the [Presbyterian Church in England] to shed its Scottish clothing and glory in pure Presbyterianism.'[552] But the Presbyterian Synod in England could not maintain a position that was not one or the other as 'a steady flow of ministers left England for vacant parishes in the Kirk' between 1843 and 1844.[553] Therefore, in 1844 the meeting of the Presbyterian Synod in England declared independence from the Kirk and recognised its future lay as 'part of English Dissent not as an alternative "British" establishment.'[554] By the end of the meeting, the Presbyterian Synod in England's organisation had been established, a committee appointed to develop the *Book of Order*, and steps taken to create a theological college enabling the training of ministers.[555] By 1847, there was a committee employed in the preparation of a hymn book.

The Presbyterian Church in England (as the Presbyterian Synod in England came to be known) was not the only Presbyterian church that established itself in the nineteenth century. This was recognised early on by the Presbyterian Church in England and a committee was appointed 'to put themselves into communication with such presbyteries in [the] country as adhere to the Westminster standards, with the view of cultivating a brotherly spirit, which may at some future period issue in a union.'[556] One of these such churches was the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland that came from schisms in the Church of Scotland that occurred in eighteenth century: the Secession in 1733 and the Relief (from Patronage) in 1752. It had planted churches in England from the middle of the 1800s and, by 1867, had formed an English Synod due to strong evidence that the churches in England needed to be treated separately.[557] On 13 June 1876, in Liverpool, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England and the English Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, both met for the last time and via an act of public witness (both Synods leaving their places of meeting and marching through the streets of

[552] Cornick, 1985, p.203.
[553] Cornick, 2003, p.291.
[554] Cornick, 2003, p.292.
[555] Carruthers, 1944, p.4; Cornick, 2003, p.292; Sell, 2012, p.18.
[556] Carruthers, 1944, p.9.
[557] Carruthers, 1926, p.6; Cashdollar, 2000, p.5.

Liverpool to the Philharmonic Hall) united to form the Presbyterian Church of England.[558] Included in this union was also a single congregation from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland in England at Shaw Street, Liverpool.[559]

The mission of this newly formed church was not to convert England to Presbyterianism but instead to further the Kingdom of God in England by enabling people to come to a loyal and catholic Christianity. The Church intended to undertake this work, Carruthers wrote, by using the best elements of Presbyterianism and the spirit of revival and union which had brought about the Presbyterian Church of England.[560] This understanding of its mission raised the question of the Church's relationship with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Could this continue to be the doctrinal standard of Presbyterianism? This was a question that had already been asked within Scottish Presbyterianism as changes in theological thought and development in biblical criticism challenged points in the Confession.[561] Given that inter-connection between the Presbyterians of the British Isles through the movement of people and ministers, it is unsurprising that in 1883, three presbyteries, Liverpool, London and Birmingham, sent overtures to Synod conveying the view that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was 'no longer well suited in form and expression' to the condition and aspirations of the Church.[562] Carruthers recorded:

> By an extremely large majority a Committee was appointed with instructions to consider the possibility of (1) changes in existing formulas of subscription, and (2) an explanatory declaration.[563]

This led to the appointed committee suggesting to Synod in 1884 that subscription, tying oneself or a church to a doctrinal creed or confession, should not be 'to the doctrine of the Confession' but to 'the system of doctrine contained in' the Confession.[564] An explanatory statement was submitted to Synod in 1885 which dealt with the doctrinal matters in the *Westminster Confession* that were considered difficult at times. The statement, which was

[558] Carruthers, 1944, p.9; Doodson, 2004, p.313; Sell, 2012, p.19; Smith and Kemeny, 2019, p.129.
[559] Doodson, 2004, pp.313 & 371.
[560] Carruthers, 1926, p.7.
[561] Murray, 1996, p.87.
[562] Carruthers, 1926, p.18.
[563] Carruthers, 1926, p.18.
[564] Carruthers, 1926, p.18.

approved by all the presbyteries and many of the sessions, discussed the universal offer of salvation, the question of humanity's total depravity, the mercy of God to infants and those beyond the reach of ordinary means of salvation, and persecution.[565] Although not immediately, this led to the preparation of 'Articles of Faith' that were 'doctrinal, credal in form, and trinitarian in arrangement (i.e. on the lines of the Apostles' Creed),' which were appended to 'all matters of polity, worship, and civil relations.'[566] Carruthers noted that although this emphasised and strengthened the character of the Presbyterian Church of England, it was not intended to separate it from sister churches.[567] It did set them apart from their sister churches because the Articles satisfied both those in the Presbyterian Church of England 'who want the substance of the faith defined' and those who wanted definitions that were not over burdensome.[568] This approach to the Articles was also visible in the direction taken by the Church in other aspects of its life including worship.

4.3. Order in worship

J. T. Middlemiss, in his paper to the Newcastle Presbytery on Presbyterian worship in 1893 suggested that liturgy had nothing to do with Presbyterianism.[569] However, Donald Fraser, three years before, in a paper to the Synod meeting of the Presbyterian Church of England had shown that it was a mistake to say this about Presbyterian worship. Both in terms of their shared Reformed heritage and historically as part of the church in England, liturgical services had their place in the corporate worship of English Presbyterians.[570] Yet, in making that statement Middlemiss was questioning liturgy as that which was prescribed and must be conducted as written down. Although not deemed necessary by Middlemiss, written liturgy that gave substance and structure to worship but did not bind the minister, allowed the 'exercise of gifts and graces'. This was thought expedient particularly in preserving order and giving the worship of a denomination a 'measured uniformity'.[571]

---

[565] Carruthers, 1926, p.18.
[566] Carruthers, 1926, p.18.
[567] Carruthers, 1926, p.19.
[568] Statter, 2018, p.69.
[569] Middlemiss, 1893, p.1.
[570] Fraser, 1890, pp.9-10.
[571] Middlemiss, 1893, p.2.

Therefore, liturgy as something that gave good order to worship was important especially at a time when the opinion was widely held that the corporate worship of many congregations was without shape or form. Middlemiss stated:

> … order and beauty should characterise our mode of worship. Order and beauty in worship, of necessity, be good since they are divine … Order and beauty are of God, and are evident in all His works. What adorns the outer courts of God's temple cannot be from its nature inadmissible into the inner, but ought to be, from His nature, ever present.[572]

When corporate worship of the Presbyterian Church of England received serious consideration by Synod, it was concerned primarily to consider order. 'Beauty' followed as directories of worship were revised and became service books during the life of the Church, as will be discussed below (Section 4.3.1). As a church with a more formal organisational structure, the resourcing of worship was predominantly based at the centre—through the committees of the Synod and later the General Assembly. This is shown in Appendix III where it can be seen that all but three of the worship-related publications were compiled by committees of the Church. This is very different to Congregationalism (Chapter 3). Although the two traditions did unite and they have shared commonalities historically and theologically, their polities were poles apart. Therefore, in the following discussion on the development of worship books in English Presbyterianism, the analysis relates predominantly to the records of Synod and General Assembly meetings (Section 4.3.1), rather than individual attempts to reform the worship of the Church, as was the case in Congregationalism.

4.3.1. Worship books and their development

The approach taken by the Presbyterian Church of England to corporate worship was not given serious consideration by Synod until 1885. Overtures, which were submitted questions or proposals by individuals or presbyteries to the Synod, had been brought in preceding years relating to specific acts of worship—marriage and burial services—due to changes in law over who may preside over these rites.[573] In spite of these, no action was

[572] Middlemiss, 1893, p.3.
[573] Davies, 1996d, p.108.

taken until an overture proposing that the use of the *Westminster Directory* and its content by the Church be reviewed. A committee to consider the possibility of drafting a new directory was appointed and they began by consulting the churches over their customs in worship. Two hundred answers were scrutinised by the Committee, finding that 'printed forms of worship for the Lord's Supper, marriages, burials and the reception of new communicants' were generally used, of which there were 24 different forms.[574] The sources of these different forms were not identified, although the Committee noted one instance of a minister using the *Westminster Directory* in baptismal services.[575] In Davies' analysis of the Committee's findings, he stated that for the conduct of regular Sunday services, the Committee found considerable diversity:

> All but 30 of the congregations had two Scripture lections in the morning service, but the practice was most uncommon in the evenings. One hundred and eighteen congregations only repeated the Lord's Prayer at either the morning or evening service, but none repeated the Apostles' Creed. Very few congregations repeated the Creed even in the Communion service.[576]

Given that the Committee could not ascertain any principle on which the order of worship in congregations was based and the great variety in practice, [577] their conclusion was brought in the recommendation below to the Synod of 1886:

> The Committee … are of the opinion that it is desirable to prepare … a Revised Directory of Public Worship, on the basis of the 'Westminster Directory,' which 'exhibits generally the order of public worship, and of the administration of sacraments in the Church;' and that, along with this, forms of service should be provided for optional use on special occasions, as at marriages, burials, ordinations of office-bearers, reception of young communicants, and the like. They are agreed in thinking that in this way the Church may gain much in respect of the completeness, concord, and decorum of her services.[578]

The Committee was instructed to undertake the proposed revision and the first draft of the revised *Directory for Public Worship* was presented to Synod in 1889 with copies circulated for comment. This initial draft contained seven chapters that covered public, corporate worship, the administering of the sacraments, marriage and funeral services.

---

[574] Davies, 1996d, p.109; Committee on the Directory of Public Worship report, 1887 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.507.
[575] Committee on Public Worship report, 1887 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.508.
[576] Davies, 1996d, p.109.
[577] Committee on Public Worship report, 1887 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.507.
[578] Committee on Public Worship report, 1886 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.209.

Donald Fraser, Convener of the Committee, stated that most of the content followed the plan of a directory and were not to be considered as liturgies. He asserted:

> The Committee had taken this course, understanding it to be the wish of the Church to afford guidance to the inexperienced, and to place some restraint on individuals or local idiosyncrasies, but by no means to stereotype the public worship under rigid forms of words.[579]

There was the proposal that specimen services could be included to illustrate the directions but none had been drafted when the draft version of the directory was shared with the Synod. Although what was included was complete liturgies for baptism, marriage and burial due to the nature of these rites. The reasons given for the inclusion of prescribed language in the baptismal service were:

> (i) persons who are called on to make a public profession of faith and a solemn promise, ought to know beforehand what will be required of them; (ii) the method and the very terms of the administration of this rite, as the gate of entrance into the Church, should not vary, but be the same for all.[580]

Despite the fullness of the liturgies in each of these services, there was scope for extemporary or unprescribed prayer.

Although care had been taken by the Committee to justify the different aspects of the directory, there was reticence in the Synod as far as the publication of liturgically complete resources was concerned. Davies, from evidence of the debates held in the Synod in 1889, stated that 'there was a clear and acute division of opinion.'[581] The sources quoted by Davies, although not evidence this research has been able to interrogate as it is not part of the public archive of the Presbyterian Church of England, suggested that there were those who expressed the view that the directory should contain more liturgical material and be akin to the worship of John Knox and Andrew Melville. There were also those in the Synod who believed the worship of the Church should be representative of the nonconformist practice of the day.[582] Davies' analysis does not define what was meant by this but given the address made by Middlemiss to the Newcastle Presbytery in 1893, it can be assumed that there were those who felt the directory should not impinge on the

[579] Committee on Public Worship report, 1889 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.272.
[580] Committee on Public Worship report, 1889 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.272.
[581] Davies, 1996c, pp.109-110.
[582] Davies, 1996c, p.110.

freedom that was advocated by the Independents when the *Westminster Directory* was discussed and written.[583]

Initially, this did not prevent continuation of the drafting process. Controversy over the content of the directory did come to hamper its progress and led to work halting for a couple of years as discussions were postponed in Synod due to insufficient time and detail for proper, intelligent discussion.[584] In the Committee's defence of its work given to the Synod in 1894 and in Middlemiss' paper that was written as a response to the delay in Synod of the directory's progress because of objections raised by individuals and presbyteries, it was clear that the question of freedom in worship was of greatest concern.[585] The juxtaposition of order and freedom in worship will be discussed later in the chapter (Section 4.4) but at this point it is worth noting the diversity of views held by the Church's councils in the early years of the Church, and how one committee tried to find middle ground. It also reflects how the Church was still, at this point, divided between Presbyterian migrants and those with the mission to make the Presbyterians part of the nonconformist contingent in the ecclesiological landscape of England. In trying to persuade the Newcastle Presbytery of the case for the *Directory for Public Worship*, Middlemiss attempted to bridge this gap. Although he spoke out against the influence of the Independents, he recognised that the disunity in the approach taken to worship could be ascribed to the different influences of Independency and Scottish Presbyterianism. He argued:

> Perhaps the strongest argument against a directory is the fact that we have allowed that which we already possess to fall into general disuse. Things have gone so well under the present method (or want of method) that the introduction of this proposed book of order is not required. There may be something in that, but that something is very little. If things have been good in the past it is legitimate to desire that they be made better. Our service can be made better. They can be made more helpful and more orderly – more helpful, it seems to me, because more orderly. They can be made both, by following the lines laid down by the most sainted and most learned of our forefathers. We may be sure that men like ALEXANDER HENDERSON, SAMUEL

[583] Middlemiss, 1893, p.4.
[584] Minutes, 1892 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.44; Minutes, 1893 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.343.
[585] Committee on Public Worship report, 1894 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.852; Middlemiss, 1893, p.4.

> RUTHERFORD, ROBERT BAILLIE, and GEORGE GILLESPIE knew which were the best methods for divine services from the standpoint of presbytery. And their views find support from the writings and practices of JOHN CALVIN and JOHN KNOX, names not lightly esteemed in the succession to which we belong. I therefore, as an English Presbyterian, prefer to follow those names I have mentioned rather than take my lead from the Brownists or Independents in anything pertaining to the worship of the church, and in following them I am persuaded I shall not transgress the teaching of scripture.[586]

What difference this made to the Presbytery's view it is not possible to conclude from the evidence available. Such interjection at presbytery level may, however, have had an effect given what happened when Synod met in 1894.

At the Synod of 1894, although the Synod was still divided, work recommenced on the directory with additional members being elected to the Committee on Public Worship to give further perspective on the objections made by Synod on the insertion of the Apostles' Creed, liturgical forms and other matters that had been raised which were not detailed in the Synod minutes.[587] After a further four years of work the draft brought before the Synod was received and authorised for publication. Nonetheless, although the resolution passed by Synod agreed it for use by the Church, it did so with the proviso that Ministers and Sessions could 'adopt it as far as they judge[d] this desirable and expedient.'[588] This is interesting in terms of the polity of the Church because by doing so Synod were giving a level of autonomy to the Ministers and congregations over the use of the directory. This may have made official existing practice in regard to corporate worship, but it was a different approach to how other Synod decisions had been acted on across the denomination. As the Synod was made up of every minister and one elder from every congregation, a decision made by Synod, even when about the life of a congregation, was followed without question. This also meant Synod bypassed the need for agreement of the presbyteries with the directory, which had been another sticking point along the way of drafting the revised *Directory for Public Worship*.

---

[586] Middlemiss, 1893, p.5.
[587] Minutes, 1894 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.664.
[588] Carruthers, 1926, p.19; Minutes, 1898 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.30.

In his early defence of the *Directory of Public Worship*, Middlemiss observed that as a Presbyterian it was 'not proper for each minister to have his own order of worship.'[589] He believed the Church lost something of itself when there was no common order. What was required was a directory of worship 'suitable to the time in which [the Church lived] and in accordance with all that [was] best in the history of devotional practice of [the] Church.[590] The *Directory for Public Worship*, although divisive, did offer a common, if optional, norm for the worship of the Presbyterian Church of England.[591] Therefore, it is interesting to note Carruthers' observation that 'even where [the *Directory for Public Worship* was] not used its influence … conduced to the greater regularity and reverence of services.'[592] In its non-use, as well as its use, the *Directory for Public Worship* appears to have encouraged the worship of the Church to be more orderly.

The question of the *Directory for Public Worship* did not return to Synod until 1913, when the Report by the Committee on the State of Religion and Public Morals suggested that it might be desirable to revise and supplement it. The report stated the opinion that, although the *Directory for Public Worship* was 'of the nature of an experiment,' it had been a useful book. Given this and the belief that there was the demand for a book that embodied more of the 'treasures' of Presbyterian devotion and bringing the Presbyterian Church of England more into line with Presbyterian churches across the world in its worship, a resolution was put that a committee be formed to consider a work of revision of the *Directory for Public Worship*.[593] In 1914 a special committee was convened.

The final draft of the revision initiated in 1914 was presented to Synod in 1920. Compared to the edition of the *Directory for Public Worship* published in 1898, this version was distinctly different. It was not a book of guidance on how worship should flow and what might be said at a given point, it was a book of liturgies. During the drafting process, this

[589] Middlemiss, 1893, p.5.
[590] Middlemiss, 1893, p.8.
[591] Davies, 1996c, p.111.
[592] Carruthers, 1926, p.20.
[593] Committee on the State of Religion and Public Morals report, 1913 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.317.

approach appears not to have been questioned by Synod even though approval of certain liturgies had been sought by the Committee from both presbyteries and Synod, *i.e.* the services of ordination and induction. Interestingly, as a completed collection, the Committee sought its approval on the same terms as the *Directory for Public Worship* of 1898. Its adoption by a congregation, the Committee felt, should remain the choice of the Minister and Session.[594] In the resolutions that recommended and gave final authorisation for the publication of the directory, this was not mentioned. Nevertheless, although emphasised in a different way, that sense of freedom and choice in how the directory was to be used was stated within the book's 'Preface':

> The Forms of Service in this book are not intended to interfere with the freedom of our worship, or to be in any sense obligatory.[595]

A possible reason for the emphasis being placed on the content of the liturgies rather than the adoption of the directory was that with the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship* there were aspects of certain liturgies that Synod deemed must be used within certain acts of corporate worship held within the churches. Also, it would appear that Synod believed it was right that uniformity in aspects of corporate worship should be encouraged and therefore suggested the use of certain liturgies would be desirable. In the 'Preface' the Committee stated:

> The only exceptions are those portions of the Orders of Service for Ordination and Induction which the Synod has enjoined to be used as they stand; and certain words in the Marriage Service, which are prescribed by Act of Parliament, and are therefore essential to the validity of the marriage. It is most desirable, however, that, as far as possible, the procedure should be uniform throughout the Church in the Administration of the Sacraments, the Admission of Young Communicants, and the Dedication of Churches.[596]

The combination of this with elements within the liturgies being labelled as 'if desirable' and 'may be used' permitted and enabled ministers/worship leaders to use the book freely while developing a link between church order and worship. This is important, not only

[594] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1920 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.544.
[595] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1920 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.545; Presbyterian Church of England, 1921, p.vii.
[596] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1920 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.544; Presbyterian Church of England, 1921, p.vii.

because this reflected the hierarchical structure of Presbyterianism but re-emphasised the importance of good order in the whole life of the Church.

In the presentation of the full final draft of the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship* for review by both presbyteries and Synod, it was not surprising that criticisms were once again received relating to what had or had not been included and concerns expressed over whether the directory was to be obligatory. Many of the criticisms were easily refuted and the Committee noted that they were all made out of the desire 'to make the directory as useful and as worthy of [the] Church as it could be.'[597] The Committee concluded their response to the comments with the hope that 'the general outline of services [would] commend itself to the judgement of the Church' and through its adoption make corporate worship easier to follow 'with intelligence and spiritual profit.'[598] Carruthers expressed the view that the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship* did this because 'it look[ed] at worship from an essentially Presbyterian standpoint, but expressed it in a fashion especially suited for England.'[599] He went on to suggest that revision of the directory would not be for a long time to come.

It was after a gap of 23 years that the revision of the *Directory for Public Worship* returned to the floor of what was then called General Assembly. The Publications Committee brought the proposal in response to the stocks of the 1921 edition being exhausted. The suggestion was made that it might be appropriate to compile a service book that was common to all the British Presbyterian churches. A special committee was convened and made its first report to General Assembly in 1945, when it was confirmed that a joint service book would be written with the Presbyterian Church of Wales. Work proceeded with the service book without General Assembly seeing draft sections, countering the approach taken to develop the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship*. The

[597] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1921 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.888.
[598] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1921 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.888.
[599] Carruthers, 1926, p.20.

proposed 'Preface', table of contents and 'a sample page indicating the form of printing' were presented to General Assembly in 1947, on which the publication was authorised with the condition that any portions relating to the law of the Church were checked by the Committee on Law and History prior to publication.[600] Therefore, in 1948 the *Presbyterian Service Book for use in the Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales* was published.

As with the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship*, the *Presbyterian Service Book* expanded the Church's liturgy. The Committee reported in 1947 that they had been unanimous in the belief that a 'comprehensive set of services' were needed to act as 'guides and suggestions for devotion' to 'deepen reverent worship and enrich the inward life of ministers and people alike.'[601] The Committee also felt that all the services included would find full acceptance by any that held to the traditions of the Reformed churches. These were bold statements to make when the book itself combined two traditions of worship: the simpler, freer form of worship that was akin to the worship of the Puritan tradition which was still strong in Wales and the more liturgical tradition that had come to be characteristic of Scottish and English worship.[602] It was substantively achieved by offering a number of alternative orders for Sunday worship and Holy Communion. There were three orders for Sunday public worship: one credal in character, one not and the third arising from the Welsh tradition.[603] Similarly for the celebration of Holy Communion: there were two described as being different expressions of the Reformed tradition, one more aligned to the Welsh tradition and a fourth shorter order for use with the sick or in other circumstances where an abbreviated service might have been desirable.[604] As with the previous editions of the *Directory for Public Worship*, Ministers and Sessions were not obliged to use the services within the book, other than those services where the General

[600] Minutes, 1947 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.132; Committee on the Directory of Public Worship report, 1947 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.54.
[601] Committee on the Directory of Public Worship report, 1947 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.55.
[602] Davies, 1996e, p.377.
[603] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.2.
[604] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.2.

Assemblies had prescribed their use, *e.g.* in the matter of ordinations and inductions and when the service included a legal requirement as found in the Marriage Service.

In the 'Preface' to the *Presbyterian Service Book*, the compilers stated that one of their objectives with the book was to 'give a richer expression to the liturgical tradition of Church Catholic and Reformed.'[605] Davies, in his analysis of the service book, suggested this was in part influenced by the founding and growth of the Iona Community and George MacLeod's theology and understanding of worship.[606] In his book on the Iona Community, *We Shall Re-build*, George MacLeod discussed the worship of the church in terms of the church catholic and reformed, and the need to recapture elements of this in the worship of the community.[607] Further evidence of MacLeod's potential influence is demonstrated by a statement at the end of the book's 'Preface' where the compilers wrote: 'The book is sent forth with the earnest prayer that, by the blessing of God, it may foster a deeper spirit of worship in the hearts of the people and be for greater glory of His name.'[608] This hints at the need for something that is truly corporate and that satisfies the souls of the people, which MacLeod emphasised in his discourse of worship.[609] Davies noted this potential influence because there were members of the drafting Committee for the *Presbyterian Service Book* who were members of a group known as the 'Parkgate Group'. This group were early English enthusiasts of the work of the Iona Community and also studied aspects of worship and had a zeal for its reform.[610]

The other potential influence was the publication of the Scottish *Book of Common Order* in 1940, which Davies suggested was taken up by many English Presbyterian ministers.[611] This claim is supported by the similarities in approach to content in the *Presbyterian Service Book* and the *Book of Common Order*, and that the 'First Order' for Holy

---

[605] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.1.
[606] Davies, 1996e, p.378.
[607] MacLeod, 1962, pp.81-90.
[608] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.2.
[609] MacLeod, 1962, pp.82-3.
[610] Davies, 1996e, pp.378-9. In this research little else was found on the Parkgate Group in the sources interrogated, so their influence cannot be concluded further than the observations made by Davies.
[611] Davies, 1996e, p.379.

Communion in the *Presbyterian Service Book* is the same liturgy as the service of 'The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion' printed in the *Book of Common Order*.[612]

Between 1956 and 1957, the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion took it upon themselves to discover how the *Presbyterian Service Book* was employed across the Church in response to the question from the Publications Committee on whether the book should be reprinted. From the initial 129 returns from ministers, it was found: 75 used the book regularly (45 used only this book and 30 used with other service books); 41 used the book occasionally; and 12 did not use the book at all.[613] Although these initial returns showed the book was being used, the Committee observed a general dissatisfaction with some of its content which suggested to them it was time to rewrite the service book.[614] General Assembly in 1958 authorised the Committee to begin a piecemeal rewriting of services and publishing them as pamphlets. Revision was carried out in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church of Wales. During the process of redrafting certain services were given permission to be used in the Church by General Assembly. These included the services for 'Adult Baptism and Confirmation' and 'Confirmation of Baptism and Admission to the Lord's Supper'.[615] General Assembly in 1964 was presented with drafts for twelve services that were proposed for inclusion in the new edition of the service book with the hope that it would agree that the Church could experiment with the liturgies in its corporate worship. As with previous times when such resolutions were put, much discussion was generated on the floor of General Assembly and the resolution was amended. In the General Assembly minutes, the amendments put imply there were concerns over doctrine and polity expressed in some of the services. The resolution finally adopted was:

---

[612] The Church of Scotland, 1940, pp.111-23; The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.50-9; Davies, 1996e, p.379.
[613] Minutes of meeting held on 29 October 1956, Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England.
[614] Minutes of meeting held on 17 July 1957, Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England; Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1957 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.254.
[615] Minutes, 1961 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.482.

> The Assembly authorises for experimental use the draft services of Infant Baptism, Confirmation of Baptised Persons, Joint Service of Adult baptism and confirmation, Ordination of Ministers, Induction of an Ordained Minister, Licensing of Probationers, Ordination of Elders, Setting-Apart of Deacons, Recognition of Lay Preachers, Dedication of Teachers and Youth Leaders, A Morning Service and Services for the Ministry of Healing; instructs the Committees on Doctrine and on Law and History to examine them and communicate their comments on them to the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion before the 31st May, 1965; and invites others interested to send written comments to the Committee by the same date.[616]

From comments received in the allotted time schedule and in consultation with the Committees on Doctrine, and Law and History, these services were revised, and the remaining sections were drafted. Some additional services were presented in the Committee's report to General Assembly in 1966 for consideration, although the resolution for General Assembly to agree the Church's experimentation with them was withdrawn. The final table of contents was approved in 1967 and the Committee was instructed to proceed with publication. This took place in time for the meeting of General Assembly in 1968 when the revised *Presbyterian Service Book* was commended 'to the use of Ministers and others responsible for leadership of Public Worship' in the Church.[617] This did not restrict the worship of the Church to the service book, but neither the resolution nor the 'Preface' make mention of 'freedom' as emphasised in the editions of the *Directory for Public Worship* or the previous version of the service book. Through the consultation method used in the drafting of the book, the Committee offered the Church an ownership of the book's authoring, which could be interpreted as there being no need for such a statement as the contained liturgies were truly deemed reflective of the Church's corporate worship and it was written in a way that freedom could be inferred. This interpretation of the evidence is supported by the final statement made by the Committee in the 'Preface':

> It is the hope of the Committee that, in the words of the Preface of the 1921 Directory, "this book may voice the present needs, the urgent desires and united hopes of the people of Christ in the language of orderly devotion so that the Public Services of Religion may be conducted to the glory of God and the edification of the worshippers."[618]

---

[616] Minutes, 1964 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, pp.510-1.
[617] Minutes, 1968 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.132.
[618] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1968, p.v.

The Committee in its 'Preface' to this edition of the service book described it as reflecting the 'thinking on public worship of the newer generation', which emphasised 'the missionary nature of the Church and ministry of laity.'[619] This was apparent in the choice of language and some of the subjects contained in the prayers. Yet, this was still a book designed for use by the worship leader and not to be in the hands of the whole congregation. At no point in the discussion on service books was the potential raised for congregation members to have their own copy of the service book, as would have been seen in the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Therefore, from the content of the service book, it appears that there was only limited innovation in the Church's worship. Previous influences of the Liturgical and Ecumenical Movements and the Church of Scotland are apparent in the construction of the liturgies through the use of particular terminology, phrases and responses. For example, the use of the term 'intimations' for the giving of church notices was continued in some orders which came from the Church of Scotland. The continued influence of the liturgical and ecumenical movements can be seen in one order of the Holy Communion including the *sursum corda,* the *sanctus* and the *agnus dei,* which had come to be seen as part of corporate worship in the universal church. These maintained the service book's character as a book of liturgies but it is difficult to describe them as a reflection of a 'newer generation'. The revolution may have been in the use and acceptance of the book within the Church—something which was never measured as this book was published in the midst of the conversations of the union of the Presbyterian Church of England with the Congregational Church in England and Wales to form the United Reformed Church. Despite this, it was reported to General Assembly in 1969 that 1,020 copies had been sold and that the service book had been well received.[620] It is not clear whether this number included sales in the Presbyterian Church of Wales, given that in 1969 there were only 334 churches in the Presbyterian Church of England with 279 ministers in charge (these were the numbers recorded on the

[619] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1968, p.iv.
[620] Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1969 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.226.

1 January 1969 and does not include all ministers on the roll),[621] this level of uptake does support a high regard for this service book and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a small percentage of the members would have also owned a copy.

Liturgies in the 1948 edition of the *Presbyterian Service Book* were described as being Reformed. However, it was not until the 1968 edition that the order reflected that of practices in the churches of Zurich, Strasbourg and Geneva at the time of the European Reformation in the sixteenth century. Until this point, the sermon came at the end of the service, as it had done in the *Westminster Directory of Public Worship* (1645). In the first order of morning worship in the 1968 service book an alternative position for the sermon was suggested:

> Beginning with the Little Entry with its stress that all worship is based upon the Word of God, of which the Minister is the servant, it proceeds to praise. After confession and pardon follow the reading of the Word and the exposition of the Word in the sermon. After the hearing of God's Word comes the response to the Word in thanksgiving, intercession and offering.[622]

This follows the order provided by John Calvin for use in the Reformed churches in Strasbourg and Geneva in the 1540s, where the people were encouraged to respond to having heard the Word of God through their prayers.[623] It should be noted that this was not an innovation in the worship of the church made by Calvin alone, it came from the development of the pattern for Reformed worship set out by Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) and progressed by Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Guillaume Farel (1489-1565).[624]

Despite all the different influences on content of the directories and service books published by the Presbyterian Church of England, it is of note, that the overall order of corporate worship was consistent. This is shown in Table 3 that compares the orders for a service of the Word from the five directories/service books published on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of England. As with Congregational worship, the only distinctive difference is the relationship of the sermon and prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

[621] The Presbyterian Church of England, Yearbook, 1970, p.410.
[622] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1968, p.iv.
[623] Maag, 2016, pp.74-6.
[624] Rice and Huffstutler, 2001, pp.30-3.

in the 1968 edition of *The Presbyterian Service Book* compared with all other volumes. It should be recognised that there was an order of worship in the 1968 edition of *The Presbyterian Service Book* that did have the sermon coming after the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, as in the 1948 edition, so this change in order cannot be concluded as universal in the worship of the Presbyterians.

Directory for Public Worship (1889)	**Directory for Public Worship (1898)**	**Directory for Public Worship (1921)**	**The Presbyterian Service Book (1948)**	**The Presbyterian Service Book (1968)**
			Venite *(optional)*	
Call to worship Scripture sentences	Call to worship Scripture sentences	Call to worship Scripture sentences	Scripture sentences	Call to worship
Prayer of adoration and invocation	Prayer of invocation	Prayer of invocation	Prayer of approach	Prayer of invocation
Hymn	Psalm/Hymn	Psalm/Hymn	Psalm *(metrical)*/Hymn	Psalm/Hymn
Confession of sin with petitions for absolution and cleansing	Prayer of adoration Confession of sin with petitions for forgiveness and cleansing	Prayer of adoration Confession of sin Petition for pardon Thanksgiving Supplication for grace	Confession of sin Petition for pardon Lord's prayer	Confession of sin Petition for pardon Lord's prayer
		Psalm *(metrical)*/Hymn		
Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading
Hymn *(optional)*	Hymn/Psalm	Psalm/Canticle/ Hymn	Hymn/Canticle	Psalm *(metrical/prose)* or Children's address with hymn
New Testament reading	New Testament reading	New Testament reading	New Testament reading	New Testament
			Apostles' creed	Apostles' creed *(optional)*
Children's address	Children's address *(this could also come after the Old Testament reading)*	Children's address	Children's address and prayer	
Hymn *(suitable for children)*	Hymn *(suitable for children)*	Hymn (suitable for children)	Hymn	Hymn
Apostles' Creed	Apostles' Creed	Apostles' Creed		
Prayers of thanksgiving, supplication for grace and intercession, and Lord's prayer	Prayers of thanksgiving, supplication for grace and intercession, and Lord's prayer	Prayers of intercession, and Lord's prayer	Prayers of thanksgiving and intercessions	
		Notices	Notices	
		Offering *(and prayer of dedication)*	Offering *(and prayer of dedication)*	
Hymn	Psalm/Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	
Notices	*Notices*			
Prayer of illumination	Prayer of illumination	Prayer of illumination		
Sermon	Sermon	Sermon	Sermon	Sermon
Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Doxology	Hymn
Offering	Offering			
				Prayer of thanksgiving and intercessions
				Notices
				Offering
Hymn	Hymn	Hymn/Doxology	Hymn	Hymn
Apostolic Benediction	Apostolic Benediction	Apostolic Benediction	Prayer and Benediction	Dismissal and Blessing

Table 3. Comparison of rubrics for a service of the Word in the service books of the Presbyterian Church of England

4.4. Order with freedom

Carnegie Simpson in his paper to the Presbyterian History Society on the 'Character of the Presbytery' (1936) observed that the church ultimately should have spiritual freedom:

> The only true 'high' idea of the Church is that the Church is Christ's Church, and therefore must be free, in those spiritual matters—faith, morals, worship and discipline—on which He speaks to it, to listen and follow His voice alone.[625]

But the nature of the church is such that even in polities that emphasise freedom, such as Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, there are boundaries. There was an acceptance of this in how the Presbyterian Church of England approached corporate worship, although not always with great willingness. When the 1921 edition of the *Directory for Public Worship* went before Synod in 1920, the drafting Committee, in anticipation of the concerns over freedom in worship the directory would again raise, made the statement:

> Concerning the manner in which different Forms are to be profitably used, it is to be remembered that, while churches of Presbyterian order do not impose a Liturgy by authority, nor confine Ministers to set Forms of Prayer, they have always been careful to preserve the order, dignity and reverence of Public Worship, and to ensure that the several parts of the Service of the House of God maintained in due proportion, and that they should not be demeaned by irregular, irreverent or extravagant utterances.[626]

Therefore, despite high ideals, freedom in worship needed to be bound within order to ensure 'a corporate response by the church to God's mighty act of redemption in Jesus Christ.'[627]

In the controversy of the drafting of the first publication of the revised *Directory for Public Worship* in the 1880s and 1890s, the concern was that the publication would constrain the worship of the Church. Individuals did not want their liberty to be restricted or to be prevented from leading worship as they believed fitting for their congregations. As has already been discussed, committee reports to Synod demonstrated that this was never the intention, although members of Synod evidently interpreted the process as such. It is interesting to note that, unlike in the conversation on public worship in Congregationalism

[625] Simpson, 1936, p.14.
[626] Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Public Worship report, 1920 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.545.
[627] Macleod, 1965, p.9.

at this time, the argument for freedom in worship was not related to the activity of the Holy Spirit. Although declared and established as an independent Presbyterian church, the Presbyterian Church of England, as discussed in the history of the tradition (Section 4.2), in the early years still grappled with what this meant in terms of the ecclesiological landscape in England and the culture inherent within the Church because of its people, *i.e.* migrants from other Presbyterian churches in the British Isles. Nonconformity in England was based on the concept of freedom, particularly from the prescribed in the context of worship. Yet, given the structure and order that was at the heart of Presbyterianism, uniformity in approach to worship would seem essential and that was why there was that initial call for a directory that would enable this in the 1880s. These two were not easy to reconcile especially when views expressed both by individuals and presbyteries were polar opposites in Synod and the presbyteries themselves. As with the *Westminster Directory* in the seventeenth century, finally middle ground was found through a *Directory for Public Worship* which was a book of guidance on how public worship should flow, what ideally should be contained and how specific actions of the church might be undertaken. This attitude of freedom being about choice and conviction was carried forward into subsequent editions of the *Directory for Public Worship* and then the *Presbyterian Service Book*, as shown above (Section 4.3.1). It was distinctly reiterated in the 'Preface' in the revision of the *Directory for Public Worship* published in 1921.[628]

The emphasis of the liberty of choice in the understanding of freedom in worship rather than the Holy Spirit also reflects how Presbyterianism in England was very different from the other nonconformist traditions. In the Moderator's Committee report to Synod in 1922 on corporate worship, freedom in worship was talked about in the broadest sense. There was a focus on how this related to prayer and the use of extemporary, written, old and new prayers and responses:

[628] Presbyterian Church of England, 1921, p.vii.

> … the freedom as to the form of worship, which is part of our precious heritage from the past, is freedom to use many varieties and methods of expression, freedom to use written or printed forms of prayer along with prayers that are extemporary, freedom to invite the congregation to say aloud certain prayers (such as the General Thanksgiving), to repeat responses which have come down from very ancient times, or to unite for a few minutes in that silent prayer which many find solemn and helpful.'[629]

Regarding prayer, this is picked up later by James Todd, a Congregationalist, in a paper given at a 'Symposium on Worship' organised by the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the Presbyterian Church of England immediately prior to the formation of the United Reformed Church.[630] Todd discussed the forms prayer can take in corporate worship. Although extemporisation in his tradition of Congregationalism was perceived as the truest outworking of freedom in worship, he made the observation that prayer does not have to be only extemporary to be free.

> Because all true Christian prayer is not simply a human activity but is made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit it has often been supposed that the writing and reading of a prayer means a quenching of the Spirit. Today in our Reformed churches it is generally accepted and commonly expected that the prayers of the service will be carefully prepared and written, and probably read. Those who have suffered from long, rumbling and sometimes ungrammatical utterances are thankful for this and would not want to go back on it.[631]

This and the acknowledgement that other material was being used by ministers in the survey undertaken by the Committee of Public Worship and Aids to Devotion between 1956 and 1957, shows how ministers understood they were free to use other sources both for prayers and for the liturgy. This, of course, is further supported by how the directories and the service books were only ever commended to the use of the Church. The very nature of the *Directory for Public Worship* made this clear, particularly in its earliest form when the service was a description of what should be done when and examples of prayer or liturgy were only given for the sacraments or ordinances when ministers would benefit from, or required, exact wording (*e.g.* marriage service). In striving for a uniformity in the corporate worship of the Presbyterian Church of England, there was a sense that freedom

---

[629] Moderator's Committee report, 1922 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.194.
[630] The Symposium on Worship included papers given by Congregationalists (*e.g.* James Todd). From early in the process of the discussions on union, there had been cooperation in matters of worship and devotion. In 1960 the two churches began to share devotional resources for Lent and Holy Week, (Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1960 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.237).
[631] James M. Todd, 1971, p.1.

should always be bound to the defined order that the directory or service book suggested. Freedom in the actual order and not just within the order was only acknowledged as a feasible interpretation of the relationship between freedom and order until the 1968 edition of the *Presbyterian Service Book* when the possibility of this was expressed about the content of the book and there was open acceptance of the freedom to utilise worship material according to the needs of the congregation:

> The order for morning worship has a note appended giving the rationale of the order, and this order has been adopted, where applicable for the other services. There will, inevitably, be differences of opinion on this, but it is easy enough for those who wish to follow a different order, to utilise the material provided according to their taste.[632]

The concentration on freedom as an individual's or council's liberty when discussing in the first instance how freedom and order work together in the worship of the Presbyterian Church of England, did not mean that the freedom of the Holy Spirit within the worship was not important. Middlemiss made reference to the significant role of the Holy Spirit in his paper to the Newcastle presbytery in 1893. He outlined the negative response to the *Directory for Public Worship* as restricting the possibilities for the Holy Spirit to act:

> There have been those, and there be those still, who prefer that divine service should be conducted entirely as the Holy Spirit directs—who have no order of service, and who desire none … Others again, without taking that position exactly, resent the imposition of a directory as an interference with spiritual liberty.[633]

As Middlemiss' paper was only presented to the Newcastle Presbytery and its intention was to gather support for the *Directory for Public Worship*, these comments were possibly never conveyed to the Committee on the Directory for Public Worship in Synod. Nonetheless, although the Committee never intentionally spoke about freedom of the Holy Spirit in worship, the 'Preface' of the *Directory for Public Worship* in 1898 referenced the original preface of the *Westminster Directory* and the statement that the directory was not intended to make the church 'slothful and negligent in the stirring up the gifts of Christ in them.'[634] Therefore, as came to be understood in the worship of the Congregationalists,

---

[632] Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1964 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.424.
[633] Middlemiss, 1893, p.4.
[634] Presbyterian Church of England, 1898, p.iv.

freedom in worship was two-fold in nature: a liberty of choice and the work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed within the liberty of choice. Donald Macleod, commentating on Presbyterian worship generally and from the perspective of a national identity, observed that for Presbyterian worship 'to have meaning, shape, and unity' the downward movement of the Word of God must be recognised, 'becoming real in Jesus Christ, and an upward movement of [the congregation's] response with the Holy Spirit bringing forth new creations for this tremendous encounter in the realm of grace and faith.'[635] This observation by Macleod also makes the case for why freedom in worship had to be bound to order. Well-ordered worship ensured soundness in doctrine and prayer, as identified by the divines as essential when they drafted the *Westminster Directory* and this principle remained fundamental within Presbyterian worship.

4.5. Order and Participation

As Presbyterianism in England began to give due consideration to its worship there was a sense, as in Congregationalism, that there was something to put right. The concern for the Presbyterians, through the *Directory for Public Worship*, was ensuring worship had an order that was complete and reverent. Although the *Directory for Public Worship* and the development of it in the 1880s and 1890s does not specifically address this matter, order was observed to be essential for worship to be corporate. Donald Fraser commented on this in terms of participation by all those gathered to worship:

> The Presbyterian Church loves a sober and simple worship, rendered by the Christian people, as themselves a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifice through Jesus Christ.[636]

In worship, other than the singing of hymns and psalms, there is no evidence of what that meant for Fraser and other Presbyterians of his time. There is no suggestion in the *Directory for Public Worship* (1898) that the people should make responses in worship, other than when required in the sacrament of baptism and the ordinances of communion,

[635] Macleod, 1965, p.16.
[636] Fraser, 1890, p.9.

ordination and induction. The use of congregational responses was first suggested in the 1921 edition. There is no reason given as to why this approach was adopted in the liturgies although the drafting of this directory coincided with the beginning of a movement of high churchmanship in English Presbyterianism and the formation of the Church Society in 1917. The Society was formed 'with the object of developing the study of English Presbyterianism, particularly on the subject of ordination, church worship and similar questions.'[637] However, the Society was short lived and there is no suggestion of a connection between it and the drafting committee. It is recorded that the committee during drafting consulted other manuals of worship used within Reformed churches as well as considering the expression of prayer and praise in ancient and modern Christianity, and these may have been influential. [638]

Participation in worship is a natural outcome of liturgy that includes responses or order with congregational singing. Despite this, in a paper to the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion in 1968, J. E. Fenn observed how order alone can enhance participation in worship:

> Worship is not communing with one's self. Nor is it simply thinking about other people … It presupposes a dynamic inter-change between God and us, with all that this implies and involves. The familiar progression in public worship from Recollection through Confession to hearing of the "Word", and Intercession represents a hitherto reliable discipline of mind and emotions through which the reality of God, and the realisation of our dependence upon him can issue in new dedication and service of brethren: but the heart of it is the reality of God …[639]

This paper was read when the influence of the liturgical movement was most significant in the approach churches were taking to corporate worship and there was a clear desire to emphasise the corporate in congregational worship. Therefore, suggesting participation can develop from the discipline of a familiar order without adding further elements that encouraged the congregation to participate with prescribed responses was counter intuitive, yet it made sense in the context of congregations' lived experience. This is

[637] Murray, 1985, p.227.
[638] Presbyterian Church of England, 1921, p.vii.
[639] J. E. Fenn, 1968, p.1.

supported by the comment made by Nella Ross in one of the papers given to the 'Symposium on Worship' (1971). Ross stated:

> It would be nonsense to suggest that the congregation cannot participate in the traditional Presbyterian service: the history of Presbyterianism is the history of a people who have found their services meaningful and worshipful—and even if there is a tendency for the sermon to dominate them, there is also a tendency to follow the sermon with an attentiveness which amounts to participation.[640]

Fenn does not expand on this idea of order enabling participation. Interestingly, although not in response to Fenn's paper, Ross did offer more insight into lack of participation, suggesting that it may be due to services being badly conducted:

> If the prayers are too fast; or the pauses are in the wrong places; or there is too much verbiage and too little content, it is difficult for the congregation to enter into them. It is even more difficult if the prayers are sermons in disguise and are prayed at the congregation rather than with them. A greater concern of ministers to lead their congregations into corporate praying would increase participation …[641]

The aim of the revision of the *Westminster Directory* in the 1880s and 1890s was to improve the quality of services which, following Ross' argument, should have enhanced the participation of the congregation in corporate worship. Nonetheless, as wider influences impacted the Church and its perception of worship, good shape and flow to corporate worship were not seen as the means of participation. This was particularly evident in the 1960s when participation of the congregation was more of a concern. Then it was the more openly active approaches offered through responsive liturgies that were discussed in detail.

There was an understanding that responsive liturgies were not going to be effective in all congregational settings. This was demonstrated by how both editions of the *Presbyterian Service Book* used congregational responses minimally in the liturgies. When the 1968 edition was being drafted the committee observed that, in the context of Presbyterian worship, the congregation would not in general have a full order of service in their hands. Therefore, it was extremely difficult to encourage congregational participation in this way. Their resolution was the promotion of the congregational 'Amen' at the end of prayers and

[640] Nella Ross, 1971, p.2.
[641] Nella Ross, 1971, p.2.

breaking the intercessory prayers into 'a series of short prayers on specific subjects which would provide for the congregation to respond with the 'Amen' at the end of each prayer.'[642]

The use of silence in worship was offered as another method for enabling participation of the congregation. The use of silence was not supported by Ross in her discussion on the topic in Presbyterian worship to the 'Symposium on Worship' (1971), suggesting that it actually lessened participation because it was unfamiliar to congregations.[643] But Ross did go on to say that where silence had been experimented with it had fulfilled a need. The value was dependent on how congregations were led in this form of participation.[644]

As already shown, in Presbyterian worship there was an argument that order and/or liturgy, in the sense of a fully scripted act of worship, had the ability to enable participation. Counter to this argument was one that suggested participation led to improved liturgy (worship content as well as order). This revolved around the importance of the priesthood of all believers. If the Church owned this ideal then Donald McIlhagga, in his paper to the 'Symposium on Worship' (1971) on experimental worship, suggested that worship would be the work of the whole people, both in terms of preparation and execution.[645] McIlhagga, when discussing the shape of 'Family Church Worship' noted such worship might include 'responses, corporate prayers, (creed), laymen reading one or two of the lessons, and a layman usually leading the intercessions (unless they are corporately prepared, or corporately extempore).'[646] This concept finds support in Donald Macleod's discussion of Presbyterian worship. He wrote, that in Presbyterian worship, liturgy was not the creation of any one person because it is the 'form in which the congregation received God's word in word and sacrament, and in which it, at the same time, clothes its prayers, its praise

[642] Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1964 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.424.
[643] Nella Ross, 1971, p.2.
[644] Nella Ross, 1971, p.3.
[645] Donald McIlhagga, 1971, pp.3 & 5.
[646] Donald McIlhagga, 1971, p.5.

and its confession of faith.'[647] Therefore, it had to be the activity and product of the belief of the body of Christ. For Macleod this meant that if the people were engaged then worship was corporate and liturgical.[648]

4.6. Conclusion

In the 'Preface' to the 1994 edition of the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order*, John Bell described how order, freedom and participation inter-relate from the perspective of Presbyterian worship:

> In worship we engage as the Body of Christ in an encounter with almighty God. This engagement should never become a rambling incoherence of well-meaning phrases and gestures. It should exhibit that deliberate and historical patterning of sentiment and expression which befits the meeting of the sons and daughters of earth with the King of kings. Further, in public worship, as distinct from personal devotions, it is important the whole congregation sense a purpose and direction in their representation before God. They should never be placed in the position of being spectators at a performance which is entirely dependent on aesthetics, emotional, and spiritual whims of its leaders.
> This in no way precluded or denies the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirt. The enemy of the Spirit is not form but anarchy.[649]

From the beginning of the Presbyterian Church of England's consideration of its corporate worship in the 1880s to the union with the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1972, this chapter has shown that this has been at the core of discussions. Compared to the Congregationalists, the starting point was order as the Presbyterians believed that reverence came from good order. Nevertheless, in achieving good order, freedom was not precluded. Originally, as with the worship of the Congregationalists, there had to be order with freedom—prayers and liturgy were not to be prescribed—unless essential for legal or polity reasons, *e.g.* set words in marriage and ordination services. That understanding organically shifted over time to freedom in order. It was not only the content of the order that could change, but when deemed right the order could too.

Good order in worship also enhanced participation in worship. Although not spoken of in these terms, this was recognised early on. In its development, the *Directory for Public*

---

[647] Macleod, 1965, pp.10-1.
[648] Macleod, 1965, p.14.
[649] Panel on the Worship of the Church of Scotland, 1996, p.x.

Worship did encourage more oral participation of the congregation in worship through the addition of responses. This came from wider influences including the liturgical and ecumenical movements and the Church of Scotland. This was not in response to the belief that participation was lacking in the worship of the Church. This acknowledgement of the entwinement of order and participation early on in the development of the Church's worship is distinctly different to what was observed in the worship of Congregationalists, although they both related to how the people came to together in the presence of God.

CHAPTER 5. 'IMPROV'? A THEOLOGY OF FREEDOM, ORDER AND PARTICIPATION IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

5.1. Introduction

In the preface to the first book of services published by the United Reformed Church in 1980, John Huxtable emphasised the importance of freedom in worship. The publication of a service book, Huxtable wrote, 'does not impugn that freedom.'[650] As argued in Chapter 1, Huxtable's statement has been proved to be true; the United Reformed Church has been a prolific producer of liturgical resources over its lifetime and there is no one liturgy that defines the worship of the Church. Yet, as the historical survey (Chapters 2 to 4) demonstrates, freedom in worship concerns not only what, if any, liturgical material is used; it relates to how the Church understands its practice theologically, particularly in relationship to its identity as one of the 'free churches'. Also, although it is much emphasised, this research has established that the corporate worship of the United Reformed Church is not characterised by freedom alone. It is the distinctive relationship freedom has with order and with participation and how these terms are understood in practice, historically and theologically, that allows for a theology of the Church's corporate worship to be articulated.

In this chapter, this theology will be developed using an analogy developed by Jeremy Begbie in his book *Theology, Music and Time* (2000) to explore a theological account of human freedom. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, freedom can be defined as the state of being able to act without hindrance or restraint.[651] Begbie recognised that in human freedom this is not the case. Freedom, Begbie stated, is 'mediated through and in relation to constraint.'[652] Under this condition constraint should not be understood as a method of confinement or form of hinderance, rather as a specificity that gives structure to prevent something from being indeterminate.[653] For example, human beings subject

[650] The United Reformed Church, 1980, p.7.
[651] "freedom, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view.Entry/74395 [Accessed 24 March 2021].
[652] Begbie, 2000, p.198.
[653] Begbie, 2000, p.198.

themselves to conditions which might be defined as constraints—frameworks, rubrics, structures—yet they enable experiences to be meaningful, just as in mathematical modelling where boundary conditions ensure simulations give meaningful answers. It is possible that some constraints can run the risk of threatening human freedom. Nevertheless, without degrees of limitation humanity would never advance beyond chaos. Therefore, constraint ensures freedom because it gives a structure within which meaningful choices can be made,[654] as was evident in the Presbyterian approach to the development of a directory of worship (Section 4.3.1).

Begbie stated, freedom 'is not a thing or entity to be sought after, or a possession to be grasped. It qualifies arrangements of persons and things; it describes proper relationships and configurations between particularities.'[655] Begbie went on to suggest an aid to understanding the truth about freedom flourishing through the engagement with and negotiation of constraints is to think about it through the lens of improvisation in 'traditional jazz' music.[656] Begbie explained:

> At first sight, we might think that the only limit or constraint to consider is a musical structure or framework – a pattern of chords, a theme, or whatever. But improvisation involves larger networks of constraint, interacting in highly elaborate ways. The improvisor is *multiply* constrained, and as with all networks of constraints we can never exhaustively specify all the constraints. Some are purely passive, setting the boundary conditions; some are actively and directly causative; some are permissive, needing a particular happening in order to be activated; some are proximate, some distant; some are invariant and intransigent, some flexible and pliable.[657]

In improvisation there has to be an alertness to all these constraints, but not all define what happens musically. Some constraints can be rejected, for example a certain musical convention, in order to pursue something that appears to be musically promising. This is never done without taking seriously that constraint and testing its implications on the overall composition.[658]

---

[654] Begbie, 2000, p.199.
[655] Begbie, 2000, p.199.
[656] Begbie, 2000, p.199.
[657] Begbie, 2000, p.200.
[658] Begbie, 2000, p.200.

This analogy of improvisation for comprehending the truth about human freedom is also applicable to freedom in worship. However, in developing a theological understanding of corporate worship of the United Reformed Church, as shown by the historical survey in the preceding chapters, freedom has to be considered in relationship to order and participation, both of which can be defined as constraints on freedom. They ensure that worship is not chaotic and that it is meaningful in its purpose and the participation of the congregation and God. It is how these three inter-relate that make worship what it is. Therefore, to define corporate worship theologically, the interaction of these three needs to be discussed, analysed and evaluated theologically. To aid this discussion, and to continue the musical analogy, order and participation will also be considered in musical terms: the *cantus firmus* and the performers.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote of how God in all aspects of life wants humanity to have a firm support, which has a distinct wholeness in its own right, and ensures nothing calamitous happens in the polyphony of life.[659] Although this was part of a Christological reflection on love, the musical analogy he used translates, *mutatis mutandis,* to a theological consideration of corporate worship in the interaction between freedom, order, and participation. The firm support Bonhoeffer referred to as the *cantus firmus* in classical music is the fixed melody around which a piece of polyphonic music is developed. To have a clear, plain *cantus firmus* means that a musical composition can develop to its limits.[660] When thought of in terms of something more than a fixed liturgy of words and ritual, order is the *cantus firmus* of an act of corporate worship. Without it, as was observed in the historical survey (Chapters 2 to 4), worship can be chaotic and its purpose unclear as aspects of worship come adrift from one another.

Cantus firmus is not musical terminology usually applied to traditional jazz music. Nevertheless, the sense and purpose of the *cantus firmus* is there. Every piece of jazz

[659] Bonhoeffer, 1971, p.303.
[660] Bonhoeffer, 1971, p.303.

music has an 'undergirding structure that makes improvisation possible.'[661] In traditional jazz music this is provided by the metre (or syncopation), and harmonic sequence (or chord progression), maintained by the 'rhythm section' of the band, and the melody from which improvisation is developed and shaped according to an idiom (or style).[662] Therefore, for the purpose of this theological exploration, it is appropriate to think of order in worship, analogously, as the *cantus firmus*.

Freedom and order might define and give content to an act of corporate worship but for it to be worship there has to be participation. Using the analogy, a piece of jazz music only becomes that when the *cantus firmus* is taken as foundational but is subject to improvisation by a musician. That musician, or performer, has to have some technical competence and an understanding of musical theory, its rules of harmony, counterpoint and acceptable conventions for the development of melody.[663] Considering participation in worship through the analogous lens of performer does put a particular inference on participation—those participating should have a level of understanding and sensitivity to the relationship between order and freedom in approaching worship as a whole. Frances Young, when taking about the performance of scripture, observed that the performer needs to 'have a sensitivity to the actual score of that work, its form, its themes and subjects, and their "generative" potential.'[664] In scriptural terms, this equates to a 'philological competence [in] biblical [interpretation], linguistic skills, sensitivity to context, and ability to re-state without distortion but with imagination.[665] In the context of worship, this would be more appropriately applied to the minister or worship leader than the congregation. Yet, as has been argued throughout the historical survey, the congregation's understanding of worship and their place within it is just as important as that of the worship leader. They too are performers.

[661] Benson, 2011, p.304.
[662] Begbie, 2000, p.208; Benson, 2011, p.304.
[663] Young, 1990, p.160.
[664] Young, 1990, p.160.
[665] Young, 1990, pp.160-1.

The *cantus firmus* and performers, using Begbie's definition, constrain improvisation in the sense that they make the resulting music meaningful and not just a cacophony of sound. Similarly, as already stated, order and participation shape freedom to ensure worship fulfils its purpose in the life of the church. The *cantus firmus* and performers can constrain improvisation in different ways affecting the overall composition of the music heard. The same is true for corporate worship; it is dependent on the inter-relationship between freedom, order and participation. Begbie suggested that this resulted in three types of constraint: 'occasional, cultural and continuous.' He described them as follows:

> … occasional constraints [are] unique circumstances which are specific to a social, spatial or temporal situation, in the case of improvisation, those pertaining to a performance—for example, the acoustics of a concert hall, the mood of a particular audience. Cultural constraints are frameworks and patterns of action brought to an improvisation by the improvisers and listeners, constraints which have developed from interactions with others, perhaps over many years—the harmonic sequence in blues is an example. They include the whole range of skills and musical experience which inevitably shape any particular performance. Continuous constraints are those which condition us by virtue of the fact that we all inhabit a 'given', physical world with its own integrity—for example, the way strings vibrate, bodily competence, etc.[666]

When considering these types in the context of worship, these constraints translate as tradition (cultural constraint), embodiment (continuous constraint) and response (occasional constraint). These three constraints will now be explored and used to develop a theology of corporate worship in the United Reformed Church, through the analogies for freedom, order and participation of improvisation, *cantus firmus* and performers.

5.2. Tradition

The early church was recorded in Acts 2 as having 'devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.'[667] These actions of the New Testament Church are the foundation of corporate worship and it was with these words of scripture the European Reformers of the sixteenth century began their approach to reforming the worship of the church. John Calvin wrote:

[666] Begbie, 2000, p.201.
[667] Acts 2.42, NRSV.

> … there are in sum three things which our Lord has commanded us to observe in spiritual assemblies, namely, the preaching of his Word, the public and solemn prayers and the administration of his sacraments (cf. Acts 2:42).[668]

The *cantus firmus* which Acts 2 offers has continued to underwrite approaches to corporate worship, particularly in the United Reformed Church, whose Basis of Union when describing the ministry of the Church, states:

> This service is given by worship, prayer, proclamation of the Gospel, and Christian witness; by mutual and outgoing care and responsibility, and by obedient discipleship in the whole daily life, according to the gifts and opportunities given to each other.[669]

Although this suggests an orderly approach, it does not formally order corporate worship. It gives a *cantus firmus* that ensures there is something in the life of the Church that is recognisable as worship, but it does not constrict worship in such a way that there is no freedom of interpretation which comes from the interaction of the 'performers' through 'improvisation'. Despite this, the *cantus firmus* of Acts 2, was only the starting point for sixteenth century European Reformers and can only be identified as rooting the practice of worship in the United Reformed Church. Over the centuries, as shown by the historical survey (Chapters 2 to 4), approaches taken to worship have been revised as the relationship between freedom, order and participation has become apparent and the understanding of these terms has developed and changed. The *cantus firmus* has come to have more substance as 'tradition' has grown and become an important narrative in the Church's approach to worship.

Prescribed or fixed liturgy was dispensed with by the United Reformed Church's Puritan antecedents in the seventeenth century, yet a liturgical tradition has developed over the centuries which is rooted in the form of worship Calvin determined for the churches in Geneva and Strasbourg from original liturgies by William Farel and Martin Bucer.[670] Calvin noted that Jesus 'foresaw that [the ceremony of worship] depended upon the state of the times, and he did not deem one form suitable for all ages.'[671] Therefore, it is the general

---

[668] Calvin, 1545. 'Epistle to the Reader' in *Psalter*, reproduced in Maag, 2016, p.144.
[669] The United Reformed Church, 2021. *The Manual,* Section A: Basis of Union, clause 19.
[670] Spinks, 1984, p.9.
[671] Calvin. *Institutes*, 1559, §4.10.30 (Calvin, 1960, p.1208).

rules that are found in the scriptures, and any disciplines or ceremonies believed necessary for the order and decorum of worship should be tested against these.[672] This is why Calvin's liturgies were refinements of what had been used before and why Calvin did not discount formal, prescribed liturgy. To remain faithful to the principles of worship, that *cantus firmus*, words and formulae might alter, although some fixed elements are required in specific situations. In a letter to the Protector Somerset, dated 22 October 1548, which commented on reforms needed in the English church, Calvin recognised that there may be a case for written liturgy that bound ministers, although he believed the catechism would serve equally well as a check upon people and their practices:

> Indeed, I do not say that it may not be well, and even necessary, to bind down the pastors and curates to a certain written form, as well for the sake of supplementing the ignorance and deficiencies of some, as the better to manifest the conformity and agreement between all the churches; thirdly, to take away all ground of pretence for bringing in any eccentricity or new-fangled doctrine on the part of those who only seek to indulge an idle fancy; as I have already said, the Catechism ought to serve as a check upon such people. There is, besides, the form and manner of administration of the sacraments; also the public prayers. [673]

For Calvin, a form of liturgy was a way in which the church could honour the holy ordinances ensuring it is known 'what they contain, what they mean, and to what purpose they tend, in order that their observance may be useful and salutary, and in consequence rightly regulated.'[674] As the historical survey shows, when considering how to approach its corporate worship, the United Reformed Church and its antecedent church traditions have made this an aim in the various publications produced in order to guide the worship of the church. For example, this is demonstrated in the inclusion of explanatory notes about worship as a whole and the different elements included in an act of worship which are part of the introductions or prefaces to *A Book of Public Worship compiled for the use of Congregationalists* (1949), the Congregational Church of England and Wales' *An Order of Public* Worship (1970), and the United Reformed Church's *Book of Order for Worship* (1974) and *A Book of Services* (1980). Although the folklore of nonconformity suggests a break from liturgy, the historical survey reveals that what has been before has not stopped

[672] Calvin. *Institutes*, 1559, §4.10.30 (Calvin, 1960, pp.1207-8).
[673] Baird and Binney, 1856, p.23; Calvin, 2014, pp.191-2.
[674] Calvin, 1545. 'Epistle to the Reader' in *Psalter*, reproduced in Maag, 2016, p.144.

the development of liturgy. Instead, it has informed it and ensured that the ordinances set out in scripture—the *cantus firmus* for all worship—are maintained even though there has been and continues to be improvisation. Liturgies have been updated with regard to cultural change and, as Geoffrey Wainwright observed, as a cause for the revision of corporate worship, from a perceived gap between current practice and that of earlier and classical periods of the church's history.[675] Wainwright's remark echoed Neville Clark's view:

> … liturgy is not, cannot be, a sudden artificial construction, because it ever has been, ever must be, the product and deposit of the ongoing life and experience of the Body of Christ, there every new venture must be positively related to tradition and must, in some sense, stem from the practice of years.[676]

In the context of the jazz analogy, Begbie can be seen as supporting this process, while offering an important caveat:

> … the informal ways in which jazz has been gathered, passed on, improvised and re-improvised can remind us of a similar process in the development of tradition, and of the dangers of unduly restrictive ways in which the Church has understood the sources of 'valid' themes for improvisation.[677]

In improvisation, tradition can only point beyond itself insofar as the one improvising is prepared to trust and inhabit it.[678] This means that tradition has to be understood and fully defined. It is possible to turn tradition into themes within the church that unduly restrict freedom or make freedom 'freer' than it truly is in the context of the church. In the preface to the *Service Book* published by the United Reformed Church in 1989, Colin Gunton acknowledged the tradition of the Church's worship:

> The forms of worship offered in this book reach back through Christian history both to those biblical beginnings and to their development in the early centuries of the Church's life. But it is to the Reformation, and perhaps especially to John Calvin, that they owe their particular shape. For Calvin, the Church was to be found wherever the Word was truly preached and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were duly administered, and this book maintains that two-fold emphasis. One of its ancestors is the *Westminster Directory*, approved by the Commonwealth Parliament in 1645. Revealing influences from Geneva, Scotland and the Netherlands, it listed the necessary components of worship, gave instructions on prayer and preaching, but also allowed flexibility and encouraged free prayer. Influences on this

[675] Wainwright, 1980, p.324.
[676] Clark, 1960, p.12.
[677] Begbie, 2000, pp.216-7.
[678] Begbie, 2000, pp.219-20.

> present book are not only that tradition, but more recent developments within and without the URC …[679]

However, as with the *Book of Services* published in 1980 and *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* published in 2003, it is a tradition of 'freedom' that is emphasised when consideration is given to how worship leaders and churches might use this book. Of course, it can be said that a traditional element of jazz music is improvisation, but to constrain it in such a way is nonsensical. Even in the genre of 'free-jazz' where the improvisation is supposedly free from all constraints or influences, there is an inheritance from the past and influences from different musical styles are evident.[680] As Begbie stated, 'the intelligibility of any music depends on indwelling proven traditions of practice, interpretation and belief, ranging from the small-scale to the corporate memories which form the large-scale interpretative grids of a cultural group.'[681] And this is true for the corporate worship of the Church. For it to be intelligible there are indwelling traditions of practice, interpretation and belief that are natural conditions of worship, particularly around the concept of freedom.

The United Reformed Church belongs within the free church tradition in the United Kingdom. The identifier of 'free' is predominantly understood in the context of a denomination's relation to the state, *i.e.* it is not connected to the state and therefore free from its control in its worship and practice. Although, it should be noted, there are legal requirements upon the Church. As revealed by the historical survey, this understanding is rooted in the events of the seventeenth century, influenced by controversies between the church and state and theological thought of the sixteenth century. Ernest Payne described free churches as coming 'into existence because the life-giving spirit broke out with new power from within structures and polities, ceremonies and conventions, which were in danger of becoming too restrictive.'[682] Perhaps Payne's view reflected the strength of nineteenth/early twentieth century nonconformity for whose adherents it was convenient to

[679] The United Reformed Church, 1989, p.vii.
[680] Begbie, 2000, p.217.
[681] Begbie, 2000, p.217.
[682] Payne, 1965, pp.2-3.

see the Ejectment as the result of conscience more than legal prescription and exclusion. Nevertheless, as a Baptist, Payne would have seen the Anabaptists and the 'Spiritual Reformers' of the sixteenth century as influential and the subsequent radical groups of the seventeenth century providing a courageous witness that should not be overlooked.[683] This focus on conscience as a particular narrative of freedom has developed other freedom narratives within the life of the church which in turn have come to define churchmanship.[684] It is also evident that this traditional interpretation of freedom in the Church is a notion linked with lordship and ruling over choices and actions. In viewing freedom in terms of lordship, Jürgen Moltmann observed that everyone finds in others 'a competitor in the struggle for power and possession.'[685] Taking the position that the individual is master of choice and action suggests that the only perspective the individual holds is that of self. There is no sense of freedom of another person, although the ideal is that as a society of individuals no other person disturbs another—everyone equally having the right to be free.[686] If through freedom a better social outcome is sought, Moltmann suggested that freedom has to be an activity of a community or fellowship.[687] In community, freedom goes beyond the limits of self and there is unhindered solidarity which is important in the consideration of how the church worships corporately.[688] Although community broadens the limits, there continued to be boundaries to freedom which are those traditions of practice, interpretation and belief that in community are the 'checks and balances' on actions.

In the church, freedom cannot only be defined in human terms. God is a part of the community. Therefore, freedom is also a creative initiative that transcends the present and directs the future.[689] In the Christian faith this relates to the activity of the Holy Spirit. To be

---

[683] Payne, 1944, p.45
[684] Payne lists these freedoms as including freedom from State connection and control, freedom from essential dependence on a priestly succession, freedom from fixed liturgical forms, freedom of conscience and inquiry. (Payne, 1965, p.3).
[685] Moltmann, 1981, p.215.
[686] Moltmann, 1981, p.215.
[687] Moltmann, 1981, p.216.
[688] Moltmann, 1981, p.216.
[689] Moltmann, 1981, pp.216-7.

free is to participate in the creative Spirit of God.[690] This necessitates a distinctive understanding of freedom as it is no longer about the chosen actions of the human individual or community, but what the Holy Spirit inspires within them. This translated into traditions of practice which were believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.[691] It could be argued that an example of this is extemporary prayer, but the meaning is more nuanced than this. None of the church's traditions should be born of what the people want but of how the Spirit leads. That is why although the Holy Spirit might be perceived as having ultimate freedom—like the wind, the Spirit blows where it choses (John 3.8)—in the context of the church the Holy Spirit structures, or orders, the church's freedom so that it is meaningful.

Martin Bucer (1491-1551), although holding to the importance of scripture in the life and practice of the church as other first-generation reformers in sixteenth-century Europe, held the view that the Holy Spirit was also essential to the Christian life. This was based on John 6.63 where Jesus is quoted as saying, 'it is the Spirit which gives life'. Bucer formulated the perspective that 'it is by the Spirit that those who are children of God are led (Romans 8.14), and [God] will teach them that they should always observe with their deeds what they teach in words.'[692] Therefore, God's people will only come truly to worship God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and it is the Holy Spirit that enables the church to worship as God desires—in spirit and in truthm as identified in John 4.23-24.[693] As Ottomar Cypris summarised from *Grund und Ursach*, Bucer's defining work which was influential on liturgies across the Reformed and Protestant churches of the sixteenth century, including those of John Calvin (1509-1564), John Knox (1514-1572) and Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556):

> The servants of the Spirit are enabled through the Spirit to render to God the spiritual worship which is acceptable to Him, a worship which concerns itself not with external matters but with inner spiritual realities.[694]

---

[690] Moltmann, 1981, p.217.
[691] Payne, 1965, p.4.
[692] Bucer, *Grund und Ursach*, 1524, para.47 (Cypris, 2016, p.111).
[693] van de Poll, G. J., 1954, pp.16-7; Cypris, 2016, p.24.
[694] Cypris, 2016, p.24.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, inspires and is the means of achieving and participating in the worship that God desires from humanity.[695]

By understanding the Holy Spirit as being how the church achieves and participates in the worship God desires, Bucer determined that praise and prayer should be spontaneous. This view was not without scriptural root. Bucer wrote:

> … since we know that only the Spirit of God can know divine things (1 Corinthians 2.10-11), and further that the Scriptures of God contain nothing but good (2 Timothy 3.16), therefore in the congregation of God we used neither songs nor prayers which are not based on Holy Scripture.[696]

Although, Cypris stated, 'Bucer looked upon spontaneity in worship and the expression of the freedom of the spirit as an ideal,'[697] there was an orderly form to worship that Bucer believed congregations should follow. This too was argued on the basis of scripture.[698] But, inter-related to this was Bucer's understanding of Christian freedom. Bucer encouraged the church in Strasbourg to move away from the medieval practices that had become superstitious, were not understood by ordinary people, and were not described in scripture. However, to force any to observe or not observe a particular practice without attendance to an individual inner conviction, Cypris determined, for Bucer was a transgression against Christian freedom.[699] Therefore, although Bucer spoke out against the elevation of the bread and cup in the Lord's Supper, the making of the sign of the cross and other customs and practices of medieval piety, if they were beneficial to the spiritual well-being of an individual, were understood and remained as signs and took on no other significance, Bucer did not see them as harmful. Bucer wrote:

> … we ask all those who love the Gospel that they should regard with faithful and simple eyes all the reasons … for the changes which have been made among us, according to the Scriptures of God, and should make use of Christian freedom in external things in such a way that their first concern should always be those things which are edifying and useful; and further to take to heart that even though the idols are nothing, all external ceremonies are free in themselves, yet there are very few who will recognize these things

[695] Hardy and Ford, 1984, p.120.
[696] Bucer, *Grund und Ursach*, 1524, para.180 (Cypris, 2016, p.176).
[697] Cypris, 2016, p.62.
[698] Bucer, *Grund und Ursach*, 1524, paras.95-98 (Cypris, 2016, pp.139-41).
[699] Cypris, 2016, p.24.

> as nothing and free in truth, even though they may have said so for a long time.[700]

The tradition of freedom in worship established by Bucer allows for freedom in approach but only if it gives due regard to the Word of God and is led by the Holy Spirit. This is the only way to ensure true worship. As John Calvin, a pupil of Bucer, reinforced, God alone has the authority over humanity's right and fitting approach to worship and Christian conscience should be such that it is bound by the Word of God.[701] Calvin's argument, like Bucer's, was based on scripture. From the letter to the Colossians, Calvin reasoned:

> … we are not to seek from men the doctrine of the true worship of God, for the Lord has faithfully and fully instructed us in how he is to be worshipped. To prove this, [Paul] says in the first chapter that the gospel contains all the wisdom by which the man of God is made perfect in Christ [Colossians 1.28]. At the beginning of the second chapter he states that all treasurers of wisdom and understanding are hidden in Christ [Colossians 2.3]. From this he subsequently concludes that believers ought to beware lest they be seduced from Christ's flock through empty philosophy, according to the constitutions of men [Colossians 2.8]. But at the end of the chapter he condemns with greater confidence all self-made religion, this all feigned worship, which men have devised for themselves or received from others, and all precepts they of themselves dare promulgate concerning the worship of God [Colossians 2.16-23]. We therefore consider impious all constitutions in whose observance the worship of God is feigned to consist.[702]

Like Bucer, Calvin allowed for a freedom in observances in corporate worship which were believed useful and would build up the congregation. Without stating it, this could have included some ceremonial rites.[703] Calvin did emphasise that the ways of worship should be those set out in scripture and with the 'least possible admixture of human invention.'[704] The Holy Spirit does empower and enable new possibilities, yet the church should be aware of how easily worship described as being from the freedom of the Spirit can become worship that is pleasing to individual worshippers and the church but not God.

Tradition can give shape and understanding to how worship in the church creatively incorporates freedom, order and participation. It is through tradition that the *cantus firmus* enables the performer to improvise successfully. Without knowledge of tradition, inherited

---

[700] Bucer, *Grund und Ursach*, 1524, para.187 (Cypris, 2016, p.179).
[701] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §4.10.8 (Calvin, 1960, pp.1186-7).
[702] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §4.10.8 (Calvin, 1960, pp.1186-7).
[703] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §4.10.32 (Calvin, 1960, p.1210).
[704] Thompson, 1980, p.194.

ideas or thoughts that can be found in how individuals and congregations discuss worship lose meaning and can lead to corporate worship being meaningless.

5.3. Embodiment

The exploration of tradition has shown that the worship of the United Reformed Church inhabits a narrative of freedom within order. For some congregations this means that every act of corporate worship starts from the premise of the *cantus firmus* of Acts 2.42 or possibly expounds Calvin's ecclesiology in the *Institutes* that is based around worship:

> Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists [cf. Eph. 2:20]. For his promise cannot fail: "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them" [Matt. 18:20].[705]

Other congregations will have more elaborate prescribed orders which have developed over their lifetimes as traditions. A need for continuity and the natural cycle of change meld together in their worship. Moltmann described these rhythms and memories which are fundamental for a community as rituals, and they have the potential of becoming fixed.[706] Whatever approach is taken, these are the anchors that Bucer spoke of as being required for the spiritual well-being of an individual or community. A liturgy that is acceptable to the present Christian community and faithful to its past does more than just encourage spiritual well-being. Wainwright observed that it also enables worshippers to 'identify themselves with a continuing community and enter into the 'story' of that community.'[707] Such a perspective is offered by Huxtable about the liturgies drafted in *A Book of Services* (1980):

> … we believe most of these services reflect the ethos of our Church and of its inherited traditions.[708]

Given that it was seen as 'desirable' that the United Reformed Church had a service book from early in its life, [709] this statement by Huxtable could be read to mean that through *A Book of Services* the United Reformed Church's identity was made evident. However, the

[705] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §4.1.9 (Calvin, 1960, p.1023).
[706] Moltmann, 1992, p.263.
[707] Wainwright, 1980, p.344.
[708] The United Reformed Church, 1980, p.7.
[709] Church Life Department report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1973, p.24.

Church was formed in the hope that it would encourage further organic union in the church.[710] In fact, what *A Book of Services* did, James Todd observed in his reflection on the draft of the first order of Holy Communion presented to the 1973 General Assembly, was to provide the United Reformed Church with a text which did justice to the tradition inherited, took account of new liturgical insights 'by which all branches of the church [were] being enriched', and enabled congregations 'to worship God in freedom, with confidence and joy'.[711] This process drew the congregations of the United Reformed Church into the bigger story which goes beyond the local and denominational—the church universal.

Moltmann took the definition of the community with which people can identify themselves through worship beyond the confines of a local congregation or denomination. The church has to be a messianic fellowship, organised in 'accordance with the gospel, its promises and its challenges.'[712] In this context, worship that identifies worshippers with that community and enables them to be a part of the 'story' takes a unique shape. Moltmann wrote:

> A 'religious' church which aims to 'look after' people will always stylize its services into fixed ceremonials and will understand them quite generally as being anthropologically founded rituals with social functions, adapted to people's particular needs in certain social situations. But a messianic fellowship of the people will see itself as the subject of its assemblies, and will hence mould them into feasts of the divine history.[713]

If the church understands itself as the body of Christ and is open to being drawn into the community of God through incorporation into Christ in the Holy Spirit, then its worship will become shaped around the church's indwelling in God. Yet, if too much human history is moulded into divine history, Bucer and Calvin's fears of human invention in worship becomes a reality. That said, for worship to be of the people for the glory of God it needs to be identifiable and owned by the community who are offering that act of corporate worship. In Begbie's analogy of the jazz improvisation this relates to the musical

[710] Huxtable, 1977, p.33.
[711] Todd, 1975, p.18.
[712] Moltmann, 1992, p.275.
[713] Moltmann, 1992, p.275.

instrument in the hands of the musician. The instrument is not a mere tool 'for making pre-conceived sounds.'[714] Just as a congregation has its own characteristics and traditions that should be explored, honoured and incorporated in worship, a musical instrument has its own properties, characteristics and features that have to be respected and understood by the musician for them to create that improvised jazz melody. Therefore, successful performance relies on the performer not only knowing how they can develop a melody but being one with their instrument, knowing its sound and limitations and allowing that to be part of the performance. Similarly, if corporate worship is to retain what Wainwright described as its etymology—the sense of being 'the work of the people'—then it must embody the identity of a congregation, reflecting and embracing all that congregation has to offer to God and in fellowship with one another. [715]

As something that comes from the church's indwelling in God, worship cannot only be an expression of the people. It has to be of and in relation to God. Begbie suggested that faithful worship is that which is properly orientated—'primarily to God, and, in the power of the Spirit, to others with whom [the church] worship, and to the world [the church] represent and to which [the church] are sent.'[716] This orientation is possible because of that connection of the church with Christ through Christ's humanity and the understanding of the church as a messianic fellowship. Christ ensures that the church's worship is true to God's character and purpose.[717] This is only fully true when Christian freedom is understood as coming from the knowledge and acceptance that Christ has made people free. [718] It is not the lordship of one's own identity. The freedom that the church has before God is given by God's own grace through Christ and by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.[719] Begbie wrote, the Spirit 'brings about that particularity-in-relation which constitutes [Christian] freedom and which has already been actualised in the Son.' [720] This

[714] Begbie, 2000, p.232.
[715] Wainwright, 1980, p.8.
[716] Begbie, 2011, p.336.
[717] Begbie, 2011, p.336.
[718] Payne, 1965, p.10.
[719] Bucer, *Grund und Ursach*, 1524, para.37 (Cypris, 2016, p.105); Forsyth, 1955, p.61.
[720] Begbie, 2000, p.240.

cements the idea that the freedom of the performer in worship requires the agency of both themselves and God. Although Christ makes it possible for humanity to worship, God too acts through the Holy Spirit.

The epistles show how the Spirit can inspire and facilitate aspects of worship. In the letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul wrote: 'Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought …'[721] In the letter of Jude, there is the encouragement to 'pray in the Holy Spirit'.[722] The work of the Holy Spirit is related specifically to how the church prays in these scriptures. Yet, they demonstrate how the Holy Spirit can be described as both leader and enabler of worship.[723] The Holy Spirit also does more than this. The Holy Spirit too draws humanity into the divine. In Isaiah 11.2 the affinity between the divine and human spirit can be observed. The Spirit acts as the contact point between God and humanity, making the *koinonia* in Christ real to believers.[724] The activity of the Spirit entwinning humanity and God in Christ, enables God through the Spirit to shape 'human character and conduct the divine model and purpose.'[725] Therefore, as Alan Kay reflected, worship is the uniting of the church with God 'in heart, will, mind, and deed' through Christ:

> The union of heart is a uniting of the worshipper with God in all the feelings that are created by love. The union of will is a true sacrifice, not merely a delighting of God, but a desire and determination to those things that please Him. The union of mind is a waiting upon the word of God that we may know who He is, what is His will, and how it may be done—a learning of the mind of Christ. The union of deed is not only practised in our work and life during the week, but finds its place also in our worship when we make requests both for ourselves and others, and thus co-operate with God by faith in the transforming of the world.[726]

Begbie echoed this view in his conclusion of faithful worship as a uniting activity:

---

[721] Romans 8.26, NRSV.
[722] Jude 20, NRSV.
[723] Wainwright, 1980, p.91.
[724] Kärkkäinen, 2016, p.25.
[725] Isaiah 11.2, NRSV; Wainwright, 1980. p.93.
[726] Kay, 1953, p.41.

> To be re-directed to the Father through the Son by the Spirit is to discover the love that is eternally given and received between Father and Son, the love with which [humanity] can be bound together (John 17.21). All worship in the Spirit builds up the Body of Christ and encourages unity (1 Corinthians 14.5, 12, 26).[727]

Alan Torrance summarised this as worship being part of the 'human-Godward movement that belongs to God and takes place within the divine life.'[728] Begbie stated 'to participate, through the Spirit, in what Christ has done and is doing for us in relation to the Father, is to participate in God's gratuitousness and his inner life of exchange.'[729] Therefore, by the Holy Spirit the church is brought into and within God to participate through the gift of grace realised in Christ. The church's worship, when 'in the Spirit' becomes a sign of a God who is immanent without forfeiting a transcendent nature. Elizabeth Welch expressed this in how she concluded that because of the Holy Spirit worship is at the heart of transformation in individuals and the church:

> Worship offers visibility for the Holy Spirit's transformative activity. This transformative work of the Spirit takes place in the moments of visible offering of worship and contributes to the ongoing process of transformation. The regularity of the offering of worship itself points to the developmental aspects of transformation. This is not something that happens in the moment and is then forgotten. Worship contributes to the development of transformation in the person and the church.[730]

God is among and within the people to transform them in order that they become 'sharers in the divine nature' and subsequently agents of transformation in the world as 'partners in [God's] enterprise for the whole world.'[731]. The performer, therefore, receives the *cantus firmus*—those givens of metre, harmony, melody, idiom—and through improvisation 'returns an equivalent different gift.'[732] This, Begbie wrote, results in:

> The giving back here usually includes passing it on in an equivalent but different (and unpredictable) form to an audience of some sort, who themselves (unpredictably) receive it in countlessly different (and unpredictable) ways, and who themselves pass it on unpredictably (perhaps in no other form than an increased joy in their lives). Alternatively, the improvisation may be taken up by other musicians on subsequent occasions. As we have seen, in traditional jazz the improvisation itself (relying on its underlying, prior gift of harmonic progression) can function as the subject of

[727] Begbie, 2011, p.337.
[728] Torrance, 1996, p.314.
[729] Begbie, 2000, pp.254-5.
[730] Welch, 2021, p.222.
[731] 2 Peter 1.4, NRSV; Wainwright, 1980, p.352; Begbie, 2011, p.337.
[732] Begbie, 2000, p.249.

> further (unpredictable) improvisation, resulting in improvisation on improvisation.[733]

There results a cascade of response that makes the performance something dynamic and alive that has the potential of continuing for generations.

5.4. Response

Catherine Mowry LaCugna and Moltmann shared the view that 'worship is essentially something which *we do*, a task which we perform, in response to what *God has done and is doing*.'[734] Although this has been demonstrated as being a result of the embodiment of the church in God which leads to worship, it is also suggestive of worship being subjective. Worship can be an anthropological response, or a consequence of, 'the human perception of the divine joy.'[735] Moltmann derived this from the experience of salvation, which when known can only find 'expression in thanks, praise and adoration.'[736] Humanity's encounter with and knowledge of God leads to doxology which is more than mere thanks by the receiver to the giver; it extols the giver because they are good.[737] Moltmann suggested that adoration goes beyond thanksgiving and praise, 'it is totally absorbed into its counterpart, in the way that [humanity is] totally absorbed by astonishment and boundless wonder.'[738] A similar account, relating to what constitutes corporate worship in the United Reformed Church, is evident in Gunton's perspective on worship in the Church found in the 'Preface' of the *Service Book* (1989):

> In response to the presence of Christ, made known by the Spirit especially in Scripture and the preaching of the Word, the Church gives praise to God by offering its life and the life of the world in prayer, hymn, and sacrament.[739]

But worship is not just a task of the church. As demonstrated earlier (Section 5.3), it is also a gift that the church participates in through priesthood of Christ.[740] Begbie wrote:

---

[733] Begbie, 2000, p.249.
[734] Torrance, 1996, p.317.
[735] Torrance, 1996, p.311.
[736] Moltmann, 1981, p.152.
[737] Moltmann, 1981, p.153.
[738] Moltmann, 1981, p.153.
[739] The United Reformed Church, 1989, p.vi.
[740] Torrance, 1996, p.311.

> Christ, as fully human, embodies and enables faithful worship. He is "faith-ful," full of faith in the Father, not only in his earthly life of loving and obedient self-offering to the Father, culminating in crucifixion, but also in his continuing risen life—he is now the human High Priest who, on the ground of his atoning work, leads us in our worship (Hebrews 2.12; 4.14; cf. Romans 8.34). In him, our humanity has been taken, and through the Holy Spirit re-formed, re-turned to God, so that now with him we can know his "Abba, Father" as *our* Abba, Father. So the church's worship is united with the one perfect response of the incarnate Son, with his once-for-all offering of worship on the cross, and with his ongoing worship of the Father in our midst as High Priest. And this is possible through the same Spirit who enabled and undergirded Christ's own earthly self-offering. Worship, in short, is a sharing by the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father by the Spirit.[741]

In this context, therefore, corporate worship is the Spirit-inspired response of the church to the revelation of the triune God in which praise is rendered 'to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit'.[742] This is also evident in Gunton's description of worship in the United Reformed Church—it is where God and God's people meet and both parties respond and act.

Nicholas Wolterstorff observed that the sixteenth century Reformers saw corporate worship as God's action and the church's faithful reception of that action.[743] To participate in worship was to enter into the sphere of God's acting, not just God's presence, and for the church 'to appropriate God's action in faith and gratitude through the work of the Spirit.'[744] This is demonstrated in Huldrych Zwingli's approach to worship. Bard Thompson stated in Zurich 'churchgoers were not expected to rush into the traditional activities of worship—seeing and doing, making adoration and oblation to the righteous God—but to wait in stillness and repose upon the loving heavenly Father, that they might *hear* His Word and *receive* His gift of forgiveness and sonship.'[745] Equally Bucer believed that true worship only occurred when the Word went forth in the church and the church made its response of prayer and praise. It was then 'in this context that the Spirit of the Lord [worked within] the congregation, bringing [people] to faith and thence to true piety in Christ.'[746] The Holy Spirit is the central agent of God's action. It is the Holy Spirit who

[741] Begbie, 2011, pp.336-7.
[742] Chan, 2009, p.47.
[743] Wolterstorff, 1992, p.290.
[744] Wolterstorff, 1992, p.291.
[745] Thompson, 1980, p.144.
[746] Thompson, 1980, p.162.

impresses the external word of the sermon on the hearts of the congregation and makes it the living Word of God. The Holy Spirit calls the church to repent, impels it to prayer and assures it that those prayers are heard by God, and who provides the church with the spiritual gifts for mutual priesthood that serve both God and neighbour.[747] Therefore, the Holy Spirit 'stands at the head of the cascade of giving that flows through the material world and nourishes the creativity of the artist' or performer.[748] Embodiment feeds response because it is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which fosters in the performer the musicality that enables them in their improvisation to bring an 'old score and present experience into creative interaction.'[749] This might suggest that because the performer's experience of inspiration is beyond personal conscious control or something that is in spite of themselves, that any response to the performance or as part of the performance is passive. Frances Young suggested, through consideration of what happens with pieces of artwork, this is not the case. The artist produces their own artwork. 'The response of hearer or reader is more than merely passive since the "recipient" of the "revelation" has to discern in the "symbol", the meaning or meanings that ring bells or create new discernment. The authority of such artistic creation is inherent in the work, and yet has no impact on the "blind" or "deaf" – only on those who see the signs and believe.'[750] This demonstrates further how multi-dimensional worship is in its meaning and practice, particularly when framing it as something that is free. The anthropological aspect of worshippers' response—their participation as performers in the performance of worship—cannot be lost sight of because the truth of worship and the struggle for true worship would cease to be. This is highlighted by Young's discussion on whether there can be a definitive performance if the scriptures presented Christ as both fulfilment of all the complexities of existence and a critical challenge to it. Young states that there can never be a single adequate doctrine of biblical authority or a single adequate theology of biblical inspiration.[751] 'Like "faith and works", "grace and freewill", and many other areas of

[747] Thompson, 1980, p.162.
[748] Guthrie, 2011, p.146.
[749] Young, 1990, p.162.
[750] Young, 1990, p.180.
[751] Young, 1990, p.181.

Christian thought,' Young wrote, 'the truth does not lie where the tension or paradox is resolved.'[752] It is in the struggle to perform that an appreciation of the range of dynamics is exploited.[753]

Improvisation cannot be seen as one-sided. The performer, the one improvising, has to be working with something that already exists.[754] This is the *cantus firmus* but, from the Christian perspective, it is also the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin were of the same opinion that for worship to be true the invocation of the Holy Spirit was required. In the church in Zurich, Zwingli began an act of worship with a plea for God, by the Holy Spirit, to open God's holy and eternal Word to himself and the congregation and to establish within them the knowledge of God's will, directing all who err in the right way, so that all might live according to God's divine pleasure.[755] Bucer and Calvin took the approach that worship should begin with the confession of the congregation to bring them to a place of openness to the grace of God. In the prayers of confession they used, this was to be brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit:

> Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge that we, alas, were conceived and born in sin, and are therefore inclined to all evil and slow to all good; that we transgress the holy commandments without ceasing, and evermore corrupt ourselves. But we are sorry for the same, and beseech thy grace and help. Wherefore have mercy upon us, most gracious and merciful God and Father, through thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant to us and increase in us thy Holy Spirit, that we may recognise our sin and unrighteousness from the bottom of our hearts, attain true repentance and sorrow for them, die to them wholly, and please thee entirely by a new and godly life. Amen.[756]
>
> O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and acknowledge unfeignedly before thy holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress the holy commandments without end or ceasing: Wherefore we purchase for ourselves, through the righteous judgement, are ruin and perdition. Nevertheless, O Lord, we are grieved that we have offended thee; and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, beseeching thy grace to relieve our distress. O God and Father most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy upon us in the name of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as thou dost blot out our sins and stains, magnify and increase in us day by day the grace of the Holy Spirit: that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with all our heart, we may be moved by the

[752] Young, 1990, pp.181-2.
[753] Young, 1990, p.182.
[754] Benson, 2011, p.303.
[755] Thompson, 1980, p.147.
[756] Thompson, 1980, p.168.

> sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance in us, mortifying all our sins, and producing in us the fruits of righteousness and innocence which are pleasing unto thee; Through the same Jesus Christ &c. [our Lord. Amen][757]

Although neither of these prayers invoke the Holy Spirit directly, they suggest the need of the Holy Spirit which Bucer and Calvin perceived as essential in the congregation to participate in and offer true worship. G. van de Poll stated that in Bucer's opinion, it is the Holy Spirit that 'renders God's Word transparent and prepares [the people] for the service of God.'[758] A similar understanding of the work of the Spirit is demonstrated in Calvin's theology:

> … that the Word may not beat your ears in vain, and that the sacraments may not strike your eyes in vain, the Spirit shows us that in them it is God speaking to us, softening the stubbornness of our hearts, and composing it to that obedience which it owes the Word of the Lord. Finally, the Spirit transmits those outward words and sacrament from our ears to our souls.[759]

Therefore, before the reading of scriptures and the preaching of the sermon, both Bucer and Calvin would offer prayers of illumination. Other *epicletic* prayers were included as part of the sacraments emphasising an awareness of the continued need for divine interruption and transformation within worship to ensure that it is the best it can be and fulfils its purpose. Matthew Myer Boulton argued that 'the *epicletic* character of Christian worship should be conceived and enacted as a recognition of worship's own destitution and malformation, its urgent need for the Spirit's gracious, transformational presence.'[760] This probably takes the Reformers perspective on how the *epiclesis* should shape worship further, but it takes us full circle to their view that worship is lacking if based solely on human invention. Calvin wrote:

> … every chance invention, by which men seek to worship God, is nothing but a pollution of true holiness.[761]

Jean-Jacques von Allmen wrote:

> It is absolutely essential that the act of worship should be open towards God, that God may intervene in His saving power. It must not be self-justifying, in other words, the element of *epiclesis* is of vital necessity. We must be free from prejudices or enviousness.[762]

---

[757] Thompson, 1980, pp.197-8.
[758] van de Poll, G. J., 1954, p.77.
[759] Calvin, *Institutes,* 1559, §4.14.10 (Calvin, 1960, pp.1285-6).
[760] Boulton, 2009, p.77.
[761] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1559, §4.10.25 (Calvin, 1960, p.1204).
[762] von Allmen, 1965, p.288.

Simon Chan suggested worship as being 'both truly the work of the people and truly the work of God.'[763] What becomes evident is how the Holy Spirit causes and enable response—aiding and bringing about a congregation's participation—so that worship is the work of God in and through the work of the people. As Steven Guthrie wrote:

> … because God gives to make us givers, each participant in the cascade of giving contributes its own voice, its own gifts, to the onward movement.[764]

5.5. Conclusion

Bruce Ellis Benson suggested that although improvisation on the tune is what is thought to make jazz music unique, it is also the improvisation on musical styles, which are both historical and ontologically prior, that is key to how jazz music operates and is created.[765] Benson goes on to say that the development of jazz is in fact 'the story of continual improvisation upon itself.'[766] Given all that has been discussed in this chapter and in the previous chapters of this thesis, the same can be said about corporate worship. Worship is constantly being reshaped. It is being given new emphases without loss of historical knowledge or its importance in the life of the church. There has been that cascade of giving with each generation, yet also a constancy, through worship being both rooted in scripture and God because of the church's relationship with Christ in the Holy Spirit. To limit the evolution of corporate worship to be solely about freedom, not only mis-interprets exactly what happens in improvisation—the givens and constraints that are essential to create music of any genre—it requires freedom to be thought of in very specific terms. The analogy of improvisation has demonstrated that freedom in worship is more complex and wider consideration must be given to what happens when Christians gather for corporate worship.

If freedom was the only consideration in how the church worships corporately, the definition of freedom would need to align with Moltmann's perspective:

---

[763] Chan, 2009, p.53.
[764] Guthrie, 2011, p.146.
[765] Benson, 2011, p.308.
[766] Benson, 2011, p.308.

> … freedom means the unhindered participation in the eternal life of the triune God himself, and in his inexhaustible fullness and glory. 'Our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee', said Augustine. And when we think of freedom we may surely say: 'Our hearts are captive until they become free in the glory of the triune God.'[767]

This might be how the church should understand its freedom and be the underlying principle to the freedom that ensures worship is truly directed to God and of God, but it does dismiss what is understood and known of human freedom. The historical survey (Chapters 2 to 4) has shown that for the church human freedom is as important as divine freedom when it comes to worshipping corporately. But what can happen is that the church ends us with two approaches to freedom. John McIntyre described them as:

> … one [approach] holding that the sovereignty of the Spirit is supreme and irresistible – all is of God and nothing is of the human spirit, which is in any case too sinful to accept God's goodness; the other, that it is wrong to eliminate human responsibility and freedom, because the dehumanising of persons, even if the results are the highest and the best of them, is too high a price to pay, and persons are open and free themselves to decide on acceptance or rejection of God's offer.[768]

In corporate worship these two approaches have to be held in tension with one another. This is achieved by the inter-relationship with and constraint of order and participation on freedom. This chapter has offered three ways in which this tension can be understood and engaged within the context of worship: tradition, embodiment, and response. Tradition is the inherited ideas and thoughts that cement the importance of freedom while demonstrating why order and participation cannot be dismissed. Tradition gives the formulae from which corporate worship can develop and evolve from generation to generation. Embodiment brings the human and divine together. However, the church and God do not only meet in corporate worship. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, the church is part of the divine life and, therefore, the activities of the church should reflect this. Yet in worship this relationship between humanity and God finds its greatest expression. Welch wrote: 'In worship the nature of human dependency in God is emphasized, and in this relationship of dependency, God is known'.[769] Response is the working together of the human and divine in worship. Response is born out of what is given by God and the

[767] Moltmann, 1981, p.222.
[768] McIntyre, 1997, p.188.
[769] Welch, 2021, p.139.

people's gift back to God. Therefore, tradition, embodiment, and response do not singularly describe how divine and human freedom in worship are brought together through their relationship with order and participation. As Wainwright reflected:

> Into [worship] the people bring their entire existence so that it may be gathered up in praise. From [worship] the people depart with a renewed vision of the value-patterns of God's kingdom, by the more effective practice of which they intend to glorify God in their whole life.[770]

They all add to a theology of worship that encourages the church to see corporate worship as an ongoing process of reforming activity which is crucial to the life and identity of the church as it participates both in the life of God and of the community.

[770] Wainwright, 1980, p.8.

CONCLUSIONS

When the contents of the service book to support the worship of the United Reformed Church were last revised, the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee noted the 'need for continuity and change' in the worship of the Church.[771] This is why *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* (2003) was described as a collection of worship resources which was deeply rooted in the Reformed tradition and developed the liturgical tradition of the church 'in the spirit of the dictum "the reformed church is ever in need of reformation".'[772] Although the worship of the United Reformed Church can be spoken of in these terms, this does not explain fully the denominational perspective of worship and why all the United Reformed Church's service books have begun with the statement that the orders within are not prescribed, and are not expected to be used to the exclusion of others.[773] This thesis and the associated research has sought to explain the nature of these statements by examining the worship of the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions. Historically and theologically, this thesis has examined why, denominationally, the United Reformed Church approaches worship as it does and has developed an understanding of the Church's worship in terms of the inter-relationship of freedom, order and participation.

The Christian traditions that the identity of the United Reformed Church align with, globally and nationally, are the Reformed and Free Church traditions. The origins of these traditions lie in the European and English Reformations of the sixteenth century. Both traditions have influenced the Church's approach to worship, instilling the idea that there should be freedom in worship but not to the detriment of order. All corporate worship has to have an order to enable worship to fulfil its role within the life of the church: drawing the community of disciples together in communion with God, to glorify God and learn more of God. This explains why a consideration of freedom and order and their

[771] The United Reformed Church, 2003, Foreword.
[772] The United Reformed Church, 2003, Foreword.
[773] The United Reformed Church, 1980, p.7; The United Reformed Church, 1989, p.ix; The United Reformed Church, 2003, Foreword.

inter-connectedness is an important part of developing an understanding of United Reformed Church worship. However, because God and human beings come together in worship, neither freedom nor order can be thought of without due consideration of participation: who participates in worship and how. This is the premise on which the theology of worship in the United Reformed Church was discussed (Chapter 5). Although freedom is overtly emphasised in the United Reformed Church's approach to corporate worship that freedom requires parameters for worship to be meaningful and to fulfil its purpose in the life of the Church. This is traceable in the antecedent traditions too, although more clearly in Presbyterianism whose ecclesiology was more orderly and shaped more of the United Reformed Church's denominational practice.

From the identity of the United Reformed Church, the principles of freedom, order and participation therefore provide a way of understanding the Church's approach to worship. Each of these terms can be understood theologically and practically. The Church's understanding of them has developed over time and been influenced by historical events in the life of the church. This is why, this thesis, in recognition of the importance of history and the emphasis on heritage in the identity of the United Reformed Church, as noted in the Church's statement of Nature, Faith and Order, has explored freedom, order and participation through the lens of history.[774] Beginning with events in the seventeenth century, freedom, order and participation in corporate worship have been traced through the establishment of the Free Church tradition in England to which belong two of the four antecedent traditions in the union that makes the United Reformed Church what it is today. The two traditions examined were English Congregationalism and English Presbyterianism which initially formed the United Reformed Church in 1972 and were born out of the divisions in the English church during the seventeenth century.

[774] In the statement of Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church the declaration is made that the Church acknowledges and honours the statements of faith made by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ and accepts them as part of the heritage of the United Reformed Church. (Full text of the statement is available in the United Reformed Church's hymnbook, *Rejoice and Sing*, no.761.)

The seventeenth century is far removed from the twenty-first, and it could be argued that historically exploring the immediate antecedent traditions would have adequately developed the findings of this research. However, the common root of English Congregationalism and English Presbyterians in English Puritanism demonstrates why there is a commonality in the understanding of the principles of freedom, order and participation in the two denominations given these principles were also foundational in Puritan worship. The understanding of these principles has developed over the centuries due to the furthering of theological thought and societal changes. In each denomination the inter-relationship between the principles have also developed in varying ways. Essentially in every generation, freedom, order and participation have steered the approach to corporate worship, with order and participation bounding freedom so that corporate worship is all that it must be in the Church. And this was a concept outlined by the Westminster Divines in the *Westminster Directory for Public Worship* (1644).

Freedom

From the prefaces to each of the service books written for the United Reformed Church since 1972, freedom in worship might be perceived to be the most important principle governing the Church's worshipping life. On a very practical level, freedom in worship enables a diversity in worship that reflects and responds to the diversity of the Church.[775] Yet, this understanding of freedom in worship is only one of many interpretations over the centuries. As society has changed and human thought has advanced, the understanding of freedom has varied and developed. Freedom in worship is not only about human freedom. It is also relates to the freedom of God, particularly through the activities of the Holy Spirit. The Church's theological understanding of this has also developed over the centuries. It is this change and exploration of human and divine freedom, and their interconnection or otherwise, that has impacted the approach to corporate worship with respect to freedom.

[775] Peel, 2002, p.269; Burgess, 2016, p.3.

The observation made by John Huxtable in the preface to *A Book of Services* (1980) that the Church cherishes freedom in worship and none of the orders within the book were prescribed, has its foundation in the historic origins of the United Reformed Church.[776] The starting point for this was the attempt made in the drafting of the *Westminster Directory* to move the worship of the English church away from a rigid liturgy to worship that was scriptural and orderly while free to encompass the gifts of the minister and respond to the Holy Spirit. Freedom in worship, following the events of the Great Ejectment in 1662, became heavily emphasised in the worship of the churches that grew from dissent to the measures in the Act of Uniformity. This freedom related specifically to human freedom and the liberty of conscience. Individual worshipping communities believed they were best placed to know and decide how to worship God and therefore the form of their worship should not be a dictated by Parliament.

As already stated, divine freedom is the activity of the Holy Spirit in worship guiding and illuminating the Word of God, helping and leading the minister and congregation in their words of praise and petition. In worship, human and divine freedom should work together, but historically it can be argued that human freedom has been dominant in discourse on the worship of the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions. This is evident in how users of written liturgies have been encouraged by some authors to adapt their liturgies to 'meet the taste' of the users (*i.e.* the worship leaders or the congregation). This was part of the discussion in the draft of the 1968 edition of *The Presbyterian Service Book*.[777] It was also an approach advocated by a few authors associated with the United Reformed Church.[778] There have also been points where the argument for freedom in worship has been made in terms of divine freedom but the argument has been really about human freedom. This is evident in how allowing the true freedom of the divine in worship has been misinterpreted. There has been no acknowledgement that humanity has

[776] The United Reformed Church, 1980, Preface.
[777] Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion report, 1964 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, p.424.
[778] Hilton, 1990, p.3; Forster and Smith, 1999, p.11.

to surrender its freedom for the divine to be free. Daniel Jenkins illustrated this in observations on Congregational worship:

> In contrast to churches with a fixed liturgy, Congregationalism has always been disposed to emphasize the free and active movement of the Spirit in worship, valuing sincerity and spontaneity of expression more than the due performance of a rite. It cannot always claim to have understood the right relation between the free movement of the Spirit and fixed forms, although it sometimes has, and it has often had a naïve conception of what constitutes sincerity and spontaneity. This has exposed it to grave dangers …[779]

Jenkins identified here how a human understanding of freedom can misinform humanity's understanding of divine action in worship. It is often believed that the Holy Spirit only acts when corporate worship allows for spontaneity, primarily of the worship leader, therefore making worship truly sincere. This demonstrated a naïve understanding of the divine and, as Jenkins suggested, discounts God's ability to also act and enable sincere worship of God through fixed forms.

Human factors may be prevalent in the Church's approach to worship, but divine freedom, particularly that of the Holy Spirit, is theologically central to United Reformed Church worship. The importance of and reliance on the Holy Spirit has been reiterated through the centuries. Without the Holy Spirit, it could be concluded that the worship of the Church would be worthless and without foundation. This is summarised in the preface to the *Service Book* (1989):

> … worship takes its reality from the presence of the risen Christ in the congregation; through him the Holy Spirit lifts the people up to God the Father, creator, ruler, and redeemer of all things. Thus it is that 'The worship of the local church in an expression of the worship of the whole people of God' (*Basis of Union, 25*). In response to the presence of Christ, made known by the Spirit especially in Scripture and the preaching of the Word, the Church gives praise to God by offering its life and the life of the world in prayer, hymn, and sacrament.[780]

As well as reinforcing the Reformed nature of the Church, it demonstrates how the United Reformed Church understands that its worship is an action of the divine and human. Therefore, corporate worship in the United Reformed Church holds true to David Fergusson's description of worship:

---

[779] Jenkins, 1954, p.90.
[780] The United Reformed Church, 1989, p.vi.

> … a performative action in which both the Church and God participate. It is not merely a human acknowledgement of who God is or what Christ has done. Worship is an event by which God is known and Christ communicated; it is not of our own making for it is dependent upon the grace of God. In this regard, the act of worship is not merely a human recollection or bearing witness although it includes these. It is also an event in which God's grace works for us in repeated, regular and dependable ways, albeit in a manner that refers us to the once for all action of Christ.[781]

Worship is where the community of the church can be built up in relationship with God. It is where God can speak to the people and the people of God can make a response to God. Understanding worship to be that place of participation by both the divine and humanity, reminds the church of how it dwells in God and God dwells within it. In turn this is essential for faithful worship.[782]

Participation

Although worship is an entwinement of divine and human action, participation in corporate worship has come to be thought of predominantly in terms of human actions. In the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions this is evident in how participation in corporate worship has developed over time reflecting the Church's response to societal changes and the incorporation of worship practices from other church traditions. There are examples of these throughout the resources written for or on behalf of the United Reformed Church. For instance, the choice of language has been an important factor in making corporate worship inclusive for different group of individuals who might be part of a congregation and therefore encouraging and enhancing the ability of the whole congregation to participate. Also, in the responsive litanies and prayers that have been published, there have been a number designed specifically to encourage acts of worship to incorporate the active participation of different groups. But it is not only through responsive liturgy and language that the United Reformed Church's response to societal changes is seen. The inclusion of a 'children's address' in services was an element in the order of corporate worship adopted in the worship of both the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians out of the recognition of the importance of the presence of children and

[781] Fergusson, 2009, pp.72-3.
[782] Torrance, 1996, p.314; Begbie, 2011, p.337.

young people in worship. There was a change in terminology in the orders for the United Reformed Church (see Table 4 below, and Table 1 in Chapter 1). The 'children's address' became the 'theme introduction'. Nonetheless, in *A Book of Services* (1980) this was where the minister or worship leader was encouraged to speak directly to the children.[783] Yet, this change in terminology begins a shift towards the consideration of all generations in the whole of an act of worship. This was initiated by the adoption of the Charter for Children in the United Reformed Church, first introduced at General Assembly in 1990.[784] In the charter, the Church is called to recognise that children are equal partners in the life of the Church and are included in the concept of the 'priesthood of all believers'. Therefore, children and young people should not be thought of or spoken to at only one point in the service. Consideration should be given to their inclusion and participation throughout a whole act of corporate worship.

The expansion of resources for use in the corporate worship of congregations of the United Reformed Church also demonstrates how freedom in worship has enabled liturgical evolution. New and alternative ways of worship enhancing participation, including the use of liturgy from other church traditions and the use of silence, have been encouraged in corporate worship without diversion from what principally might be understood as the Church's approach to worship. This can be recognised as a strength in United Reformed Church worship, particularly as the Church is broad. Despite this, with an overemphasis of human action on participation in worship, it is possible to make worship purely about humanity's response to God. This is intimated by the prayer offered at the start of the 2020 edition of the *URC Prayer Handbook* written by Karen Campbell:

[783] The United Reformed Church, 1980, p.22.
[784] Children's Work Committee report, General Assembly Book of Reports 1990, p.102.

From our heart to yours, O God,
from our heart to yours.

All that stirs and bubbles within –
the naked truth of who we are
and what we feel,
born of joys and fears
and hopes and disappointments,
challenges and frustrations
and pain.

No 'right words';
no 'correct way';
no pomp,
no ceremony,
no norms or etiquette

Just a pouring forth of
all we are
in response to what we sense
of you.

From our hearts to yours, Gracious God.
From the hearts of your people
to you.[785]

A beautiful prayer that reflects the theme of the prayer handbook, yet shows how easy, when free to do so, worship can become one-dimensional (*e.g.* only about humanity's response to God), rather than it being also an action of God toward humanity.

Order

Order has been the means over the centuries to ensure that the worship of the church fulfils its place in the life of the church. It gives worship the structure so that worship informs those gathered about the content of Christian believing while demonstrating 'faith's embodiment in prayer, proclamation and the patterns of community life'.[786] Even in the periods of history when the antecedent traditions of the United Reformed Church were without published orders, corporate worship still followed an order that was fairly constant from Sunday to Sunday.[787] This might be explained by the recognition that even though it can be asserted that if God is free to act, then worship will be as God wills, human freedom can skew what happens in practice. Given the nature of the evidence analysed in

[785] Campbell and Fosten, 2019, p.3.
[786] Ellis, 2004, p.1.
[787] As illustrated by the order for the Lord's day recorded in the Bury Street Meeting House, St Mary's Axe, Church Book, 1723 (see Chapter 2).

this research, this thesis cannot conclude that all congregations in the United Reformed Church follow the same order or view order and freedom of equal importance in their approach to corporate worship. Nevertheless, the idea of orderly freedom has been clearly demonstrated and encouraged denominationally in the ways the United Reformed Church has approached and worded their service books over the years. Nonetheless, it should be noted that none of the service books published by the United Reformed Church have been like the *Westminster Directory* or the directories for public worship published by the Presbyterian Church of England. The service books have been books of liturgy rather than directories of how worship should be ordered and what might be spoken. Although not imposed, the liturgies within the United Reformed Church service books have been formulated in full without the express option for the minister or worship leader to pray in their own words. While the minister, or worship leader, is not explicitly prevented from using their own words, they are not directly encouraged to do so within the text of the liturgies.

Order has had another role in the worship of the United Reformed Church. It has been the means by which continuity in worship has been assured over the generations. There has been evolution, particularly in content, but the shape and form of the worship of the United Reformed Church can be traced back to Martin Bucer and his reformation of the worship in the church in Strasburg and where he laid the ground for understanding worship to be ordered and free. This is demonstrated in Table 4 with the comparison of rubrics for a service of the Word from Bucer's *Psalter* (1539) through to *Worship: from the United Reformed Church* (2003) including examples from English Congregationalism and English Presbyterianism.

	Bucer's Psalter (Strasburg) (1539)	**Calvin's La Forme (Geneva) (1542)**	**Westminster Directory (1643)**	**Congregational Union in England and Wales An Order of Public Worship (1970)**	**Presbyterian Church of England The Presbyterian Service Book (1968)** *(NB. The 2nd order does suggest sermon can come after prayers of intercession)*	**The United Reformed Church Worship: from the United Reformed Church (2003)**
Preparing to hear God's Word	Scripture sentences	Scripture sentences	Solemn call to worship	Call to worship Scripture sentences	Call to worship	Call to worship
					Prayer of invocation	
				Hymn/Psalm	Psalm/Hymn	Hymn/Song
	Confession of sin Scripture sentences of remission Absolution	Confession of sin	Prayers of adoration, supplication and illumination	Prayer of approach Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon	Confession of sin Petition for pardon Lord's prayer	Prayers of approach, adoration and confession Assurance of Pardon
	Psalm/Hymn *(e.g. singing of the introit, even followed by Kyrie eleyson, Gloria in excelsis)*	Psalm *(metrical)*				
Hearing God's Word						Theme introduction
	Collect of illumination	Prayer of illumination		Prayer for grace		Prayer for grace or collect for the day
				Old Testament reading	Old Testament reading	Reading from scripture
	Psalm *(sung)*			Psalm/Canticle/Hymn	Psalm *(metrical/prose)* or Children's address with hymn	Psalm/Hymn/Song
	Reading of gospel	Scripture reading from New Testament	Reading of scripture *(ordinarily, one chapter from each Testament)* Expounding of text *(if deemed necessary)*	New Testament readings (Epistle and Gospel)	New Testament	Readings from scripture
					Apostles' creed *(optional)*	
			Psalm *(sung)*	Hymn	Hymn	Hymn/Song
			Confession of sin Assurance of Pardon and Reconciliation			
			Prayers for propagation of the gospel and kingdom; for those in authority, including monarchy; for all pastors and teachers; for the congregation *(some parts of petitions can be offered after sermon)*			
	Sermon	Sermon	Sermon	Sermon *(followed by collect or doxology)*	Sermon	Sermon or other exposition of the Word
Responding to God's Word		Marriages, baptisms, publications of banns *(when appropriate)*; Special bidding prayers for sick and poor				
	Apostles' Creed *(sung)*/Psalm/Hymn				Hymn	Hymn/Song
						An Affirmation of Faith *(optional)*
	Long prayer and Lord's prayer	Long prayer and Lord's prayer *(in a long paraphrase)*	Prayer of thanksgiving and Lord's prayer	Intercessions *(could be followed by Lord's prayer)*	Prayer of thanksgiving and intercessions	Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession
		Apostles' Creed *(said only by minister)*				
					Notices	
				Offering	Offering	Offering
	Psalm *(sung)*	Psalm *(sung)*	Psalm *(sung)*	Hymn/Doxology	Hymn	Hymn/Song
	Blessing *(Aaronic)* and dismissal	Blessing *(Aaronic)*	Blessing	Dismissal	Dismissal and Blessing	Blessing

Table 4. Comparison of the rubrics for a service of the Word over the centuries

Over the centuries, there have been subtle changes in order and redefining of elements within worship, particularly the content of prayers. Yet, the essential flow has remained unchanged. One thing to note, which is not evident in Table 4 *per se* but has been shown in discussion of service books in Chapters 1, 3 and 4, is where the sermon comes in relation to what today are termed the prayers of intercession. The *Westminster Directory* had these prior to the sermon and the early service books of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians followed this principle. The prayers of intercession are seen as part of hearing the Word of God, rather than being a response to it. In the later service books of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, as shown in Table 4, and then the service books of the United Reformed Church, the intercessions formed part of the response to the Word of God as Bucer and John Calvin had in their orders. This thesis has not explored this subtlety in order, but the importance of the sermon in the worship of the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions and an understanding that response to the Word of God happens in the wider life of the church could be argued to the reason lying behind this difference. The Word of God proclaimed in the sermon should edify the congregation so that they live according to the Word of God and aim to glorify God in all aspects of their daily lives. Therefore, the sermon can be interpreted as the connection between worship and the wider life of the church, encouraging the concept that all aspects of life are to be a response to God. The sermon immediately before the congregation leave an act of corporate worship emphasises this in a way that may not be evident when the prayers of intercession form a part of the response that the congregation makes to hearing God's Word. With this aside, the continuity in order demonstrates how there is a firm tradition underlying the liturgical freedom in the worship of the United Reformed Church. This is a tradition that has allowed worship to evolve while ensuring the worship fulfils its purpose.

Further research

There are areas that this thesis has not explored in depth which might be felt as central to how the United Reformed Church approaches worship. The singing of hymns is an important participatory action in corporate worship but other than recognising this in this thesis, little else has been discussed. This is because to have looked at hymnody in more detail and is place in the corporate worship of the United Reformed Church would have altered the direction of the research and thesis. It is of note that at the time when service books were in discussion by the United Reformed Church, the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, the hymns of the churches were too. Therefore, a further area of research on the worship of the United Reformed Church could be the inter-relationship between the development of its service and hymn books. Also, hymnody has developed over the centuries in relation to societal change and reflection on the mission and identity of the church. How this has impacted the place and use of hymns in the worship of the United Reformed Church would be a means of expanding this research. This could be further developed by looking at the approach to hymns taken by the hymnwriters of the United Reformed Church. Given the number of hymnwriters within the Church, the theology in hymns could be investigated and how that impacts the theology of the Church's worship.

This research has focused on historical records and printed literature relating to the worship of the United Reformed Church and its antecedent traditions. An alternative way of exploring the United Reformed Church's approach to corporate worship would have been to undertake an empirical study. To collate enough data from which meaningful conclusion was felt to be a task beyond the scope of this body of research. Yet, given the findings of this thesis, a study could be designed that tested those findings across a well-defined, broad sample of congregations.

The traditions of the Churches of Christ and Scottish Congregationalism have not been considered as part of this research. To support the conclusions of this thesis further, the development and understanding of corporate worship in these traditions could also be

researched. This would highlight what influence, if any, they have had on how the approach to corporate worship of the United Reformed Church has developed since 1972.

This thesis has recognised that freedom in worship, although bounded by order and participation, is central to United Reformed Church worship. This would suggest that corporate worship in every congregation of the United Reformed Church would be different reflecting the individual identity of the congregation and its relationships with God and each member of that congregation. Yet, during the Coronavirus Pandemic there has been the development of digital corporate worship for the whole of the United Reformed Church and at General Assembly 2021, it was decided that there should be a General Assembly post for a Minister of Word and Sacraments to continue and develop this ministry.[788] Following on from the research presented in this thesis, further exploration might probe how corporate worship from and of the whole church can be developed with integrity. An allied question is how might the development of this practice of worship in the Church change the understanding of freedom, order and participation.

The final area where further research could be undertaken is on the question of the influence of societal changes on the Church's approach to corporate worship. The importance of children and young people in the life of the Church has been emphasised for some time and attempts made to reflect that in the Church's worship. But with an increased emphasis on intergenerational worship, what impact might this have on the conclusions of this thesis? Equally, does the inclusion of minority groups have an impact on the overall approach to corporate worship or just in such peripheral details as the language used?

It should be noted that no consideration to the sacraments has been given in this research other than observing that they are a part of corporate acts of worship. This approach was taken to ensure that this research held its focus on being a theological and historical

[788] Appendix Two to Mission Council report, General Assembly Book of Reports 2021, pp.9-17.

exploration of corporate worship as a whole. In addition, others have theologically considered the sacraments in the Church.[789] Nonetheless, further research could explore how the Church's understanding and practice of the sacraments impacts, if at all, its theology of worship.

Conclusion

Understanding freedom, order, and participation and how they inter-relate allows the worship of the United Reformed Church to be described particularly from a theological perspective. The approach that has denominationally been taken to worship has developed out of the Church's historic identity and its wider church alignment with the Reformed and the Free Church traditions. Freedom, order, and participation are reflections of the practical approach to corporate worship, but each has theological dimensions which relate to the theology of the United Reformed Church. However, for worship in the United Reformed Church to continue to evolve while being attentive to scripture, open to the Holy Spirit and engaging the covenant community, the Church must remember and emphasise that corporate worship takes place in partnership with God. This is how the Church will ensure that it always worships 'in spirit and in truth'.[790]

[789] For example: Spinks, 1984; Ball, 2010; Riglin, 2012; Thompson, 2012a
[790] John 4.24, NRSV.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Worship literature

Bailey, B.H., 1983. *Psalms for Pilgrims: CWM Prayer Handbook 1983*. London: Council for World Mission.

Bailey, B.H., 1984. *Proverbs for Today: CWM Prayer Handbook 1984.* London: Council for World Mission.

Bailey, B.H., 1985. *Partners in Prayer: CWM Prayer Handbook 1985.* London: Council for World Mission.

Banyard, E. ed., 1986. *The Word and the World: Prayer Handbook 1986*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Banyard, E. ed., 1987. *The Power and the Glory: Prayer Handbook 1987*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Banyard, E. ed., 1988. *Encounters, Encounters: Prayer Handbook 1988*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Banyard, E. ed., 1989. *All the Glorious Names: Prayer Handbook 1989*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Banyard, E. ed., 1992a. *Festival Services.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Banyard, E., 1992c. *Turn but a Stone: A collection of meditations and prayers based in the Lectionary*. Nutfield: National Christian Education Council.

Bennett, B., 2011. *A Great Cloud of Witnesses, Reflections of Encounters with Jesus, Part One: Birth*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Bennett, B., 2012. *A Great Cloud of Witnesses, Reflections of Encounters with Jesus, Part Two: Life*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Bennett, B., 2021. *A Great Cloud of Witnesses, Part 3: Death and Beyond*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Berry, J., 2011. *Naming God.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Brienen, F. ed., 2000. *What Does the Lord Require? A New Anthology of Prayers and Songs for Worship and Mission*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Brienen, F. and Jagassar, M. eds., 2012. *Ordinary Time: Prayer Handbook 2013*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Brienen, F. and Jagassar, M. eds., 2014. *Listening for the Whisper: Prayer Handbook 2015*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Brienen, F. and Jagassar, M. eds., 2015. *Hidden in Plain Sight: Prayer Handbook 2016*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Brown, S., 2009a. *Preacher's Press Resource for the Christian Year: New Year Services.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Brown, S., 2009b. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Christmas Services 2.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Bulley, K., 2019. *Creative Ideas for All-Age Church: 12 through-the-year programmes for informal church services and special one-off events.* Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship.

Burnham, T., 1981. *In the Quietness: Prayers before Worship*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Burnham, T., 2010. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Summer Saints*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Campbell, J., 2016. *Songs to Shake Us Up.* Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew.

Campbell, J., 2021. *Sunflowers and Thistles: Praise songs and Protest*. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/sunflowers-and-thistles.html> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

Campbell, K. and Fosten, I., 2019. *Prayers from the heart: Prayer Handbook 2020.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Campbell, K. and Fosten, I., 2021. *Conversations: Prayer Handbook 2021.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Campbell, K. and Fosten, I., 2022. *Jubliee: Freed to Live! Prayer Handbook 2022*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Chapman, G.R. ed., 1971. *The Rodborough Bede Book.* Revised ed. Woodchester: Arthurs Press, Ltd.

Chapman, R. and Hilton, D., 1978. *Prayers for the Church Community*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Cheetham Hill Congregational Church, 1869. *A Form of Morning and Evening Service for the use of Free Churches.* London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Chippindale, K. ed., 2003. *Prescription for Prayer: Prayer Handbook 2003-2004*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Chippindale, K. ed., 2004. *Unwrapping the Kingdom: Prayer Handbook 2004-2005*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Chippindale, K. ed., 2005. *Glory at Ground Level: Prayer Handbook 2005-2006*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Church, R. and Eddy, N. eds., 2016. *Feasts and Festivals: Prayers Handbook 2017.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Church, R. and Eddy, N. eds., 2017. *On Eagles' Wings: Prayers Handbook 2018.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Church, R. and Eddy, N. eds., 2018. *Seasons of the Spirit: Prayers Handbook 2019.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Coates, A., Gregory, J., Micklem, C., Sewell, W., Stapleton, D. and Wren, B., 1967. *Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship.* London: SCM Press.

Coates, A., Gregory, J., Micklem, C., Stapleton, D. and Tomes, R., 1970. *More Contemporary Prayers: Prayers on Fifty-two Themes.* London: SCM Press.

Colechin, E.S., 2018. Draft of Opening Worship for General Assembly 2018. [Personal copy owned by Revd Elaine Colechin].

Committee of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1889. *The Directory for the Public Worship of God.* Draft ed. London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Compston, K. ed., 1993. *Encompassing Presence: Prayer Handbook 1993.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Compston, K. ed., 1994. *Edge by Fire: Prayer Handbook 1994.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Compston, K. ed., 1995. *A Restless Hope: Prayer Handbook 1995.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1847. *The Congregational Service Book: A Form of Public Worship designed for use of the Independent and Other Nonconformist Bodies in Great Britain.* London: Ward and Co.

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1936. *A Manual for Ministers.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Cook, G. ed., 1990. *Say one for me! Prayer Handbook 1990*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Cook, G. ed., 1991. *Exceeding our Limits: Prayer Handbook 1991*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Cook, G. ed., 1992. *Read Mark and Pray: Prayer Handbook 1992*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Cornfield, T., 1974. *Come Alive! Prayer Fellowship Handbook 1974.* London: Congregational Council for World Mission.

Davies, H.W., 1930. *Ten Orders of Worship from the Book of Congregational Worship with Music*. London: Paterson's Publication Ltd.

Duncan, G. ed., 1995. *Dare to Dream: A Prayer and Worship Anthology From Around the World*. London: Fount.

Duncan, G. ed., 1999. *Wisdom is calling: An anthology of hope: An agenda for change*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2000*. A World of Blessing: Benedictions from every continent and many cultures*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2002a. *Courage to Love: An Anthology of Inclusive Worship Material*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

Duncan, G. ed., 2002b. *Harvest for the World: A Worship Anthology on sharing in the work of creation*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2002c. *Seeing Christ in Others*. 2nd ed. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2002d. *Shine on, Star of Bethlehem: A Worship Resource for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2003a. *Let Justice Roll Down: A Christian Aid/CAFOD Anthology for Lent, Holy Week and Easter*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2003b. *Timeless Prayers for Peace: Voices Together from Around the World: A New Anthology*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2004a. *A Lifetime of Blessing: Benedictions for all the days of your life*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2004b. *A Place for Us*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Duncan, G. ed., 2005. *Entertaining Angels: A Worship Anthology in Sharing Christ's Hospitality*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2006a. *Eternal Springs: An Anthology of Hope*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Duncan, G. ed., 2006b. *A New Heaven on a New Earth: Prayer Handbook 2006-07*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Duncan, G. ed., 2007a. *A Chair Pulled to the Place of Prayer: Prayer Handbook 2008*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Duncan, G., 2007b. *The Whole World Will Rejoice: New Worship Resources for Justice and Hope*. Peterborough: Inspire.

Duncan, G. ed., 2008. *Hush the Storm: Prayer Handbook 2009.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Duncan, G. and Hazell, M. eds., 2005. *Dancing on Slaves.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Duncan, G. and Pavitt, P. eds., 2002. *What a World.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Dunston, G., 1982. *Prayers in God's Household: CWM Prayer Handbook 1982.* London: Council for World Mission.

Durber, S. ed., 2009. *Gathered to the heart of God: Prayer Handbook 2010.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Durber, S. ed., 2010. *Still Praying: Prayer Handbook 2011.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Durber, S. ed., 2011. *Common Prayers: Prayer Handbook 2012.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Durber, S., 2013. *Surprised by Grace: Parables and Prayers.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Editorial Committee for Rejoice and Sing, 1997. *A Choice of Hymns: A Thematic Index to Rejoice and Sing*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Faber, S., Henderson, J. and Webbe, G., 2015. *Treasures: Pilot Worship Material.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Forster, M., 1993. *High Days and Holy Days: Worship Resources for the Liturgical Year.* Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew Limited.

Forster, M., 1994. *Fasts and Festivals: Worship Resources for the Liturgical Year.* Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew Limited.

Forster, M., 2001. *Life in all its fullness: Bringing the Bible Alive.* Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

Forster, M., 2002a. *Instant Hymns: New texts to well-loved tunes, A Common Worship resource.* Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

Forster, M., 2002. *Worship Interactive: 24 services for all-age worship.* Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

Forster, M. and Smith, S., 1999. *A New Start in all-age Worship: Service outlines for the millennium and beyond.* Stowmarket: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

Forsyth, P.T., 1896. *Intercessory Services for Aid in Public Worship.* London: John Heywood.

Gaunt, A., 1975. *New Prayers for Worship.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher’s Press.

Gaunt, A., 1979a. *All God's Children: Prayer Handbook 1979.* London: Council for World Mission.

Gaunt, A., 1979b. *Each Day's Delight: A diary of daily prayer.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Gaunt, A., 1982. *Prayers for the Christian Year.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher’s Press.

Gobledale, A., 2021. *Worship Words.* [online]. Available at: <https://worshipwords.co.uk> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

Goodbourn, D., 2010. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Christian Unity 2.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Grosch-Miller, C.A., 2014. *Psalms Redux: Poems and Prayers.* Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Hall, C.N. ed., 1866. *Free Church Service Book: Five short services, with supplementary collects and anthems, selected from the Book of Common Prayer*. London: John Snow and Co.

Hart, N. ed., 2001. *Kneelers - Prayers from Three Nations: Prayer Handbook Advent 2001-2002*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Hart, N. ed., 2002. *Bridge of Love: Prayer Handbook Advent 2002-2003*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Hilton, D. ed., 1974. *Words to Share: An anthology of poetry and prose for use in Christian education and worship*. Redhill: Denholm House Press.

Hilton, D. ed., 1979. *Fresh Voices: An anthology of poetry and prose by children and young people*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D., 1980. *Celebrating Christmas*. Redhill: Christian Education Publication.

Hilton, D., 1981. *Celebrating Harvest*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D., 1983. *Celebrating Special Sundays*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1984. *A Word in Season: Prose and verse for use in Christian Education and Worship*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D., 1987. *Celebrating Lent & Easter, Book 1*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D., 1990. *Celebrating Lent & Easter, Book 2*. Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1991. *Liturgy of Life.* Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1993. *Flowing Streams.* Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1994. *Sounds of Fury.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Hilton, D. ed., 1996. *Seasons and Celebrations: Prayers for Christian Worship Book 1.* Birmingham: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1997. *The Word in the World: Prayers for Christian Worship Book 2.* Birmingham: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 1999. *No Empty Phrases.* Birmingham: National Christian Education Council.

Hilton, D. ed., 2005. *Called to praise.* Birmingham: Christian Education.

Hilton, D., 2008. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Harvest Services*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hilton, D., 2010. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Lent*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hilton, D., 2010. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: When someone dies*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hilton, D., n.d.a. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Christmas Services*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hilton, D., n.d.b. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Good Friday and Easter 2*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hinks, T., 2018. *Praying the Way with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.* Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship.

Hodgson, A., Gaunt, A., Farley, A. and Burnham, T., n.d. *Worship for Christmas and New Year 4.* East Ardsley: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Horne, C.S. and Darlow, T.H., 1897. *“Let us pray”: A handbook of selected collects and forms of prayer for the use of free churches.* 2nd ed. London: James Clarke.

Humphreys, J., 2009. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Worship at the Beginning of Meetings.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Humphreys, J., n.d. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Holy Week.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Hunter, J., 1903. *Devotional Services for Public Worship.* 8th ed. London: J. M. Dent & Co.

Huxtable, J., Marsh, J., Micklem, R. and Todd, J., 1949. *A Book of Public Worship complied for the use of Congregationalists.* 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, D., 1975. *People of God: Prayer Fellowship Handbook 1975*. London: Congregational Council for World Mission.

Jenkins, D., 1983. *Where Two or Three...* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Jenkins, D., 1989. *Prayers for Sunday (Year 2)*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Jenkins, D., 1990. *Prayers for Sunday (Year 1)*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Jenkins, D., 2009. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Advent and Christmas*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Jenkins, D., 2010. *Preacher’s Press Resources for the Christian Year: Easter People.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher’s Press.

Jenkins, D., 2010. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Joined Together*. John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Jenkins, D., n.d.a. *In the Morning I.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher’s Press.

Jenkins, D., n.d.b. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Good Friday and Easter Day Services*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Johansen-Berg, J., 1981. *The Light of the World: CWM Prayer handbook 1981*. London: Council of World Mission.

Jones, R.L., 1943. *Derby Street Congregational Church: The Church meets for Worship.* Bolton: Derby Street Congregational Church.

Jones, V., 2003. *Take, Bless, Break, Give*. London: Granary Press.

Kaan, F., 1985. *The hymn texts of Fred Kaan.* Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company.

Kaan, F., 1999. *The Only Earth We Know: Hymn Texts.* Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company.

Kendall, A., Kendall, J. and Kendall, H., 2018. *Pilgrimage: Worship Material for Children and Young People.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Kingston Congregational Church, 1957. *Prayers for Public Worship*. Plymouth: Latimer, Trend & Co. Ltd.

Lees, J. ed., 1998. *Gateways of Grace: Prayer Handbook 1998-99*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Lees, J. ed., 1999. *Justice, Joy and Jubilee: Prayer Handbook 1999-2000*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Lees, J. ed., 2000. *Shining Faces: Prayer Handbook 2000-2001*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Lees, J., 2007. *Word of Mouth: Using the remembered Bible for building community*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications.

Leyson, D., 1976. *By What Power? Prayer Fellowship Handbook 1976*. London: Congregational Council for World Mission.

Long, G., 2011. *Preacher's Press Resources for Christian Year: Reviving Rogation.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Maudsley, A., Campbell, D. and Campbell, Y., 2016. *Roots and Foundations: Pilots Worship Material.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Maxey, S. ed., 2013. *Opening Doors: Prayer Handbook 2014.* London: The United Reformed Church.

McClure, J.D., Snow, A.D., Darlow, T.H., Drew, E.M., Forsyth, P.T., Jutson, C.B., Martin, T.H., Piggott, W.C., Pringle, A., Snell, B.J., Wells, R.J. and Yates, T., 1920. *Book of Congregational Worship*. London: Congregational Union of England and Wales (Incorporated).

Micklem, C. and Tomes, R., 1975. *Contemporary Prayers for Church and School.* London: SCM Press Ltd.

Morrison, K. and Webster, S., 2013. *Gifts: Pilots Worship Material 2013.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Mountain, J., 1897. *The Free Church Prayer Book*. London: Elliot Stock.

Nevard, P., Thorogood, N., Wilson, R., Nevard, L., Whitehead, R., Jennings, R., England, G., Gardner, A. and Wentink, H., 2021. *Talking Absolute Worship: Ideas for worship leaders*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.talkingabsoluteworship.com> [Accessed 10 August 2021].

Newman, M., n.d. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Worship on the Theme of Unity*. Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Nicholls, M.J. ed., 1997. *Reign Dance - The Waking: Worship Resources for young people Celebrating God's Kingdom*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Orchard, W.E., 1926. *The Order of Divine Service for Public Worship.* 2nd ed. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.

Panel on the Worship of the Church of Scotland, 1996. *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland.* 2nd ed. Edinburgh: St Andrew Press.

Philip, E.W. ed., 1948. *Sacramental and Other Services (including Children's Litanies).* 2nd ed. London: Philip, Son & Nephew Ltd.

Presbyterian Church of England, 1898. *The Directory for the Public Worship of God, on the basis of that agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, A.D. 1644. Recommended for use in the Presbyterian Church of England by the Synod, 1898*. London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Presbyterian Church of England, 1921. *Directory for the Public Worship for use in the Presbyterian Church of England.* London: The Publications Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Rawnsley, J., n.d. *The Voices of Christmas.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Reardon, J., 2009. *Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year: Harvest Services 2.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Reay, L. ed., 2014. *We Are Loved: Expressions of Spirit, Words of Worship*. Edinburgh: Augustine United Church.

Robinson, W.G., Leatherland, H.F., Bickley, H., Bowen, D.E., Davies, J.T., Duthies, C.S., Marsh, J., Perkins, J.S., Phillips, G., Phillips, J.M., Todd, J.M., Wakely, R.A. and Rutherford, J., 1959. *A Book of Services and Prayers*. London: Independent Press Ltd.

Robinson, W.G., Rutherford, J., Wakely, R.A., Todd, J.M., Phillips, J.M., Phillips, G., Perkins, J.S., Marsh, J., Duthies, C.S., Davies, J.T., Bowen, D.E., Bickley, H. and Leatherland, H.F., 1969. *A Book of Services and Prayers.* Revised ed. London: The Congregational Church in England and Wales.

Russell, G.H. ed., 1923. *Intercession Services for Congregational Use in Public Worship*. Matlock: George Hodgkinson.

Slow, J. ed., 2000. *Beginning Prayers*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Spicer, G. ed., 2000. *Say One Again*. London: The United Reformed Church.

St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Redhill, 1909. *Order of Public Worship and Prayers for Various Occasions: from the Revised Westminster Directory of Public Worship and the Book of Common Prayer*. Surrey: Reigate Press.

St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Enfield, n.d. *Service Book*. s.l.

The Church of Scotland, 1940. *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland.* London: Oxford University Press.

The Congregational Church in England and Wales, 1970. *An Order of Public Worship.* London: Oxford University Press.

The Presbyterian Church of England, 1877. *The Presbyterian Church of England: A Memorial of the Union.* London: James Nisbet & Co.

The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948. *The Presbyterian Service Book for use in the Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales.* London: The Publications Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1968. *The Presbyterian Service Book for use in the Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales.* London: The Publications Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

The United Reformed Church, 1972. *Service of Thanksgiving for the inauguration of the United Reformed Church*. Westminster Abbey, London, 5 October 1972. [Copy of service sheet held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/IDR/JPC/26].

The United Reformed Church, 1975. *New Church Praise*. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press.

The United Reformed Church, 1980. *A Book of Services.* Edinburgh: The Saint Andrews Press.

The United Reformed Church, 1989. *Service Book.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The United Reformed Church, 1991. *Rejoice and Sing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The United Reformed Church, 2003. *Worship: from the United Reformed Church.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church, 2016. *Service Sheet for Communion Service, General Assembly 2016*. London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church, 2017. *Feasts and Festivals.* [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/feasts-and-festivals.html> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2018. *Vocation Sunday*. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/vocation-sunday-2018.html> [Accessed 13 November 2018]/

The United Reformed Church, 2019. *Commitment for Life.* [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/commitment-for-life/worship-commitment-for-life.html> [Accessed 18 July 2019].

The United Reformed Church, 2021. *Worship with us digitally.* [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3385-coronavirus-worshipping-digitally> [Accessed 6 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2021. *Sunday Morning Worship, General Assembly 2021*. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Assembly2021/GA_2021_Order_of_Service.pdf> [Accessed 3 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2021. *Daily Devotions*. [online] Available at: <https://devotions.urc.org.uk> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2019. *One Body: 2019 URC Children's and Youth Work Theme.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2020. *Common Ground: 2020 Children and Youth Work Theme.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth, 2021. *Heroes and Villains: 2021 Children's and Youth Work Theme.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church in England and Wales, 1974. *Book of Order for Worship.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Thomas, D., 1881. *A Biblical Liturgy: for the use of churches, schools, homes and hospitals*. 12th ed. London: Charles Higham.

Thomas, I., 1973. *Together in Prayer: Prayer Fellowship Handbook 1973*. London: Congregational Council for World Mission.

Thompson, B., 1980. *Liturgies of the Western Church.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Thorogood, B., 2016. *Old grey prayers: Prayers and poems on growing older.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Thorogood, B., 2017. *A Basket of Prayer: Resources for Worship.* Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris.

Thorogood, N., 2016. *Charcoal Gospel: Words and images of worship across the season of the Christian year.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Thornton, S. and Jenkins, D. eds, n.d. *In the Morning 2.* Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press.

Todd, J.M., Huxtable, J., Bale, D.W.J., Christopher, C.S., Evans, R.J.M., Evans, W.S., Gathercole, W.K., Geddes, D.P.C., Gibbons, S.F., Gregory, J.K., Micklem, T.C., Savage, D.A., Shepherd, M.T., Ticehurst, J.E. and Young, J.E., 1970. *The Congregational Church in England and Wales: An Order of Public Worship.* London: Oxford University Press.

Todd, J.M., 1951. *Prayers and Services for Christian Festivals*. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press.

Uden, N.P., 2014. Draft of Opening Worship for General Assembly 2014. [Personal copy owned by Revd Nigel Uden].

Undy, H., 2002. *Somewhere to Start*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Watson, C.E. ed., 1930. *The Rodborough Bede Book*. Woodchester: Arthurs Press, Ltd.

White, R., 2017. *Feasts and Festivals: Pilot Worship Material.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Wilton, S., 1980. *Praying with the Scriptures: CWM Prayer Handbook 1980*. London: Council for World Mission.

Wootton, J. ed., 1996. *For the Love of God: Prayer Handbook 1996.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Wootton, J. ed., 1997. *Journeying: Prayer Handbook 1997.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Wootton, J. ed., 1998. *Active Power: Prayer Handbook 1998.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Wren, B., 1986. *Praising a Mystery.* Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company.

Wren, B., 1996. *Piece Together Praise: A Theological Journey.* London and Carol Stream, Illinois: Stainer and Bell Limited and Hope Publishing Company.

Wren, B., 1998. *Visions and Revisions.* Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company.

Primary literature

Adams, J. *The Dairy of Jonathan Adams, Minister of Scotts Lane Independent Chapel, Salisbury,* 1772-1804. [Held in the archives of Salisbury United Reformed Church, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 541/1].

Allon, H., 1862. *Church song in its relation to church life: A lecture.* London: Morgan & Chase.

Ames, W., 1639. *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*. [online] Available at: <http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Ames,%20William/Conscience.pdf> [Accessed: 13 September 2020].

Anonymous, 1914. From the Bury Street Church Records. *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society,* 6 (5), pp.333-342.

Anonymous, 1984. *The Church Book of the Independent Church (now Pound Lane Baptist), Isleham 1693-1805*. Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Records Society.

Baillie, R., 1841. *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A.M. Principal of the University of Glasgow 1637-1662*. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle.

Baird, C.W. and Binney, T., 1856. *A Chapter on Liturgies: Historical Sketches*. London: Knight & Son.

Baxter, R., 1657. *One sheet for the ministry against the malignants of all sorts*. London: Robert White. [online] Available at: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A26980.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> [Accessed 10 September 2020].

Baxter, R., 1661. *A Petition for Peace: with the Reformation of the Liturgy. As it was Presented to the Right Reverend Bishops, by the Divines appointed by His Majesties Commission To treat Them about the Alterations of it.* 1st ed. London: Anno Dom.

Baxter, R., 1830. Christian Ecclesiastics. In: W. Orme, ed. 1830. *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter: with a Life of the Author, and a Critical Examination of his Writings*. Vol. 5. London: James Duncan. pp.1-246.

Baxter, R., 1985. *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter*. N. H. Keeble and J. M. Lloyd Thomas, ed. London and Guernsey: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd.

Binney, T., 1849. *The Service of Song in the House of the Lord*. London: Jackson, Walford, Ward & Co.

Bonhoeffer, D., 1971. *Letters and Papers from Prison.* Enlarged ed. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Breward, I., 1980. *The Westminster Directory being a Directory for the Public Worship of God in the Three Kingdomes*. Bramcote: Grove Books.

Bucer, M., 1549. The Censura. In: E.C. Whitaker, ed. 1974. *Martin Bucer and The Book of Common Prayer*. Great Wakering: Mayhew-McCrimmon. pp.10-173.

Burroughs, J., 1650. *Gospel-worship or The right manner of Sanctifying to Name of God in general And particularly in these Three great Ordinances: 1. Hearing the Word. 2. Receiving the Lords Supper. 3. Prayer*. Reprint 1990. Morgan: Soli Deo Gloria Publications.

Calvin, J., 1960. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion.* John T. McNeill, ed. Translated from Latin by Ford Lewis Battles. 1559 ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Calvin, J., 1849a. Forms of Prayer for the Church. In: J. Calvin. 1849. *Tracts and Treatises of the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*. Translated from Latin and French by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. pp.100-112.

Calvin, J., 1849b. Several Godly Prayers. In: J. Calvin. 1849. *Tracts and Treatises of the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*. Translated from Latin and French by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. pp.94-99.

Calvin, J., 2014. *Letters of John Calvin, Compiled from Original Manuscripts and edited with Historical Notes.* Vol. 2. Translated from Latin and French by Jules Bonnet. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications. [online] Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45463/45463-h/45463-h.htm> [Accessed 26 May 2021].

Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 2016. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646. [online] Available at: <https://reformed.org/historic-confessions/1647westminsterconfession/> [Accessed 10 July 2021].

Charnock, S., 1699. *The Works of the Late Learned Divine Stephen Charnock, B.D. Being Several Discourses upon the Existence and Attributed of God. His Discourse of Divine Providence: and a Supplement of several Discourses on Various Divine Subjects*. 3rd ed. London: Anon Dom.

Clarkson, D., 1696. *Public Worship to be Preferred before Private*. [online] Available at: <https://www.covenanter.org/reformed/2015/8/18/david-clarksons-sermon-on-public-worship-to-be-preferred-before-private> [Accessed 12 September 2020].

Commissioners to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1843. *The Protest*. [online] Available at: <www.fpchurch.org.uk/about-us/important-documents/the-protest-1843> [Accessed 13 May 2021].

Common Close Congregational Church, Warminster. *Minute Book*. [Held in the archives of Warminster Congregational Church, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 2103/2].

Common Close Congregational Church, 1865. *Manual of Common Close Church, Warminster*. [Held in the archives of Warminster Congregational Church, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 2103/2].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1833. *Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters.* [online] Available at: <www.arundeltrinity.com/Trinity_Chapel_Arundel/1833_Declaration_of_Faith_.html> [Accessed 20 January 2020].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1855. *Congregational Yearbook 1855*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1856. *Congregational Yearbook 1856*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1857. *Congregational Yearbook 1857*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1858. *Congregational Yearbook 1858*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1860. *Congregational Yearbook 1860*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1861. *Congregational Yearbook 1861*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1863. *Congregational Yearbook 1863*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1874. *Congregational Yearbook 1874*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1876. *Congregational Yearbook 1876*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1881. *Congregational Yearbook 1881*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1897. *Congregational Yearbook 1897*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1920. *Congregational Yearbook 1920*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1921. *Congregational Yearbook 1921*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1926. *Congregational Yearbook 1926*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930. *Congregational Yearbook 1930*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1932. *Congregational Yearbook 1932*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1935. *Congregational Yearbook 1935*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1936. *Congregational Yearbook 1936*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1937. *Congregational Yearbook 1937*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1938. *Congregational Yearbook 1938*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1939. *Congregational Yearbook 1939*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1945. *Congregational Yearbook 1945*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1950. *Congregational Yearbook 1950*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1969. *Congregational Yearbook 1969-70*. [Held in Special Collections at Westminster College].

Cypris, O.F., 2016. *Martin Bucer's Ground and Reason: A Commentary and Translation*. Yulee: Good Samaritan Books.

Dale, R.W., 1869. *The Holy Spirit in relation to the Ministry, the Worship, and the Work the Church*. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Dale, R.W., 1884. *A Manual of Congregational Principles*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Dale, R.W., 1900. *Nine Lectures on Preaching delivered at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut.* 11th ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Dell, W., 1653. *The stumbling-stone, or, A discourse touching that offence which the world and worldly church do take against 1. Christ himself. 2. His true word. 3. His true worship. 4. His true church. 5. His true government. 6. His true ministry.: Wherein the University is reproved by the Word of God. Delivered partly to the University-congregation in Cambridge, partly to another in the same town. Together with a brief touch in the epistle (for the present) on the late quarrelsom, weak, and erroneous Animadversions of one Mr. Chambers, called Doctor in Divinity, and Pastor of Pewsy in Wiltshire*. London: Giles Calvert. [online] Available at: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A82320.0001.001 ?rgn=main;view=fulltext> [Accessed 10 September 2020].

Divines of the Westminster Assembly, 1643. *Certain Considerations to Dis-swade Men from Further Gathering of Churches in this present junction of Time.* London: John White.

Doddridge, P., 1772. *The Family Expositor: Or, A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament with Critical Notes, and a Practical Improvement of each Section*. 6th ed. Edinburgh: Anon.

Doddridge, P., 1803. *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. in ten volumes.* Vol. 5. Leeds: Edward Bains.

Duncan, J., 1961*. Transcript of the Bury St Edmunds Congregation Church Book 1646-1801*. [Held in archives of Bury St Edmunds United Reformed Church, Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, FK3 502/108].

Earle, J., 1707. The Nature of Singing. In: J. Earle, T. Bradbury, W. Harris, T. Reynolds, J. Newman and B. Grosvenor, eds. 1707. *Practical Discourses of Singing in the Worship of God: Preach'd at the Friday Lectures in Eascheap*. London: J Darby.

Fenn, J.E., 1968. Worship in the Mid-Twentieth Century. Paper to Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/HMC/WAD/A]

Forsyth, P.T., 1896a. *The Charter of the Church: Six Lectures on the Spiritual Principle of Nonconformity*. London: Alexander & Shepheard.

Forsyth, P.T., 1949. *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*. 3rd ed. London: Independent Press Ltd.

Forsyth, P.T., 1955. *Faith, Freedom and the Future.* 2nd ed. London: Independent Press Ltd.

Fraser, D., 1890. *The Presbyterian Church of England: An Outline of its Doctrine, Worship, Polity, History.* London: Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Goodwin, T., 1865. *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D.D.* Thomas Smith. Edinburgh: James Nichols.

Gunton, C.E., 1997. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. 2nd ed. London and New York: T&T Clark.

Henry, M., 1772. A Method for Prayer. In: W. Tong, ed. 1772. *The Select Works of the Late Revd Mr Matthew Henry. Being a Complete Collection of all his Practical Pieces. Together with An Account of his Life, and A Sermon preached on the Occasion of his Death*. Edinburgh: John Gray and Gavin Alston. pp.143-194.

House of Commons, 1643. *A solemn league and covenant for Reformation and Defence of Religion, the honour and happiness of the King, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland.* [online] Available at: <https://www.fpchurch.org.uk/about-us/important-documents/the-solemn-league-and-covenant-1643/> [Accessed 26 July 2021].

Howe, J., 1822. A Treatise of Delighting in God. In: J. Hunt, ed. 1822. *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Howe, M.A. with a Memoir of the Author in Eight Volumes.* Vol. II. London: F Westley. pp.7-207.

James, T.T., 1925. *The Work and Administration of a Congregational Church.* London: Congregational Union of England & Wales.

Jennings, J., 1744. Two discourses of preaching Christ, and of Particular and Experimental Preaching. 1744. *Instructions to Ministers: In Three Parts.* London: D Jennings. pp.15-71.

MacLeod, G., 1962. *We shall re-build: The work of the Iona Community on Mainland and on Island*. Glasgow: Iona Community.

Mahood, B., Durber, S., Lees, J., Stanyon, N. and Thornton, S., 2003. Worship x5. *Reform*, October, pp.24-25.

Matthews, A.G., 1959. *The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order 1658.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

McIlhagga, D., 1971. 'Experimental' Worship. *Symposium on Worship.* Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/HMC/WAD/B]

Middlemiss, J.T., 1893. *How far is a Directory of Worship necessary or expedient?* Sunderland: J G Campbell & Co.

Moltmann, J., 1981. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The doctrine of God.* London: SCM Press Ltd.

Moltmann, J., 1992. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit.* 2nd ed. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Newman, J., 1816. Sermon XIII: On the Nature of Hearing the Word. In: B. Grosvenor, T. Bradbury, J. Earle, W. Harris, J. Newman and T. Reynolds, eds. 1816. *Eastcheap Lecture: containing Twenty-four Practical Discourses on the Duties of Hearing the Word and Reading the Scriptures: Delivered at the Weigh-House, in Little Eastcheap.* 2nd ed. London: W. Brown. pp.5-82.

Owen, J., 1721. *The Nature and Beauty of the Gospel Worship.* [online] Available at: <https://www.the-highway.com/GospelWorship_Owen.html> [Accessed 12 September 2020].

Owen, J., 1862. A Discourse Concerning Liturgies, and their Imposition. In: W.H. Goold, ed. 1862. *The Works of John Owen. D.D*. Vol. XV. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. pp.1-55.

Owen, J., 2012. *John Owen on the Holy Spirit: Pneumatologia.* Cedar Lake, Michigan: Waymark Books.

Parker, J., 1874. *The Paraclete: An essay on the personality and ministry of the Holy Ghost with reference to current discussions*. London: Anon.

Parry, K.L., 1936. Prayer and Praise. In: N. Micklem, ed. 1936. *Christian Worship: Studies in its History and Meaning*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp.225-242.

Pearsall, J.S., 1867. *Public Worship: The best method of conducting it.* London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Perkins, W., 1592. *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Minister.* Revised ed. Reprinted 2011. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust.

Perkins, W., 1970. *The Works of William Perkins*. Vol. III. Ian Breward, ed. Appleford, Abingdon: The Sutton Courtenay Press.

Price, E.J., 1924. *A Handbook of Congregationalism.* London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, Inc.

Presbyterian Church of England. *Synod Records 1885-1898*. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College].

Presbyterian Church of England. *Synod Records 1913-1920*. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College].

Presbyterian Church of England. *General Assembly Records 1921-1923*. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College].

Presbyterian Church of England. *General Assembly Records 1944-1949*. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College].

Presbyterian Church of England. *General Assembly Records 1954-1972*. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College].

Presbyterian Church of England. *Minutes of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids of Devotion* 1954-1972. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/HMC/WAD/1].

Price, E.J., 1924. *A Handbook of Congregationalism.* London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, Inc.

Ross, N., 1971. On the use of silence in Presbyterian worship. *Symposium on Worship.* Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England.

[Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/HMC/WAD/B]

Rushworth, J., 1721. Historical Collections: Passages relating to Scotland 1642-43. In: J. Rushworth, ed. 1721. *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 5, 1642-45* London: D Browne. pp.387-504.

Rushworth, J., 1722. Historical Collections: Parliamentary and civil occurrences, 1645. In: J. Rushworth, ed. 1722. *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 6, 1645-47.* London: D Browne. pp.141-228.

Rutherford, M., 1881. *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, edited by his friend Reuben Shapcott*. 2nd ed. Great Britain: Hard Press.

Sanford Street Congregational Church, Swindon. *Church Meeting Minutes*, 1877-1895. [Held in the archives of Sanford Street United Reformed Church, Swindon, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 1471/1].

Schmemann, A., 1966. *Introduction to Liturgical Theology.* New York: St Valadimir's Seminary Press.

Scotts Lane Chapel and afterwards at Endless Street, and afterwards at the New Congregational in Fisherton Street, Salisbury. *Church Book*, 1852-1895. [Held in the archives of Salisbury United Reformed Church, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 1279/2].

Simpson, P.C., 1936. *The Character of Presbytery.* Manchester: R. Aikan & Son.

Shiliton, E., 1936. The Preaching of the Word. In: N. Micklem, ed. 1936. *Christian Worship: Studies in its History and Meaning*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp.207-224.

Taylor, J.H., 1981. *Tell Me about the URC: The United Reformed Church at a Glance.* Revised ed. London: The United Reformed Church.

Taylor, W.M., 1876. *The Ministry of the Word.* London: T. Nelson and Sons.

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 13 Jan 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 20 Jan 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 27 Jan 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 3 Feb 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 10 Feb 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The Christian World, 1927. Letters. *The Christian World*, 17 Feb 1927. [Copy held by the University Library, Cambridge].

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1842. *The Claim Declaration and Protest*. [online] Available at: <www.fpchurch.org.uk/about-us/important-documents/the-claim-declaration-and-protest-1842> [Accessed 13 May 2021].

The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1997. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The United Reformed Church, 1973. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1973.* The City Temple, London, 7-11 May 1973. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1973-ASSEMBLY-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1973. *General Assembly 1973, Minutes of Assembly.* The City Temple, London, 7-11 May 1973. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1973-MINUTES-OF-ASSEMBLY.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1977. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1977.* Birmingham, 2-5 May 1977. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1977-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1981. *The Unifying Assembly of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church*. Central Hall, Birmingham, 26 September 1981. [Personal copy of service sheet (owned by Revd Michael Hopkins)].

The United Reformed Church, 1983. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1983.* Brighton, 23-27 May 1983. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1983-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1984. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1984.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 30 April - 4 May 1984. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1983-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1984. *General Assembly Record 1984.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 30 April - 4 May 1984. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1984-ASSEMBLY-RECORD.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1989. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1989.* York, 1-4 July 1989. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1989-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1990. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1990.* Wolverhampton, 14-18 May 1990. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1990-ASSEMBLY-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 24 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1992. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1992.* York, 4-7 July 1992. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1992-ASSEMBLY-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1993. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1993.* Portsmouth, 5-9 July 1993. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1993-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1994. *General Assembly Book of Reports 1994.* Lancaster, 7-11 July 1994. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/1994-ASSEMBLY-BOOK-OF-REPORTS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 1996. *Developing Discipleship.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church, 1999. *Wholly Worship: Resource material to develop worship in the local churches.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church, 2000. *Better Together: The Unifying Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom.* University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 1 April 2000. London: The United Reformed Church [Personal copy].

The United Reformed Church, 2000. *General Assembly Book of Reports 2000.* London, 1-4 July 2000. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/2000-ASSEMBLY-REPORTS-RESOLUTIONS-AND-PAPERS.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2004. *Wholly Worship Too: More resource material to develop worship in the local churches.* London: The United Reformed Church.

The United Reformed Church, 2012. *Mission Council Reports*. High Leigh, Hoddesdon, 21-23 March 2012. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/papers/march-2012.html> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2017. *Mission Council Reports*. High Leigh, Hoddesdon, 12-14 May 2017. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/May2017/Mission-Council-papers-May-2017.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2019. *Mission Council Reports*. Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, 15-17 November 2019. London: The United Reformed Church. [online]

Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/Mission_Council_papers_w_covers.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2019. *Mission Council Minutes*. Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, 15-17 November 2019. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/Nov2019/DRAFT_Minutes_November_2019.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2018. *Mission Council Reports*. High Leigh, Hoddesdon, 19-21 March 2018. London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/March_2018/Full_MC_papers.pdf> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2020. *General Assembly Book of Reports 2020.* London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Assembly2020/Book_of_Reports_2020.pdf> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2021. *General Assembly Book of Reports 2021.* London: The United Reformed Church. [online] Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Assembly2021/Book_of_Reports_2021_web.pdf> [Accessed 27 July 2021].

The United Reformed Church, 2021. *The Manual*. London: The United Reformed Church. Available at: <https://urc.org.uk/the-urc-manual> [Accessed 25 July 2021].

Thomas, D., 1865. *The Ministry and the Church: The Inaugral Address delivered before the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, May 9th 1865*. London: Jackson, Walford & Hodder.

Thompson, D.M., 1996. *What we Believe: The faith of the United Reformed Church*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Thorogood, B., 1983. *Our Father's House: An Approach to Worship.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Todd, J.M., 1971. On Spontaneity in Prayer. *Symposium on Worship.* Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England. [Held in the archives of the Presbyterian Church of England (owned by the United Reformed Church History Society), Westminster College, PCE/HMC/WAD/B]

Tucker, T., 2003. *Reformed Ministry: Traditions of Ministry and Ordination in the United Reformed Church*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Van Dixhoorn, C. and Wright, D.F., 2012b. *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652, Vol. 3: Minutes, Sessions 199-603 (1644-1646)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vincent, T., 1723. *An Explicatory Catechism: Or An Explanation of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*. Edinburgh: William Brown and Company.

Walkden, P. and Chipping Local History Society, 2000. *A diary from January 1733 to March 1734 / written by the Reverend Peter Walkden; transcribed and with an introduction, indexes and notes by members of Chipping Local History Society*. Otley: Smith Settle.

Walker, W., 1893. *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Watts, I., 1718. *Hymns and Spiritual Songs.* 6th ed. London: J. H.

Watts, I., 1722. *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, And applu'd to the Christian State and Worship* 4th ed. London: John Clark and Richard Ford.

Watts, I., 1816. *Guide to Prayer; or A Free and Rational Account of the Gift, Grace, and Spirit of Prayer; with Plain Directions how every Christian may attain them.* Bungay: Brightly and Childs.

Watts, I., 2015. An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians. 2015. *The Works of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* Vol. 4. London: Forgotten Books. pp.583-635.

Westminster Assembly, 1647. *A directory for church-government and ordination of ministers, to be examined against the next Generall Assemblie.* Edinburgh: Printed by Evan Tyler. [online] Available at: <https://archive.org/details/dirchur00west> [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1645. *Westminster Directory of Public Worship.* Reprinted 2017. Brooksville: Westminster Society Press.

Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1647. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/larger-catechism/> [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1647. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/shorter-catechism/> [Accessed 11 July 2021]

Zwingli, H., 1953a. An Exposition of the Faith. In: G.W. Bromiley, ed. 1953a. *Zwingli and Bullinger.* Vol. 24. London: SCM Press Ltd. pp.245-279.

Zwingli, H., 1953b. On the Lord's Supper. In: G.W. Bromiley, ed. 1953b. *Zwingli and Bullinger.* Vol. 24. London: SCM Press Ltd. pp.185-238.

Secondary literature

Abba, R., 1957. *Principles of Christian Worship: With Special Reference to the Free Churches*. London: Oxford University Press.

Acheson, R.J., 1990. *Radical Puritans in England 1550-1660.* London and New York: Longman.

Andrew, E.G., 2001. *Conscience and its Critics: Protestant Conscience, Enlightenment Reason, and Modern Subjectivity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Appleby, D.J., 2007. *Black Bartholomew's Day: Preaching, Polemic and Restoration Nonconformity.* Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press.

Argent, A., 2013. *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900-2000.* A Nottingham: Congregational Federation.

Ball, C.E., 2010. *Taste and See that the Lord is Good: A programme evaluation of a course seeking to enhance meaning in Holy Communion*. Princeton Theological Seminary.

Banyard, E., 1992b. *Straws in the Wind.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Barkley, J.M., 1966. *The Worship of the Reformed Church*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co.

Bebbington, D.W., 2005. *Evangelism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s.* Florence: Taylor & Francis Group.

Begbie, J.S., 2000. *Theology, Music and Time.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Begbie, J.S., 2011. Faithful Feelings: Music and Emotion in Worship. In: J.S. Begbie and S.R. Guthrie, eds. 2011. *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp.323-354.

Benson, B.E., 2011. Improvising Texts, Improvising Communities: Jazz, Interpretation, Heterophony and the Ekklesia. In: J.S. Begbie and S.R. Guthrie, eds. 2011. *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pp.295-319.

Beynon, G., 2016. *Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion and the Revival of Religion.* London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Boulton, M.M., 2009. The Adversary: Agony, Irony, and the Liturgical Role of the Holy Spirit. In: T. Berger and B.D. Spinks, eds. 2009. *The Spirit in Worship - Worship in the Spirit.* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press. pp.59-77.

Bitzel, A., 2009. The Theology of the Sermon in the Eighteenth Century. In: J. van Eijnatten, ed. 2009. *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century.* Leiden: Brill. pp.57-94.

Booth, C., 1902. *Life and Labour of the People in London. Third Series: Religious Influences.* Vol. 7. London: MacMillan and Co. Limited.

Bradbury, J.P., 2013. *Perpetually Reforming: A Theology of Church Reform and Renewal.* London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Bradbury, J.P., 2014. Non-Conformist Conscience? Individual Conscience and the Authority of the Church from John Calvin to the Present. *Ecclesiology,* 10 (1), pp.32-52.

Bradley, J.E., 1987. Toleration, Nonconformity, and the Unity of the Spirit: Popular Religion in Eighteenth-Century England. In: J.E. Bradley and R.A. Muller, eds. 1987. *Church, Word, and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp.183-199.

Bradley, J.E. and Muller, R.A., 1995. *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Bradshaw, P.F., 1998. Difficulties in Doing Liturgical Theology. Pacifica, 11 (2), pp.181-194.

Branch, L., 2006. *Rituals Of Spontaneity: Sentiment and Secularism from Free Prayer to Wordsworth*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.

Briggs, J.H.Y., 2016. The Changing Shape of Nonconformity, 1662-2000. In: R. Pope, ed. 2016. *T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity.* London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark. pp.3-26.

Brown, J., 1877. *History of Congregationalism and Memorial of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk.* London: Jarrold and Sons.

Brown, S.J., Nockles, P.B. and Pereiro, J. eds., 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of The Oxford Movement.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brownell, K.G., 1982. *Voluntary Saints: English Congregationalism and the Voluntary Principle, 1825-1962*. University of St Andrews.

Burger, C., 2017. Freedom in Worship. *International Congregational Journal*, 16 (1), pp.32-37.

Burgess, J., 2016. Introduction. In: J.H. Burgess, ed. 2016. *In Word and Spirit: Discussion papers on the Theology of Worship*. Exeter: Spiritualseekers Publications. pp.1-12.

Burgess, J., 2016. Experiencing the Glory: revelation in worship. In: J.H. Burgess, ed. 2016. *In Word and Spirit: Discussion papers on the Theology of Worship*. Exeter: Spiritualseekers Publications. pp.119-127.

Bürki, B., 2003. Reformed Worship in Continental Europe since the Seventeenth Century. In: L. Vischer, ed. 2003. *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp.32-65.

Cadoux, C.J., 1943. *A Pilgrim's Further Progress: Dialogues on Christian Teaching*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Camroux, M., 2016. *Ecumenism in Retreat: How the United Reformed Church failed to break the mould*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock.

Carruthers, S.W., 1907. *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England 1876-1905*. London: Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Carruthers, S.W., 1926. *Fifty Years 1876-1926: Being a brief Survey of the Work and Progress of the Presbyterian Church of England since the Union*. London: Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Carruthers, S.W., 1944. 1844: *A Tale of Faith and Courage.* London: Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Cashdollar, C.D., 2000. *A Spiritual Home: Life in British and American Reformed Congregations, 1830-1915*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Chan, S., 2009. The Liturgy as the Work of the Spirit: A Theological Perspective. In: T. Berger and B.D. Spinks, eds. 2009. *The Spirit in Worship - Worship in the Spirit.* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press. pp.41-57.

Clark, N., 1960. *Call to Worship.* London: SCM Press Ltd.

Claus, P. and Marriott, J., 2012. *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Cleal, E.E. and Crippen, T.G., 1908. *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey.* London: James Clarke & Co.

Clifford, A.C., 2002. *The Good Doctor: Philip Doddridge of Northampton - A Tercentenary Tribute.* Norwich: Charenton Reformed Publishing.

Cornick, D., 1985. 'Catch a Scotchman becoming an Englishman...' Nationalism, theology and ecumenism in the Presbyterian Church in England 1845-1876. *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society,* 3 (6), pp.202-215. <https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jurchs/03-06.pdf> [Accessed .13 August 2021].

Cornick, D., 1998. *Under God's Good Hand: A history of the traditions which have come together in the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Cornick, D., 2003. The Disruption in London: English Presbyterians and the Scottish Disruption of 1843. In: D. Bebbington and T. Larsen, eds. 2003. *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations.* London: Sheffield Academic Press.

Cousland, K.H., 1948. The significance of Isaac Watts in the development of hymnody. *Church History,* 17 (4), pp.287-298.

Dale, R.W., 1907. *History of English Congregationalism.* 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Danso, J., 2009. *Join in: Breaking Tradition, Embracing Culture, Styles of Multicultural Worship*. Ely: Melrose Books.

Davies, H., 1948. *The Worship of the English Puritans*. Westminster, London: Dacre Press.

Davies, H., 1957. *Christian Worship - Its history and meaning*. New York: Abingdon Pr.

Davies, H., 1996a. *Worship and Theology in England: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690*. Vol. 2. Combined ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Davies, H., 1996b. *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Hooker 1534-1603*. Vol. 1. Combined ed. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Davies, H., 1996c. *Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900*. Vol. 4. Combined ed. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co,.

Davies, H., 1996d. *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice 1690-1850*. Vol. 3. Combined ed. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Davies, H., 1996e. *Worship and Theology in England: The Ecumenical Century, 1900-1965*. Vol. 5. Combined ed. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Davis, A.P., 1948. *Isaac Watts: His Life and Works.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Deacon, M., 1980. *Philip Doddridge of Northampton 1702-51.* Northampton: Northamptonshire Libraries.

Day, J.J., 2014. *Reading the Liturgy: An exploration of texts in Christian worship.* London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Deconinck-Brossard, F., 2009. The Art of Preaching. In: J. van Eijnatten, ed. 2009. *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century.* Leiden: Brill. pp.95-130.

DeVries, D., 2004. Calvin's Preaching. In: D.K. McKim, ed. 2004. *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.106-124.

Ditchfield, G.M., 1998. *The Evangelical Revival.* London: UCL Press.

Dix, D.G., 1945. *The Shape of the Liturgy.* 2nd ed. London: Dacre Press.

Doodson, A.J., 2004. *The Presbyterians in Liverpool: A Social and Religious Survey up to 1972.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Drysdale, A.H., 1889. *History of the Presbyterians in England: Their Rise, Decline, and Revival.* London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

Duck, R.C., 2021. *Worship for the Whole People of God.* 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Duncan, J., 1963. The Presbyterians in Bury St. Edmunds: A Summary. *The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society,* 12 (4), pp.100-9.

Durber, S., 2015. Voices from the Rift. In: J. Steven, ed. 2015. *Wrestling with a Godly Order: Encounters with the 1662 Book of Common Prayer*. Salisbury: Sarum College Press. pp.67-80.

Durber, S., 2016. Tearing down the Temple: deconstructing worship. In: J.H. Burgess, ed. 2016. *In Word and Spirit: Discussion papers on the Theology of Worship.* Exeter: Spiritualseekers Publications. pp.107-118.

Dyrness, W.A., 2009. *A Primer on Christian Worship: Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We Can Go.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Ellis, C.J., 2004. *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition*. London: SCM Press.

Ellison, R.H., 1998. T*he Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. London: Associated University Presses.

Ellison, R.H., 2017. Preaching and Sermons. In: T. Larsen and M. Ledger-Lomas, eds. 2017. *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions: The Nineteenth Century*. Vol. III. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 15. pp.369-386.

Fackre, G., 2007. *The Church: Signs of the Spirit and Signs of the Times*. Vol. 5. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Fagerberg, D.W., 2004. *Theologia Prima: What Is Liturgical Theology?* 2nd ed. Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books.

Fergusson, D., 2009. The Theology of Worship: A Reformed Perspective. In: D.B. Forrester and D. Gay, eds. 2009. *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice.* London: SCM Press. pp.67-80.

Forrester, D.B. and Gay, D., 2009. *Worship and liturgy in context: Studies and case studies in theology and practice.* London: SCM Press.

Green, I., 2003. Teaching the Reformation: The Clergy as Preachers, Catechists, Authors and Teachers. In: C.S. Dixon and L. Schorn-Schütte, eds. 2003. *The Protestant Clergy of Early Mordern Europe.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 7. pp.156-175.

Green, I.M., 2009. *Continuity and Change in Protestant Preaching in Early Modern England.* London: Dr Williams's Trust.

Gordon, A. and Lord, E., 2016. Bury, Samuel (bap. 1663, d. 1730), Presbyterian minister. 2016. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4154> [Accessed 13 August 2021].

Grieve, A.J. and Marshall Jones, W., 1946. *These Three Hundred Years.* London: The Independent Press, Ltd.

Guthrie, S.R., 2011. *Creator Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Art of Becoming Human.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.

Hageman, H.G., 1961. Reformed worship: yesterday and today. *Theology Today,* 18 (1), pp.30-40.

Hageman, H.G., 1962. *Pulpit and Table: Some chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches.* London: SCM Press.

Hall, D.D., 2019. *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Hambrick-Stowe, C.E., 2008. Practical divinity and spirituality. In: J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim, eds. 2008. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11. pp.191-205.

Hardy, D.W. and Ford, D.F., 1984. *Jubilate Theology in Praise.* London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

Harley, B., 2016. Making Room for the Spirit in Worship. In: J.H. Burgess, ed. 2016. *In Word and Spirit: Discussion papers on the Theology of Worship.* Exeter: Spiritualseekers Publications. pp.15-26.

Heron, A.I.C., 2012. Shaping the worship of the Reformed Church in Geneva: Calvin on prayer and praise. *HTS Theological Studies,* 68 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i1.1350> [Accessed 13 August 2021].

Hesselink, I.J., 1992. Governed and Guided by the Spirit: A Key Issue in Calvin's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In: H.A. Oberman, E. Saxer, A. Schindler and H. Stuckin, eds.

1992. *Reformiertes Erbe, Festschrift für Gottfried W. Locher zu seinem 80. Geburtstag: Band 2.* Zurich: Theologischer Verlag. pp.161-171.

Hilborn, D., 1994. *The pragmatics of liturgical discourse: with special reference to English Reformed worship and the performative language doxology of Jean Ladrière*. The University of Nottingham.

Holt, A., 1938. *Walking Together: A Study in Liverpool Nonconformity 1688-1938*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Hopf, C., 1946. *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Horton, D., 1959. *The meaning of worship*. New York: Harper & Bros.

Hughes, G.R., 2003. *Worship as meaning: a liturgical theology for late modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunt, A., 2010. *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huxtable, J., 1977. *A New Hope for Christian Unity.* Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks.

Irvine, C., 2005. *The art of God: the making of Christians and the meaning of Worship*. London: SPCK.

Jenkins, D., 1951. *Tradition and the Spirit*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Jenkins, D., 1954. *Congregationalism: A Restatement.* London: Faber and Faber.

Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E. and Bradshaw, P. eds., 1992. *The Study of Liturgy.* Revised ed. London: SPCK.

Jones, R.T., 1962. *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Jones, R.T., 2004. Thomas, David (1813-1894), congregational minister. 2004. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27213> [Accessed 13 August 2021].

Jordon, M.D., 1922. The Early Independents and the Visible Church. *Transaction of the Congregational History Society,* 8 (5), pp.258-266.

Jordon, M.D., 1923. The Early Independents and the Visible Church. *Transaction of the Congregational History Society,* 8 (6), pp.296-304.

Kärkkäinen, V., 2016. *Spirit and Salvation.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Kavanagh, A., 1992. *On Liturgical Theology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.

Kay, J.A., 1953. *The Nature of Christian Worship.* London: The Epworth Press.

Kaye, E., 1968. *The History of the King's Weigh House Church: A Chapter in the History of London.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Keeble, N.H., 2002. *The Restoration: England in the 1660s.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Kelleher, M.M., 1985. Liturgy: An ecclesial act of meaning. *Worship*, 59 (6), pp.482-497.

Knox, R.B., 1979. The Links Between Irish and English Presbyterianism between 1840 and 1976. *The Bulletin of the Presbyterian History Society of Ireland,* 9.

Knox, R.B., 1981a. Presbyterian Worship in England in the Nineteenth Century: Part 1. *The Liturgical Review,* 11 (1), pp.23-33.

Knox, R.B., 1981b. Presbyterian Worship in England in the Nineteenth Century: Part 2. *The Liturgical Review,* 11 (2), pp.79-89.

Kuyper, A., 2015. The Worship of the Reformed Church and the Creation of Its Service Book. *Calvin Theological Journal,* 50 (1), pp.59-90.

Larsen, T., 2017. Congregationalists. In: T. Larsen and M. Ledger-Lomas, eds. 2017. *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions: The Nineteenth Century*. Vol. III. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter: 1. pp.39-56.

Lathrop, G.W., 2006. Ordo and Coyote: Further Reflections on Order, Disorder, and Meaning in Christian Worship. *Worship,* 80 (3), pp.194-211.

Lathrop, G.W., 2013. What Is Liturgical Theology? One North American Lutheran View. *Worship,* 87 (1), pp.45-63.

Maag, K., 2016. *Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Macleod, D., 1965. *Presbyterian Worship: Its Meaning and Method.* Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press.

Manning, B.L., 1942. *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts.* London: The Epworth Press.

Marshall, M.F. and Todd, J., 1982. *English Congregational Hymns in the Eighteenth Century*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Marvin, E., 2005. *Shaping up: Reforming Reformed Worship.* London: United Reformed Church.

Maxwell, W.D., 1965. *An Outline of Christian Worship: Its Development and Forms.* 10th ed. London: Oxford University Press.

Mayor, S., 1981. Philip Doddridge in the History of Congregationalism. In: R.L. Greenall, ed. 1981. *Philip Doddridge: Nonconformity and Northampton*. Leicester: Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester. pp.54-76.

McGraw, R.M., 2014. *A Heavenly Directory: Trinitarian Piety, Public Worship and a Reassessment of John Owen's Theology*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

McIntyre, J., 1997. *The Shape of Pneumatology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.

McKim, L.H., 1992. Reflections on Liturgy and Worship in the Reformed Tradition. In: D.K. McKim, ed. 1992. *Major Themes in the Reformed Traditions*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pp.305-310.

McLaughlin, P., 1940. *The Necessity of Worship*. London: Dacre Press.

McNally, F.W., 1958. *Westminster Directory: its origin and significance*. University of Edinburgh.

Micklem, E.R., 1934. *Our Approach to God: A Study in Public Worship*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Limited.

Micklem, N. ed., 1936. *Christian Worship: Studies in its History and Meaning*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Millard, B.A., 1912. *Congregationalism.* London: Constable & Company Ltd.

Miller, J., 2000. *After the Civil Wars: English Politics and Government in the reign of Charles II.* Harlow: Longman.

Moore-Keish, M.L., 2008. *Do This in Remembrance of Me: A Ritual Approach to Reformed Eucharistic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Morgan, D.D., 2017. Spirituality, Worship, and Congregational Life. In: T. Larsen and M. Ledger-Lomas, eds. 2017. *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions: The Nineteenth Century.* Vol. III. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 21. pp.502-523.

Morgan, G.C., 1937. *Preaching*. London and Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott.

Morrill, J., 1997. The religious context of the English Civil War. In: R. Cust and A. Hughes, eds. 1997. *The English Civil War*. London and New York: Arnold. Chapter: 6. pp.159-181.

Morrissey, M., 2002. Scripture, style and persuasion in seventeenth-century English theories of preaching. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 53 (4), pp.686-706.

Moule, C.F.D., 1978. *The Holy Spirit.* London and Oxford: Mowbrays.

Murray, D.M., 1996. Disruption to Union. In: D.B. Forrester and D.M. Murray, eds. 1996. *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland.* 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. pp.87-106.

Murray, D.M., 1985. High Church Presbyterianism in Scotland and England. *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society,* 3 (6), pp.225-234. <https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jurchs/03-06.pdf> [Accessed 13 August 2021].

Nicholls, W., 1958. *Jacob's Ladder: the Meaning of Worship.* John Knox Press.

Nichols, J.H., 1968. *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition.* Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock.

Niebruegge, S., 1994. A Reformed Theology of Wordship. In: R.E. Webber, ed. 1994. *Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship.* Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group. pp.288-291.

Niesel, W., 1949. Order of Public worship in the Reformed churches. *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 2 (4), pp.381-390.

Niesel, W., 1956. *The Theology of Calvin.* London: Lutterworth Press.

Noyes, M.P., 1947. Worship in the reformed tradition. *Anglican Theological Review,* 29 (4), pp.215-255.

Nuttall, G.F., 1947. *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Nuttall, G.F., 1951. Doddridge's Life and Times. In: G.F. Nuttall, ed. 1951. *Philip Doddridge (1702-51): His Contribution to English Religion.* London: Independent Press Ltd. Chapter I. pp.11-31.

Nuttall, G.F., 1962. The First Nonconformists. In: G.F. Nuttall and O. Chadwick, eds. 1962. *From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962.* London: SPCK. Chapter 3. pp.149-188.

Nuttall, G.F., 2001. *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way 1640-1660.* 2nd ed. Weston Rhyn: Quinta Press.

O'Brien, G., 2013. *Christian Worship: A theological and historical introduction.* Preston, Victoria: Uniting Academic Press.

Old, H.O., 2004. *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: Moderatism, Pietism, and Awakening.* Vol. 5. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Old, H.O., 2007. *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: The Modern Age.* Vol. 6. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Owen, D., 1980. *Sharers in Worship.* Redhill: National Christian Education Council.

Payne, E.A., 1944. *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England.* London: SCM Press Ltd.

Payne, E.A., 1951. Eighteenth Century English Congregationalism: As Exemplified in the Life and Work of Philip Doddridge. *Review & Expositor,* 48 (3), pp.281-301.

Payne, E.A., 1962. Toleration and Establishment: A Historical Outline. In: G.F. Nuttall and O. Chadwick, eds. 1962. *From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962.* London: SPCK. Chapter 5. pp.255-288.

Payne, E.A., 1965. *Free Churchmen, Unrepentant and Repentant and other papers.* London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited.

Payne, E., 1981. The Hymns of Philip Doddridge. In: R.L. Greenall, ed. 1981. *Philip Doddridge: Nonconformity and Northampton.* Leicester: Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester. pp.15-30.

Pecklers, K.F., 2003. *Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Peel, A., 1931. *A Brief History of English Congregationalism.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Peel, D., 2006. *Encountering Church.* London: The United Reformed Church.

Peel, D.R., 2002. *Reforming Theology: Explorations in the theological traditions of the United Reformed Church.* London: United Reformed Church.

Pope, R. ed., 2016. *T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity.* London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Randall, I.M., 2018. Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge, 1874-1924: A "Representative Church"? *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society,* 10 (2), pp.73-93.

Rice, H.L. and Huffstutler, J.C., 2001. *Reformed Worship.* Louisville, Kentucky: Geneva Press.

Richards, S. and Peters, S., 2018. The United Reformed Church and Liturgy: Worshipping and serving together in diversity. In: J. Arnold and A. Dávid, eds. 2018. *European Atlas of Liturgy: Protestant Perspectives on Worship Services.* Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt. pp.171-179.

Riglin, K., 2012. Who Does What? Presidency at the Sacraments in the Reformed Tradition. In: J. Templeton and K. Riglin, eds. 2012. *Reforming Worship: English Reformed Principles and Practice*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock. pp.62-83.

Rivers, I., 1991. *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780 - Whichcote to Wesley*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Routley, E., 1951a. The Hymns of Philip Doddridge. In: G.F. Nuttall, ed. 1951a. *Philip Doddridge (1702-51): His Contribution to English Religion.* London: Independent Press Ltd. Chapter: 3. pp.46-78.

Routley, E., 1951b. *I'll Praise My Maker: Studies in English Classical Hymnody.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Routley, E., 1961. *The Story of Congregationalism.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Routley, E., 1962. *Into a Far Country: Reflections upon the Trajectory of the Divine Word, and upon the Communication, in affairs human and divine, of the Imperative and the Indicative.* London: Independent Press Ltd.

Routley, E., 1974. A New Book of Worship for a New Church. *Worship,* 48 (7), pp.413-420.

Ryrie, A., 2015. *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ryrie, A., 2017. *Protestants: The Radicals who made the Modern World.* London: William Collins.

Schaeffer, J.D., 2004. Tropical Latitude: Prophecy, Orality, and the Rhetoric of Tolerance in Jeremy Taylor's The Liberty of Prophesying. *Studies in Philology,* 101 (4), pp.454-470.

Schellenberg, H., 2004. Toward a Basic Understanding of Worship. Didaskalia, 15 (2), pp.17-34.

Selbie, W.B., 1927. *Congregationalism*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Selderhuis, H.J., 2009. *The Calvin Handbook.* Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Sell, A.P.F., 2012. Living in the Half Lights: John Oman in Context. In: A. Hood, ed. 2012. *John Oman: New Perspectives.* Milton Keynes: Paternoster. pp.3-63.

Senn, F.C., 1982. Worship, Doctrine, and Life : Liturgical Theology, Theologies of Worship, and Doxological Theology. *Currents in Theology and Mission,* 9 (1), pp.11-21.

Shaw, R., 1973. *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.* Lochcarron, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications.

Sinclair, L.A., 1972. Presbyterian worship and liturgy. *Worship*, 46 (3), pp.150-155.

Smail, T.A., 1988. *The Giving Gift: The Holy Spirit in Person*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Smith, G.S. and Kemeny, P.C. eds., 2019. *The Oxford Handbook of Presbyterianism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Spinks, B.D., 1984. *Freedom or Order? The Eucharistic Liturgy in English Congregationalism 1645-1980.* Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications.

Spinks, B.D., 2009. From liturgical theology to liturgical theologies: Schmemann's legacy in western churches. *St Vladmir's Theologial Quarterly*, 53 (2-3), pp.231-249.

Srawley, J.H., 1954. *The Liturgical Movement: Its Origin and Growth.* London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited.

Statter, C., 2018. Managing the Disruptions: The Ministry of J. Oswald Dykes. *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society,* 10 (2), pp.59-72.

Stephens, W.P., 1970. *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stephens, W.P., 1986. *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Stephens, W.P., 1992. *Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Stewart, M.A., 2006. Independency of the Mind in Early Dissent. *International Congregational Journal,* 5 (2), pp.85-116.

Stringer, M.D., 2005. *A Sociological History of Christian Worship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stringer, M.D., 1999. *On the Perception of Worship: The ethnography of worship in four Christian congregations in Manchester.* Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press.

Temperley, N., 2011. The Music of Dissent. In: I. Rivers and D.L. Wykes, eds. 2011. *Dissenting Praise: Religious Dissent and the Hymn in England and Wales.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter: 8. pp.197-228.

Templeton, J. and Riglin, K., 2012. Ordered Freedom: English Reformed Worship. In: J. Templeton and K. Riglin, eds. 2012. *Reforming Worship: English Reformed Principles and Practice*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock. pp.1-6.

The Presbyterian Church of England, 1877. *The Presbyterian Church of England: A Memorial of the Union.* London: James Nisbet & Co.

Thomas, K., 2020. *In Pursuit of Civility.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Thompson, A.C. ed., 2018. *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume II: The Long Eighteenth Century c.1689-c.1828.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, D.M., 1972. *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Thompson, D.M., 2012a. Holy Fear or Holy Communion in the Reformed Tradition. In: J. Templeton and K. Riglin, eds. 2012. *Reforming Worship: English Reformed Principles and Practice*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock. pp.95-112.

Thompson, D.M., 2012b. *Remembering 1662.* United Reformed Church History Society Annual Lecture.

Thompson, D., 2013. John Hunter's Devotional Service for Public Worship: Saving the Congregation from the Individualism of the Minister. *Studia Liturgica*, 43 (2), pp.193-210.

Todd, J.M., 1975. Tradition and Change: Worship in the United Reformed Church. *The Liturgical Review,* 5 (1), pp.1-18.

Tomkins, S., 2020. *The Journey of the Mayflower: God's Outlaw and the Invention of Freedom*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

Torrance, A.J., 1996. P*ersons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.

Tucker, T., 2003. *Reformed Ministry: Traditions of Ministry and Ordination in the United Reformed Church*. London: The United Reformed Church.

Tyacke, N., 1997. Puritanism, Arminianism and counter-revolution. In: R. Cust and A. Hughes, eds. 1997. *The English Civil War.* London: Arnold. Chapter 5. pp.136-159.

Underhill, E., 1937. *Worship*. 2nd ed. London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd.

van de Poll, G J, 1954. *Martin Bucer's Liturgical Ideas: The Strasburg Reformer and his connection with the liturgies of the sixteenth century*. Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V.

Van Dixhoorn, C., 2017. *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643-1653*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Hertiage Books.

Van Dixhoorn, C. and Wright, D.F., 2012a. *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643-1642, Vol. 1: Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van Dyk, L. ed., 2005. *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony.* Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

von Allmen, J., 1965. *Worship: Its Theology and Practice.* London: Lutterworth Press.

Wadsworth, K.W., 1972. *The Yorkshire Congregational Union and Home Missionary Society 1872-1972.* s.n.

Wainwright, G., 1980. *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life.* London: Epworth Press.

Wainwright, G., 1985. The praise of God in the theological reflection of the Church. *Interpretation*, 39 (1), pp.34-45.

Wakefield, G.S., 1959. *Puritan Devotion: It's Place in the Development of Christian Piety.* London: Epworth Press.

Wakefield, G.S., 2000. *An Outline of Christian Worship.* Paperback ed. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Wallace, D.D., 2008. Puritan polemical divinity and doctrinal controversy. In: J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim, eds. 2008. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter: 12. pp.206-222.

Wallace, V., 2018. *Scottish Presbyterianism and Settler Colonial Politics: Empire of Dissent*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Warfield, B.B., 2015. *The Westminster Assembly and its work*. New York: Great Christian Books.

Watson, J.R., 1997. *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Watts, M.R., 1978. *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Watts, M.R., 1995. The Dissenters II: *The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859.* Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Webber, R.E., 1994. Defining the Task of a Theology of Worship. In: R.E. Webber, ed. 1994. *Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship*. Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group. pp.261-263.

Welch, E., 2016. The Holy Spirit and the Word: the presence of God in worship, immediate and mediated. In: J.H. Burgess, ed. 2016. *In Word and Spirit: Discussion papers on the Theology of Worship.* Exeter: Spiritualseekers Publications. pp.41-45.

Welch, E.A., 2017. *The Holy Spirit and Worship: seeing unexpected congruities from the writings of John Owen (17th century Reformed) and John Zizioulas (contemporary Orthodox).* King's College London.

Welch, E.A., 2021. *The Holy Spirit and Worship: Transformation and Truth in the Theologies of John Owen and John Zizioulas.* Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications.

White, J.F., 1990. *Introduction to Christian Worship.* Revised ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Wilson, W., 1808a. *The History of Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses In London, Westminster and Southwark; including the Lives of their Ministers, from the rise of Nonconformity to the Present time*. Vol. 1. London: Anno Dom.

Wilson, W., 1808b. *The History of Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses In London, Westminster and Southwark; including the Lives of their Ministers, from the rise of Nonconformity to the Present time*. Vol. 2. London: Anno Dom.

Wilson, W., 1808c. *The History of Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses In London, Westminster and Southwark; including the Lives of their Ministers, from the rise of Nonconformity to the Present time*. Vol. 3. London: Anno Dom.

Winship, M.P., 2018. *Hot Protestants A History of Puritanism in England and America.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Winward, S.F., 1964. *The Reformation of our Worship.* London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited.

Wolterstorff, N., 1992. The Reformed Liturgy. In: D.K. McKim, ed. 1992. *Major Themes in the Reformed Traditions.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pp.273-304.

Wolterstorff, N., 2015. *The God We Worship: An exploration of liturgical theology.* Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Wykes, D.L., 2004. Jennings, John (1687/8-1723). In: H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison, eds. 2004. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Vol. 30. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.20-21.

Young, F., 1990. *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture.* London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

Zachman, R.C., 2005. *The Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.

Zakai, A., 1989. Religious Toleration and Its Enemies: The Independent Divines and the Issues of Toleration during the English Civil War. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 21 (1), pp.1-33.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. WORSHIP RESOURCES WRITTEN OR COMPILED BY MEMBERS OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

	Resource and description	Analysis
1	A Gaunt. *New Prayers for Worship*, 1972 (with two further supplements published in 1973 and 1975) A collection of prayers linked with not only the emerging liturgical pattern of worship, but the liturgical year and rites that are part of acts of worship. They are all prayers that can be offered on behalf of a congregation or be participated in by a congregation, interpreting a congregation's proper petitions and aspirations.	Collection of prayers organised thematically, and with respects to the liturgical pattern of worship. Some of which are referenced to scripture.
2	Council of World Mission. *CWM Prayer Fellowship Handbooks*, 1973-1976 *I Thomas. Together in Prayer, 1973* *T Cornford. Come Alive!, 1974* *D Jenkins. People of God, 1975* *D Leyson. By What Power?, 1976* These handbooks gave a prayer for each day of the month covering 31 days. Meditations are offered in response to scripture in some of the handbooks. Prayers are related to global church each day.	Collection of prayers and meditations based on a general theme. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
3	Doctrine and Worship Committee, the United Reformed Church. *Book of Order for Worship*, 1974 This was a draft liturgy that was published as an interim order of worship whilst the first book of services for the United Reformed Church was being written and collated. It was not an attempt to restrict the worship of the church to a set form, but it was perceived as an order that could be the basis of worship Sunday by Sunday. It did begin to open up the possibility of congregational participation through responsive speech.	Liturgy for an act of worship that included Holy Communion.
4	D Hilton. *Words to Share*, 1974 This was a collection of prose including prayers that were directed for use with young people and in family worship. They were Christian interpretations of human experiences.	Collection of proses and prayers organised thematically. An index of prayers organised them with respects to a liturgical pattern of worship. Scripture references given with respect to some of the themes.
5	The United Reformed Church. *New Church Praise*, 1975 Anthology of hymns that was compiled as a supplement to Congregational Praise following the formation of the United Reformed Church. Included was the 1974 Order of Worship for an act of worship that included Holy Communion, therefore enabling the use of congregational responses.	Collection of hymns, some of which written as responses to passages of scripture. Thematic index. Liturgy for act of worship including Holy Communion.
6	C Micklem and R Tomes. *Contemporary Prayers for Church and School,* 1975 Anthology of prayers which follows on from volumes written when C Micklem was a Congregational minister (*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship* (1967) and *More Contemporary Prayers* (1970). This book was designed to resource church worship, but also worship in different school setting, *e.g.* assemblies, school chapel services and house prayers in boarding schools.	Collection of prayers organised thematically. There are prayers reference biblical stories and passages. In some instances, simple congregational responses are given and encouraged.

	Resource and description	Analysis
7	R Chapman and D Hilton (compilers). *Prayers for the Church Community*, 1978 A collection of prayers for use worship that build the community of the church as it prayers. They prayers are written in such a way that they can be used when all age-groups are gathered, although there are a few better suited for only adult congregations.	The collection is split into themes, but within the section there are prayers that follow the liturgical pattern of worship. Some reference scripture.
8	A Gaunt. *Each Day's Delight*, 1979 A collection of prayers to enable a daily of practice of prayer.	Collection of prayers that were referenced to scripture.
9	D Hilton (compiler) *Fresh Voices*, 1979 An anthology that gave a voice to children and young people, sharing their experiences and insight into life and faith. This was a resource of use in both religious education and worship.	Collection of poems and prose organised thematically.

	Resource and description	Analysis
10	Council of World Mission. *CWM Prayer Handbooks*, 1979-1985 *A Gaunt. All God's Children, 1979* *S Wilton. Praying with the Scriptures, 1980* *J Johansen-Berg. The Light of the World, 1981* *G Dunston. Prayers in God's Household, 1982* *B Bailey. Psalms for Pilgrims, 1983* *B Bailey. Proverbs for Today, 1984* *B. Bailey. Partners in Pray, 1985* As with the preceding CWM Prayer Fellowship Handbooks, these handbooks gave a prayer for each day of the month covering 31 days. Meditations are offered in response to scripture in some of the handbooks. Prayers are related to global church each day. In the handbook written by Johansen-Berg, the author talked about prayers being intercessions and some containing elements of confession. In the last handbook, the prayers related to churches in countries and followed a conventional structure of acclamation and confession in the first prayer for each day. The second prayer was thanksgiving and intercession.	Collection of prayers and meditations based on a general theme. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
11	A Gaunt. *Prayers for the Christian Year*, 1979-1982 A collection of prayers separated into the Sundays of the liturgical year. Each set of prayers were related to the lectionary readings for the given Sunday and included prayers for Confident Approach, Collect of the day, Intercession, Thanksgiving, Penitence, Praise and Adoration, and Commitment. The lectionary followed was the two-year cycle proposed by the Joint Liturgical Group in 1967. The four volumes were: Christmas – Easter (Second Year Part One); Easter 1 – Pentecost 21 (Second Year Part Two); Christmas – Easter (First Year Part One); Easter 1 – Pentecost 21 (First Year Part Two).	Collection of prayers organised by the liturgical year and with respects to the liturgical pattern of worship. Prayers reference to scripture.
12	The United Reformed Church. *A Book of Services*, 1980 The first service book published following the formation of the United Reformed Church. It offered liturgies for all the types of services that might be conducted as public acts of worship, but apart from the services relating to ordination and induction, and membership, none were prescribed.	Collection of liturgies for specific acts of worship held within the church. Scripture referenced and used to inspire words of prayers *etc*.
13	D Hilton. *Celebrating Christmas*, 1980 Three fully scripted all-age service for use in the period leading up to Christmas. Although full orders, the author states they could be altered or adapted, or just used as a resource.	Full acts of worship on specific themes.
14	T Burnham. *In the Quietness*, 1981 A collection of prayers designed for use in the vestry prior to the leading of congregational worship. Prayer for each Sunday of the year using the calendar proposed at that time by the Joint Liturgical Group.	Collection of prayers organised by the liturgical year.

	Resource and description	Analysis
15	D Hilton. *Celebrating Harvest*, 1981 Three fully scripted Harvest Festival services for all-age worship. Although full orders, the author states they could be altered or adapted, or just used as a resource.	Full acts of worship on specific themes.
16	D Jenkins. *Where Two or Three…*, 1983 A collection of short acts of worship designed to be used to start meetings such as women's meeting, Bible studies and house groups.	Collection of short acts of worship, thematically based with reference to scripture.
17	B Thorogood. *Our Father's House: An Approach to Worship*, 1983 Although this is a book that explored worship from personal encounter and sought to re-energise a pattern of worship that might have become mundane or lacked direction, the author also offered prayers and meditations that could be used within worship.	Collection of prayers and meditations that referenced scripture and could be applied to a liturgical pattern of worship.
18	D Hilton. *Celebrating Special Sundays*, 1983 Three fully scripted festival services that were intended for special occasion that might arise in the life of a church. They were also intended for all-age worship. Although full orders, the author states they could be altered or adapted, or just used as a resource.	Full acts of worship on specific themes.
19	D Hilton (compiler). *A Word in Season*, 1984 An anthology of prose to be used in Christian Education and worship in churches and schools, following the pattern of the year beginning with Advent.	Collection of prose organised thematically.
20	F Kaan. *The hymn texts of Fred Kaan*, 1985 Anthology of previous published hymns which attempted to make all the author's work (to that date) available with background notes for each hymn. The volume attempted to use inclusive language throughout.	Collection of hymns with thematic index. Some hymns reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
21	B Wren. *Praising a Mystery,* 1986 A collection of 30 hymns that considered different journeys within Christian doctrine and towards new horizons. They were inclusive, contemporary and trinitarian.	Collection of hymns with notes that give theme and where appropriate scripture reference.
22	D Hilton. *Celebrating Lent and Easter*, 1987 & 1990 (2 volumes) Fully scripted services for Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. The were designed so that they could be used for all-age worship. Although full orders, the author states they could be altered or adapted, or just used as a resource.	Full acts of worship on specific themes.

	Resource and description	Analysis
23	The United Reformed Church in cooperation with the Congregational Federation, the Congregational Union of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Union of Welsh Independents. *Prayer Handbook* 1986-1998 *E Banyard. The Word and the World, 1986; The Power and the Glory, 1987; Encounters Encounters, 1988;* and *All the Glorious Names, 1989* *G Cook. Say one for me!, 1990; Exceeding our Limits, 1991;* and *Read Mark and Pray, 1992* *K Compston. Encompassing Presence, 1993; Edged with Fire, 1994;* and *A Restless Hope, 1995* *J Wooton. For the Love of God, 1996; Journeying, 1997;* and *Active Power, 1998* A weekly format relating to the Sundays of the Christian year. During this set of handbooks, both the Joint Liturgical Group's two-year and four-year lectionary cycles were used. On occasions alternative readings for the year were offered that related to the theme of the handbook. Although not tied direct to the work of the Council of World Mission, prayers for parts of the world were encouraged. Meditations, stories, bible study and even short sermons were offered with prayers in some of the handbooks that were linked to the theme. In the later volumes, a daily prayer cycle was also included.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year. Reference to scripture.
24	The United Reformed Church. *Service Book*, 1989 The second service book published for the United Reformed Church. It came quickly after the first service book because of the joining of the Churches of Christ to the union and in response to the concerns over the use of appropriate language in worship. As with the first service book, it offered liturgies for all the types of services that might be conducted as public acts of worship, but apart from the services relating to ordination and induction, and membership, none were prescribed.	Collection of liturgies for specific acts of worship held within the church. Scripture referenced and used to inspire words of prayers *etc*.

	Resource and description	Analysis
25	D Jenkins. *Prayers for Sunday (Year 1 and Year 2)*, 1989 and 1990 A two-volume collection of prayers related to a two-year lectionary and which gave a single prayer for every Sunday reflecting on a theme in the scripture passages.	Collection of prayers thematically based in response to scripture.
26	D Hilton (compiler). *Liturgy of Life*, 1991 An anthology of reflections and prayers that are based around the elements of the liturgy in the Roman Mass. It considers how the liturgy can be reflected in life and not just be a pattern for worship. The content was intended to aid personal devotion as well as provide material for Christian education and worship.	Collection of reflections and prayers organised thematically. Liturgical in the sense that the themes were taken from the Roman Mass.
27	The United Reformed Church. *Rejoice and Sing*, 1991 An anthology of hymns that tried to encapsulate the coming together of three traditions to form a denomination that saw itself very much a part of the wider church. It also includes psalms for every Sunday of the liturgical year, and prayers and responses that can be used as part of any act of worship, reflecting content published in the *Service Book*.	Collection of hymns organised thematically, with some being written in response to scripture. Included prayers relate to a liturgical pattern of worship.
28	E Banyard (editor). *Festival Services*, 1992 A set of outline orders of service which contain liturgical elements expected in worship yet suggest different ways for the congregation to approach the theme and participate. In some of the services, participation goes beyond being active listener or participating in prayer through responses; discussion or an activity suggested. There are some prayers and reflections offered for us, but most of the services provide ideas to be developed by the worship leader(s).	A collection of service outlines and associated resources for the Christian festivals throughout the year. The services follow a liturgical pattern. Some of the services are based around scripture, but not all.

	Resource and description	Analysis
29	E Banyard. *Turn but a Stone*, 1992 This collection was constructed around the four-year lectionary cycle proposed at one point by the Joint Liturgical Group. The material was written for corporate use.	Collection of meditations, prayers and hymn lyrics following the liturgical year and referencing scripture. Some prayers are designated as Intercessions.
30	D Hilton (compiler). *Flowing Streams*, 1993 An anthology of material that followed the story of the Bible and responded to the emotions of the people in the scripture stories. As these emotions reflected human life in general, some of the material came from contemporary experiences.	Collection of prayers, hymns and meditations organised thematically and around the canon of scripture.
31	M Forster. *High Days and Holy Days*, 1993 Fully scripted services for specific festivals in the liturgical year, litanies for Advent candles and Lent vigil, and hymns written for the services. The services were spoken of as being flexible, they could be used as written or as a resource in the preparation of acts of worship. There was extensive use of dialogue in services to encourage more people to be actively apart of leading the worship.	Full act of worship and additional resources on specific liturgical themes. Services follow a recognisable liturgical pattern.
32	D Hilton (compiler). *Sounds of Fury*, 1994 A resource for use within acts of worship, as well as part of a person's personal devotion and prayer. It is a collection of pieces written by people from the United Reformed Church, with a focus of being relevant to young people. The collection was organised and related to the underlying work and thinking of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth, at the time of publication.	Reflections and prayers that are organised thematically, some of which are referenced to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
33	M Forster. *Fasts and Festivals*, 1994 Fully scripted services for specific festivals in the liturgical year, litanies for Advent candles and Lent vigil, and hymns written for the services. The services were spoken of as being flexible, they could be used as written or as a resource in the preparation of acts of worship. There was extensive use of dialogue in services to encourage more people to be actively apart of leading the worship.	Full act of worship and additional resources on specific liturgical themes. Services follow a recognisable liturgical pattern.
34	G Duncan (compiler). *Dare to Dream*, 1995 An anthology compiled on behalf of the Council of World Mission to reflect upon the poverty, oppression and discrimination experienced in the world and the hope for a better future. Its aim was to motivate the church to explore contemporary issues and challenge action. There was the inclusion of material that could be used responsively in worship. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, litanies, poetry and prose organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
35	The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. *Developing Discipleship – Unit on Worshipping*, 1996 Primarily considered the pattern of worship in church on a Sunday, referring to the *Service Book*. In exploring the planning of worship, it used a thematic approach asking participants to pick a 'special' day in the Christian calendar and relate scripture and hymns to this. It also considered where worship where a 'normal' Sunday might differ, i.e. when there is Holy Communion, a baptism, wedding or funeral.	Course material to enable the planning of worship thematically and in a liturgical pattern of worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
36	B Wren. *Piece Together Praise: A Theological Journey*, 1996 A collection of hymns and poems which were responses to a variety of situations or commissioned works. All were written for multiple use: as a spiritual journey, a resource for planning worship, a work of theology and religious education.	Collection of hymns and poems thematically organised. Some were related to scripture.
37	D Hilton (compiler). *Seasons and Celebrations*, 1996 A collection of prayers compiled for use on Sundays in the Christian year and Sundays with significant occasions associated with them, such as Remembrance, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. There were prayers that included congregational responses.	Collection of prayers thematically organised, including areas in a liturgical pattern of worship. Some reference scripture.
38	D Hilton (compiler). *The Word in the World*, 1997 A collection of prayers compiled for use when Christians meet together for worship, with the hope that it would enrich worship when praise to God was offered. Simple congregational responses included with some of the prayers. Some of the prayers related to times when Christians meet together outside 'normal' acts of worship. Each section began with scripture reflecting on the theme and the prayers did not directly link with that scripture.	Collection of prayers thematically organised, including areas in a liturgical pattern of worship.
39	Editorial Committee for Rejoice and Sing. *A Choice of Hymns,* 1997 A Thematic Index to accompany *Rejoice and Sing*, adding the choice of hymns with regards to theme and/or occasion.	Thematic index of hymns.
40	M Nicholls (compiler). *Reign Dance – The Waking*, 1997 A collection created for and by young people who visited the centre, Yardley Hastings, which was a resource in the United Reformed Church for young people, celebrating 25 years of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth.	Collection of worship ideas, prayers, meditations, sketches and songs organised thematically. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
41	B Wren. *Visions and Revisions*, 1998 Collected of mew and revised hymns which were either commissioned or written in response to particular events.	Collection of hymns with a thematic index.
42	The United Reformed Church in cooperation with the Congregational Federation, the Congregational Union of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Union of Welsh Independents. *Prayer Handbook,* 1998-2007 *J Lees. Gateways of Grace, 1998-1999* *J Lees. Justice, Joy and Jubilee, 1999-2000* *J Lees. Shining Faces, 2000-2001* *N Hart. Kneelers, 2001-2002* *N Hart. Bridge of Love, 2002-2003* *K Chippindale. Prescription for Prayer, 2003-2004* *K Chippindale. Unwrapping the Kingdom. 2004-2005* *K Chippindale. Glory at Ground Level, 2005-2006* *G Duncan. A New Heaven on a New Earth, 2006-2007* Prayer Handbooks followed the liturgical year, being at Advent 1 and concluding with Christ the King. The scripture references were taken from the Revised Common Lectionary. Links made with Council of World Mission Partners on a week by week basis. A daily prayer cycle offered for a seven week and for Holy Week. There was other material, such as reflections and meditations, offered alongside prayers and prayer ideas.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year. Reference to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
43	D Hilton (compiler). *No Empty Phrases*, 1999 An anthology of reflections and prayers that reflect on the different clauses of the Lord's prayer. It considered the Lord's prayer as a living prayer that could be re-interpreted and expressed differently in each generation. As a collection it sought to enable the relevance of the Lord's prayer to be discovered in daily life as well as the sanctuary.	Collection of reflections and prayers that are organised thematically.
44	The United Reformed Church. *Wholly Worship*, 1999 A resource that was designed to engage congregations in developing their worship. It had four aims: to promote thinking, to encourage practice, to share ideas of things that could be included, and offer information on other sources that could be used create acts of worship. It emphasises the need for worship to be inclusive with respects to age, stages of faith, intellectual and emotional needs, physical ability, cultural background, tradition, and the expression of the church globally and historically.	Aid to the preparation of worship including suggested patterns for worship, but not what might be described as 'normal'.
45	F Kaan. *The Only Earth We Know*, 1999 A collection of hymns from earlier collections that reflected on 'today' at the point of publication and included some that the author thought might be appropriate for church to sing 'tomorrow'.	Collection of hymns organised thematically, with a section referencing the Psalms.
46	G Duncan (compiler). *Wisdom is Calling*, 1999 An anthology called to seek the wisdom of God through the spirituality that is inherent in all cultures and context. It considered hope and fostered an approach that might enable change. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prose, prayers, reflections and litanies organised thematically.

	Resource and description	Analysis
47	M Forster & S Smith. *A New Start in All-Age Worship*, 1999 A collection of fully scripted all-age acts of worship based on the theme of 'new starts'. The services cover the major festivals in the Christian year.	Full acts of worship organised thematically.
48	F Brienen (compiler). *What Does the Lord Require?*, 2000 An anthology of worship resources including prayers, hymns, litanies, stories, symbolic acts and liturgies that sought to hold worship and mission of the church together, allowing worship to nourish a church's mission. The material sough to encourage active participation of the congregation with responses or the used of multiple leaders	Collection of worship resources. Some of prayers related to a liturgical pattern of worship. Some reference scripture.
49	J Slow (compiler). *Beginning Prayers*, 2000 A collection of prayers for use at the beginning of services and before services or meetings. Some were explicit to the seasons or specific occasions.	Collection of prayers organised thematically.
50	G Spicer (compiler). *Say One Again – Prayer Handbook Anthology*, 2000 A selection of prayers, meditations and stories from the prayer handbooks published from 1986 to the prayer handbook prior to this publication.	Collection of prayers, meditations and stories organised thematically, some referencing scripture.
51	G Duncan (compiler). *A World of Blessing*, 2000 An anthology of blessings not only to be used in the worship, but to offer God's blessing in different places and situations. Included were a number of blessings that could be read responsively. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers and blessing organised thematically. Some referencing scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
52	M Forster. *Life in all its fullness*, 2001 A collection of readings that re-imagined some biblical passages in a way that might make them more accessible. They keep close to the structure of the standard text. The readings were not intended as a replacement to reading the Bible passages but offered as another way of exploring them.	Collection of scripture based readings organised thematically.
53	H Undy. *Somewhere to Start*, 2002 A collection of prayers that offered an approach to God with the interests and concerns of everyday human life lived in faith. The selection was made from developed of a 30 year period that began in pre-independence Zimbabwe and so reflect on ministry in difference cultures.	Collection of prayers organised thematically, some referencing scripture and some designated to parts of a liturgical pattern of worship.
54	G Duncan (compiler). *What a World*, 2002 An anthology based on ecology, environment and justice for use in public worship, personal meditation and thought, silence and retreats. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, meditations, litanies and liturgies organised thematically.
55	G Duncan (compiler). *Shine on, Star of Bethlehem*, 2002 An anthology focused on the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany that celebrated the good news of the seasons yet reminded the call to the continued building of the kingdom Christ announced. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, songs, liturgies, poems and prose organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
56	G Duncan (compiler). *Seeing Christ in Others*, 2002 An anthology of prayers that encouraged the diverse culture and communities of the church to listen and look for Christ in others. There were included prayers that could be used responsively within congregational worship. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers organised thematically. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
57	G Duncan (compiler). *Courage to love*, 2002 An anthology of worship material that focused on human sexuality. Along with prayers, stories and litanies, there are liturgies for relating to moments people might wish to mark or celebration within the church. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, stories litanies and liturgies organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
58	G Duncan (compiler). *Harvest for the World*, 2002 An anthology of harvest related worship material which could be used at other times of the year when thinking about creation, fair trading, poverty and politics of land. There were included prayers that could be used responsively within congregational worship. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
59	M Forster. *Instant Hymns*, 2002 A collection of hymns written in the response to the lectionary. For each Sunday of each of the three years, one hymn was offered to try and express the essential meaning the readings for the given Sunday. Related to the lectionary in Common Worship.	Collection of hymns organised by liturgical year. Related to scripture.
60	M Forster. *Worship Interactive*, 2002 Outlines for all-age worship with suggested hymns, exploration the story and related activity, and an opening prayer. The order used in each service contained the liturgical elements of praise, confession, and intercession.	Collection of service outlines and resources organised thematically. Reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
61	G Duncan (compiler). *Let Justice Roll Down*, 2003 An anthology focused on the seasons of Lent and Easter concerned with healing and justice. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, meditations, litanies and liturgies organised thematically. Some reference scripture. Some material that can be associated with a liturgical pattern of worship.
62	G Duncan (compiler). *Timeless Prayers for Peace*. 2003 An anthology of worship material focused on the theme of peace. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, meditations, reflections and poems organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
63	The United Reformed Church. *Worship: from the United Reformed Church*, 2003 (with second part being published in 2004) This third service book for the United Reformed Church took a broad approach to resourcing the worship of the church. It offered, in printed form, models of services with options of wording. In addition, there were prayer resources and some extra model services for very specific situations. These were published in digital format on a CD-ROM. The resources demonstrated a flexibility and breadth within worship that can respond to situations and occasions.	Collection of liturgies for specific acts of worship held within the church, plus a collection of additional prayers for used in worship and at other times. Scripture referenced and used to inspire words of prayers *etc*.
64	V Jones. *Take, Bless, Break, Give*, 2003 A collection of prayers related to Holy Communion through the seasons of the Christian year. A common pattern was used by the author encourage the approach to prayers being memorable even with changes to content within respects to the seasons.	Collection of Eucharist prayers and related prayers organised thematically and relating to aspects of a liturgical pattern of worship where Holy Communion would be included.

	Resource and description	Analysis
65	The United Reformed Church. *Wholly Worship Too*, 2004 An expansion to 'Wholly Worship' adding to the principles that worship ought to be 'God-centred, biblical, awesome, transforming.' Where 'Wholly Worship' emphasised the people at worship, 'Wholly Worship Too' emphasised the worship of God suggesting that the Bible should be the starting point for the development of any act of worship and not the theme.	Aid to the preparation of worship developing the meaning of liturgy in the worship of the church.
66	G Duncan (compiler). *A Place for Us*, 2004 An anthology related to bereavement at its widest definition. Prayers and poems did not only reflect on death, but the breakdown of marriages, the loss of employment, abuse, bullying, illness. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers and poems organised thematically. Some reference scripture.
67	G Duncan (compiler). *A Lifetime of Blessing*, 2004 An anthology of prayers and blessings that related to the recognition and celebration of God's goodness.	Collection of prayers and blessings organised thematically. Sections reference scripture, as do some of the prayers.
68	D Hilton (compiler). *Called to Praise*, 2005 Resources that followed the pattern of the Christian year and included material on: creation, the Christian community, mission and ministry, and justice and peace. Primarily compiled for use by worship leaders in corporate acts of worship, yet some material offered was suitable for private devotions and personal reflections.	Collection of prayers, call to worship, and meditation organised thematically. The calls to worship were scripturally based.
69	G Duncan (compiler). *Entertaining Angels*, 2005 An anthology of prayers and readings that offered a reminder of the people that cross others' paths daily who can be perceived as being sent by God. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of prayers, meditations, reflections and poems organised thematically. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
70	G Duncan and M Hazell (compilers). *Dancing on Slaves*, 2005 Anthology related to the Make Poverty History and the Trade Justice campaigns.	Collection of prayers, reflections, hymns and litanies.
71	D Peel. *Encountering Church*, 2006 Although this is a book that discusses the future of the church, it contains a small number of resources that can be used in worship where aspects of being church might be being reflected upon.	Prayers, hymn and a focal point for an act of worship. The hymn reflects on two pieces of scripture. One prayer is defined in terms of a liturgical pattern of worship.
72	G Duncan (compiler). *Eternal Springs*, 2006 An anthology of prayers, reflections, hymns, litanies and liturgies that reflect on the theme of hope. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of worship resources organised thematically.
73	J Lees. *Word of Mouth*, 2007 A book essentially encouraging the engagement with scripture through telling what is remembered. This could be done as part of an act of worship. The book included a section of resources for use in worship that were written from the language, images and ideas gathered from using the techniques of the remembered Bible with churches.	Collection of prayers, hymns and meditations organised thematically, inspired by scripture.
74	G Duncan (compiler). *The Whole World Will Rejoice*, 2007 An anthology of prayers, hymns, poems, meditations and liturgies that reflect on the whole range of human life and experience, emphasising the multicultural nature of society and the world. Contributors were from across the world.	Collection of worship resources organised thematically. Some reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
75	The United Reformed Church in cooperation with the Congregational Federation, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Union of Welsh Independents. *Prayer Handbook*, 2008-2013 *G Duncan. A Chair Pulled to the Place of Prayer, 2008* *G Duncan. Hush the Storm, 2009* *S Durber. Gathered to the heart of God, 2010* *S Durber. Still Praying, 2011* *S Durber. Common Prayers, 2012* *F Brienen & M Jagessar. Ordinary Time, 2013* Move into a resource that was dedicated to offering prayers for Sundays of the liturgical year. Additional sets of prayers included that related to the theme for the book. Prayers that could be used responsively in corporate worship included.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year. Reference to scripture.
76	D Hilton. *Harvest Services, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2008 Resources for Harvest including prayers, readings, meditations, a fully scripted act of worship and a sermon.	Full acts of worship and additional resources on a specific theme.
77	J Danso. *Join in: Breaking Tradition, Embracing Culture, Styles of Multicultural Worship*, 2009 Offered four model liturgies to encourage multicultural worship or ethnic minorities in congregations to worship. The book as a whole sought to recognise the global nature of the church and how worship needs to be inclusive. It described the overall approach that might be taken to make an act of worship multicultural and offered other resources to compliment the liturgies.	Collection of liturgies, some of which reference scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
78	D Jenkins. *Advent and Christmas, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2009 A litany that includes the lighting of the Advents candles for all Sundays of Advent; resources for a short Christmas service when young children including hymn suggestions, prayers and stories; other reflective material to be used over the Christmas period.	Collection of litanies, prayers and reflection relating to a season of the liturgical year.
79	S Brown. *Christmas Service 2, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2009 Liturgies for an all-age carol service and an all-age Christmas day service, plus additional prayer resources. The two service were almost fully scripted including the hymns and based around themes.	Full acts of worship and additional prayers on specific themes.
80	J Humphreys. *Worship at the Beginning of Meetings, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2009 12 acts of worship for use in the context of meetings and related to particular times in the liturgical calendar.	Acts of worship on specific themes. Reference to scripture.
81	S Brown. *New Year Services, Preacher's Press Resource for the Christian Year,* 2009 Two fully scripted acts of worship for around New Year and other worship resources for New Year which included prayers and an all-age address.	Full acts of worship on specific theme.
82	J Reardon. *Harvest Services 2, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2009 A fully scripted act of worship for Harvest and two sermons that could be used in Harvest services.	Full act of worship and additional resources on a specific theme.

	Resource and description	Analysis
83	*Preacher's Press Sermons for the Christian Year*, 2009-2015 Sermons related to the lectionary that included contributions by United Reformed Church ministers: Ray Adams, Bob Andrews, David Batchelor, Peter Brain, James Breslin, Stephen Brown, Tony Burnham, Robert Canham, Tony Coates, Graham Cook, Carla Grosch-Miller, Simon Helme, Terry Hinks, John Humphreys, David Lawrence, Graham Long, Peter Moth, Kristin Ofsted, Stephen Orchard, David Pickering, Peter Poulter, John Proctor, Geoffrey Roper, John Reardon, Howard Sharp, Alistair Smeaton, Lance Stone, John Sutcliffe, Neil Thorogood, Janet Tollington, John Waller, Elizabeth Welch and Kathy White.	Sermons based on scripture.
84	K Bulley. *Creative Ideas for All-Age Church*, 2010 A set of creative worship ideas that were to encourage the worshipping community to listen to one another. Suitable for all-ages, although some of the activities are age specific. Each theme was put into a biblical context and hymns and songs were suggested.	Ideas for worship on specific themes.
85	T Burnham. *Summer Saints, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2010 Resources for acts of worship based on Peter, Thomas and Mary Magdalene which included suggested readings, hymns, prayers and sermons.	Resources for worship on a specific theme.
86	D Hilton. *When someone dies, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2010 Collection of prayers and readings for use in funeral services or with response to death. A collection of sermons for funeral services offered.	Resources for worship in a particular situation. Reference to scripture.
87	D Jenkins. *Easter People, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2010 Scripted dialogues to be used instead of the sermon in an act of worship.	Resources that were an alternative to the normal sermon.

	Resource and description	Analysis
88	D Goodbourn. *Christian Unity 2, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2010 Elements for three services including prayers, sermons and suggested hymns. They could be used to lead a short act of worship or form part of a longer service.	Full/part acts of worship on specific themes. Sermons based on theme rather than scripture.
89	D Jenkins. *Joined Together, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2010 Resources for Wedding services and included a liturgy, sermons and prayers.	Resources for an act of worship on a specific theme. Sermons reference scripture.
90	D Hilton. *Lent, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year*, 2010 Liturgy with ideas for an act of worship to begin Lent, and other prayer and reflective resources for use throughout Lent, personally or with acts of worship.	Resources including liturgy, prayers and reflections for a specific season in the liturgical year.
91	G Long. *Reviving Rogation, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year,* 2011 Worship ideas, hymns, prayers, liturgy and sermon for use during Rogationtide.	Resources including liturgy, prayers, hymns and reflections for a specific season in the liturgical year.
92	J Berry. *Naming God*, 2011 A resource that has its roots in personal prayer and encounter with God. Therefore, the material contained in the book is for both personal and corporate worship. It is written from a feminist theology perspective.	Collection of prayers, poems and hymns organised thematically, with reference to scripture and a liturgical pattern of worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
93	B Bennett. *A Great Cloud of Witnesses: Reflections on Encounters with Jesus* *Part 1: Birth,* 2011 Imagined reflections from the perspective of the characters met within the story of Jesus' birth. *Part 2: Life,* 2012 Imagined reflections from the perspective of characters met within the gospel stories, some who encountered with Jesus and some who are encountered in stories Jesus told. *Part 3: Death and beyond,* 2021 Imagined reflections from the perspectives of those who witnessed the final days of Jesus' life and resurrection. It included reflections on Ascension and Pentecost.	Collection of reflections referencing scripture. Thematic in the sense that they are organised into three volumes that are themed.
94	S Durber. *Surprised by Grace*, 2013 An exploration of the parables that might be used for daily devotions, but not constricted to this use. For each parable considered there was a reflection unpacking what the parable might be saying into the culture of the day and then a prayer offered. The majority of prayers were in the first person singular, but some could be used in corporate worship.	Collection of reflections and prayers based on scripture.
95	K Morrison & S Webster. *Gifts: Pilots Worship Material*, 2013 Material designed for use in Pilot groups. Yet, contains the outline and resources for an all-age act of worship for Pilots Sunday.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme. Used a liturgical pattern of worship.
96	L Reay (editor). *We Are Loved: Expressions of Spirit, Words of Worship*, 2014 Resources for use in worship that reflected the need for inclusivity in worship with respects to gender and sexuality.	Collection of prayers and meditations based on a theme, with some reference to scripture and a liturgical pattern of worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
97	C Grosch-Miller. *Psalms Redux*, 2014 Prayers and poems that offered a reworking of some of the psalms and prayers for specific occasions and needs. The author did not intend the material to supplant the psalm, but to resource the vocabulary of prayer and worship.	Collection of poems and prayers. Some related to specific themes. Some based on scripture.
98	The United Reformed. *Prayer Handbook*, 2014-2019 *S Maxey. Opening Doors, 2014* *F Brienen & M Jagessar. Listening for the Whisper, 2015* *F Brienen & M Jagessar. Hidden in Plain Sight, 2016* *R Church & N Eddy. Feasts and Festivals, 2017* *R Church & N Eddy. On Eagles' Wings, 2018* *R Church & N Eddy. Seasons of the Spirit, 2019* Becomes a United Reformed Church only publications, contributors all being related to the United Reformed Church in some way. Set of prayers related to the Sunday lectionary (all the Revised Common Lectionary). Move towards prayers offered for Ash Wednesday and each day of Holy Week. Prayers that could be used responsively in corporate worship included.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year. Reference to scripture.
99	S Faber, J Henderson & G Webbe. *Treasures*, 2015 Material designed for use in Pilot groups. Yet, contains the outline and resources for an all-age act of worship for Pilots Sunday.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme. Used a liturgical pattern of worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
100	N Thorogood. *Charcoal Gospel*, 2016 This is a resource that combined the use of word and image to engage a congregation in different ways during an act of worship. The themes are not specifically related to set passages of scripture, but the material is inspired by the scriptures designated for the identified Sundays in the three-year Revised Common Lectionary.	Collection of reflections and litanies that are organised with respects to the liturgical year.
101	B Thorogood. *Old Grey Prayers*, 2016 A collection that reflected on the journey of old age.	Collection of prayers and poems organised thematically. A short section referencing the Psalms.
102	J Campbell. *Songs to Shake Us Up*, 2016 Collection of hymns written for a particular fellowship, setting and part of the interpretation of biblical text, making all the hymns intentionally specific, contextual, immediate and ephemeral. Not all, the author recognised, were suitable general acts of worship and so cautioned the reader to think about a hymn's appropriateness in the new context it might be sought to be used.	Collection of hymns, the majority of which reference scripture. Thematic index.
103	A Maudsley, D Campbell & Y Campbell. *Roots and Foundations*, 2016 Material designed for use in Pilot groups. Yet, contains the outline and resources for an all-age act of worship for Pilots Sunday.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme.
104	B Thorogood. *A Basket of Prayer,* 2017 A collection of prayers covering a range of situations and phase of worship. All prayers written so that they can be used responsively, although the author suggests a single voice can also read them. There is the encouragement to adapt the prayers to suit circumstances.	Collection of prayers ordered thematically. Section of prayers related to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
105	R White. *Feasts and Festivals*, 2017 Material designed for use in Pilot groups. Yet, contains the outline and resources for an all-age act of worship for Pilots Sunday.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme.
106	The United Reformed Church. *Feasts and Festivals*, 2017 A set of worship resources to encourage a year of celebration within the church. For each month of the year, ideas for a celebratory act of worship was provided linked either to the liturgical year or a significant anniversary, e.g. the 100th anniversary of Constance Coltman's ordination to ministry in the Congregational Church; 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses. All the material was published on the United Reformed Church website under a designated section (https://urc.org.uk/feasts-and-festivals.html).	Collection of ideas, prayers and content for act of worship celebrating specific themes. Worship ideas had a scriptural base. Some prayers were related to a liturgical pattern of worship.
107	A Kendall, J Kendall & H Kendall. *Pilgrimage*, 2018 Material designed for use in Pilot groups. Yet, contains the outline and resources for an all-age act of worship on the theme.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme. Used a liturgical pattern of worship.
108	The United Reformed Church, *Vocation Sunday*, 2018 Resources prepared by students from Northern College, Manchester, to enable the leading of all-age worship exploring vocations. Worship outlines for more informal acts of worship were part of the material made available, along with prayers, hymn suggestions and sermon notes. All the material was published on the United Reformed Church website under a designated section (https://urc.org.uk/vocation-sunday-2018.html)	Collection of ideas, prayers and content for act of worship celebrating specific theme. Worship ideas had a scriptural base. Some prayers were related to a liturgical pattern of worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
109	T Hinks. *Praying the Way with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,* 2018 This was a book that invited the reader to journey through the four gospels with prayer. Accompanying 40 segments of each gospel there was a prayer. Could be used on personal and corporate worship. As an appendix a pattern for prayer was included to be used in personal worship.	Collection of prayers related to scripture.
110	The United Reformed Church Children and Youth. *One Body*, 2019 A resource primarily aimed at those engaged in children and youth work. It covered a range of activities as well as providing material for use in worship. In worship it encouraged everyone to be involved, linking the practice of worship with the one body theme.	An order of service and resource for worship on the specific theme. Used a liturgical pattern of worship and referenced scripture.
111	The United Reformed Church, *Commitment for Life Sunday*, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Full outlines for acts of worship to mark Commitment for Life Sunday in local churches in 2018 through to 2020. Included with the structured plan for the service were sermon notes, all age activities, hymn suggestions and prayers. All the material was published on the United Reformed Church website under a designated section (https://urc.org.uk/commitment-for-life/worship-commitment-for-life.html).	Themed acts of worship which follow a liturgical pattern for worship. Scripture referenced linked to the theme rather than being basis of the worship.

	Resource and description	Analysis
112	The United Reformed Church. *Prayer Handbook*, 2020 *K Campbell & I Fosten, Prayers from the heart, 2020* Primarily contribution from members of the United Reformed Church, but also contributors from other denominations. Set of prayers related to the Sunday lectionary (all the Revised Common Lectionary). Included prayers Ash Wednesday and each day of Holy Week. Includes prayers that could be used responsively in corporate worship included. Some of the prayers are said to may need editing before use. Some of the prayers described to come from the personal relationship the contributors have with God. Published in a large-print version that is described as a 'lectern edition'.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year. Reference to scripture.
113	The United Reformed Church Children and Youth. *Common Ground*, 2020 A resource primarily aimed at those engaged in children and youth work. It covered a range of activities as well as providing material for use in worship on the theme Common Ground. Specifically, there were resources included to aid leading an act of all-age communion and act of worship held outdoors.	Resources for worship on the specific theme. Reference to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
114	The United Reformed Church. *Prayer Handbook*, 2021 *K Campbell & I Fosten, Conversations, 2021* Primarily contribution from members of the United Reformed Church but also contributors from other denominations. It was highlighted that a number of contributions came from young people (under the age of 25 years). The handbook had two sections. The first following the lectionary year offering a prayer for each Sunday linked to one or more of the lectionary readings and included a prayer for each day of Holy Week. The second section included prayers that arose from personal experiences of conversing with God in the everyday and in extraordinary situations. The editors compiled these prayers under themes such as 'Help!', 'Thank You' and 'Sorry!'. In the prayers linked to the lectionary there were responsive prayers included that could be used in corporate worship. As with the 2020 handbook, published in a large-print version that is described as a 'lectern edition'.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year and themes. Reference to scripture.
115	The United Reformed Church Children and Youth. *Heroes and Villains*, 2021 A resource primarily aimed at those engaged in children and youth work. It covered a range of activities as well as providing material for use in worship on the theme Heroes and Villains. Specifically, there were resources included to aid leading intergenerational worship, worship with specific age groups and organisations, and act of worship held outdoors.	Resources for worship on the specific theme. Reference to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
116	J Campbell, *Sunflowers and Thistles: Praise songs and Protests*, 2021 A collection of songs that were written during the covid-19 pandemic and in light other world events. They are songs that speak into the predicament of the church, set to tunes that should be well known. Although published in a printed format, a downloadable version of words and music was made available on the United Reformed Church website for free until April 2022 (https://urc.org.uk/sunflowers-and-thistles), with addition resources, such as recordings (audio and video) and powerpoints, to enable songs to be used in mixed media settings and the hybrid worship (in-person and online) which developed over the pandemic.	Collection of songs reflecting on specific theme. Some references to scripture.
117	The United Reformed Church. *Prayer Handbook*, 2022 *K Campbell & I Fosten, Jubilee: Freed to Live!, 2022* This edition of the Prayer Handbook celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Reformed Church. The current and past General Secretaries of the United Reformed Church were invited to contribute prayers, as well as there being a general call to the Church for contributions. As with previous prayer handbooks edited by Campbell and Fosten, the handbook is in two sections. The first following the lectionary year, being with the season of Epiphany, offering a prayer for each Sunday linked to one or more of the lectionary readings and included a prayer for each day of Holy Week. The second section included prayers and meditations celebrating the many and varied ways Christians are freed to live by God when met in Jesus and made known by the Holy Spirit.	Collection of prayers and other worship resources organised by the liturgical year and themes. Reference to scripture.

	Resource and description	Analysis
118	The United Reformed Church. *Daily Devotions* Online daily devotions written by members of the United Reformed Church. Based on scripture and included a short reflection and prayer. In 2020, this was extended to the provision of full acts of worship for Sundays in text and podcast formats. All material published and archived on a designated website (https://devotions.urc.org.uk).	Scripture referenced personal devotions. Often divided into themed series. Acts of worship follow the liturgical year with reference to specific feast days or occasions when an act of worship might be used to mark an event.
119	A Gobledale. *Worship Words* (https://worshipwords.co.uk) A website dedicated to networking writers and users of worship material. Sought to provide material that was inclusive, thoughtful, progressive, relevant, faithful and accessible. Contributors are from across the world and include a number of members of the United Reformed Church. There is specific set of services included on the website for use by Open Table communities within churches, created using a grant from the United Reformed Church.	Collection of liturgies, songs and prayers organised with respect to liturgical year and with reference to a liturgical pattern of worship. Some reference scripture.
120	P Nevard, N Thorogood, R Wilson, L Nevard, T Richards, R Whitehead, R Jennings, G England, A Gardner and H Wentink. *Talking Absolute Worship: Ideas for worship leaders* (https://www.talkingabsoluteworship.com) A website containing panel discussions on how the week's lectionary readings (from the Revised Common Lectionary) can inspire preaching and worship-leading. Includes ideas for different ways of engaging the congregation—question and answer sessions in worship, film clips for discussion starters, using music contemporary and religious, craft and other ways of starting discussion between people. Website contains both videos and podcasts of the discussions. Sponsored by the South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church.	Scripture-based. Resources for preaching. Resources for different ways of engaging the congregation in worship. Suggestions of music and hymns.

	Resource and description	Analysis
121	A Hodgson, A Gaunt, A Farley and T Burnham. *Worship for Christmas and New Year 4* A collect of resources for use over Christmas and New Year that included fully scripted liturgies that could altered to reflect local needs, dramas and sermons.	Resources for worship on a specific season. Reference to scripture.
122	J Rawnsley. *The Voices of Christmas.* A fully scripted act of worship for use at Christmas, although it was suggested that material contained could be used in other ways and contexts.	Full act of worship on specific theme.
123	M Newman. *Worship on the Theme of Unity, Preacher' Press Resources for the Christian Year* A sermon on the theme related to a scripture passage; two address that consider the theme in different ways; resources for informal worship or group discussion that reference scripture.	Collection of resources for the preaching element of worship. Some reference scripture.
124	D Hilton. *Christmas Services, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year* Liturgies for a Christmas Eve and a Christmas day service, plus additional prayer resources. The two services were fully scripted including the hymns and based around themes.	Full acts of worship and additional prayers on specific themes.
125	D Jenkins. *Good Friday and Easter Day Services, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year* Liturgies for Good Friday and Easter Day. The Good Friday service was fully scripted, whereas the Easter Day has space for expansion of where Holy Communion would take place. It did, however, include the sermon.	Full acts of worship on specific theme.
126	D Hilton. *Good Friday and Easter 2, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year* Liturgies for Good Friday and Easter Day, with additional prayers and sermon ideas. The Good Friday service had flexibility within it, whereas the Easter Day service was fully scripted.	Full acts of worship and additional prayers on specific themes.

	Resource and description	Analysis
127	J Humphreys. *Holy Week, Preacher's Press Resources for the Christian Year* Fully scripted acts of worship for during Holy Week, (Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday). The only point a suggestion was made was for the act of Holy Communion; no liturgy given but suggested that a short liturgy should be chosen.	Full acts of worship on specific theme. Reference to scripture.
128	*John Paul the Preacher's Press, For All the Saints A: Sermons for Holy Communion Festivals from January to May* Included sermons relating to saints of the New Testament by Edgar Jones, John Humphreys, David Jenkins, Bernard Thorogood, Robert Way, and Tony Burnham.	Sermons based on scripture.
129	*John Paul the Preacher's Press, For All the Saints B: Sermons for Holy Communion Festivals from June to September* Included sermons relating to saints of the New Testament by Kenneth Slack, Hazel Addy, Stanley Russell, and David Jenkins.	Sermons based on scripture.
130	*John Paul the Preacher's Press, For All the Saints C: Sermons for Holy Communion Festivals from September to December* Included sermons relating to saints of the New Testament by John Marsh, Roy Chapman, and Stephen Thornton.	Sermons based on scripture.
131	D Jenkins (editor). *In the Morning 1, John Paul the Preacher's Press* Resources for creating imaginative acts of worship that might engage all ages. For 15 different themes, suggestions of hymns, prayers, readings and story/activity were given.	Collection of resources for acts of worship on specific themes.

	Resource and description	Analysis
132	S Thornton and D Jenkins (editor). *In the Morning 2, John Paul the Preacher's Press* Resources for creating imaginative acts of worship that might engage all ages. For 15 different themes, suggestions of hymns, prayers, readings and story/activity were given.	Collection of resources for acts of worship on specific themes.
133	*John Paul the Preacher's Press, Words for Special Occasions* Collection of Prayers and sermons on specific celebrations during the year. Contributors included members of the United Reformed Church.	Collection of prayers and sermons on specific themes. Prayers relate to a liturgical pattern of worship.

Notes:

- This cannot be claimed as an exhaustive list of worship publications by the United Reformed Church or members of the church:
    - There are possibly other worship resources published for use by Pilots that has not been included as there is no archive of material published before it started to be held electronically.
    - There may have been other publications through John Paul the Preacher's Press that I have not found and as the publishing company no longer exists, I cannot identify their publications other than in the ways I have already done so.

- During the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-21) many congregations in the United Reformed Church provided worship in a digital or paper format. From local contacts within churches, United Reformed Church Communications collated a list on the United Reformed Church website, grouped by Synod, of what churches were offering and how it could be accessed.[791]

[791] The United Reformed Church, 2021.

APPENDIX II. WORSHIP AND SERVICE BOOKS WRITTEN FOR USE IN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
The Congregational Service Book	1847	Unknown	An order designed to enhance morning and evening prayers with psalms and ancient hymns. It is written as a directory with only the words of the appropriate psalms and hymns at respective points given. The compiler emphasises that this order is not suppress 'free prayer', which is acknowledged as being the 'more scriptural and ancient mode of worship.'[792]
A Biblical Liturgy	1855 (12th ed. 1881)	Individual (Revd David Thomas)	A set of thematic services based entirely on scripture. They are written to aid worship and not intended to supersede extemporary prayer.
Free Church Service Book	1866	Individual (Revd C Newman Hall)	Five services adapted from the Book of Common Prayer with supplementary collects and anthems. It was encouraged that each service could be adapted to suit the congregation. Intended to supplement extemporaneous prayer.

[792] From the 'Preface' of *The Congregational Service Book*, 1847.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
A Form of Morning and Evening Service for Use of Free Churches	1869	Cheetham Hill Congregational Church, Manchester	Liturgies for morning and evening services based on the *Book of Common Prayer.* Included are a selection of collects and psalms. Extemporary prayer is assigned a specific place in each service. The *Preface* suggests that these liturgies were to be used in their entirety.
Devotional Services for Public Worship	1886 (8th ed. 1903)	Individual (Revd John Hunter)	A collection of liturgies that developed over times. As well as a general order of service, it offers full liturgies for morning and evening worship, litanies and prayers of intercession for occasional use, liturgies for ordinances and offices of the church, and a selection of collects and prayers for special occasions and times in the liturgical year. None of the forms of worship in the book were designed to be inflexible, rather enhance corporate worship.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
Intercessory Services for Aid in Public Worship	1896	Individual (Written by P T Forsyth, their publication was requested by an un-named Manchester Congregationalist)[793]	A collection of intercessory prayers that were not intended to replace extemporaneous prayer but improved the prayers of the church. The prayers were not written to be used verbatim, rather as an aid. Responses, that could be sung or chanted, are included to demonstrate that the church should share in public prayer.
The Free Church Prayer Book	1897	Individual (Revd James Mountain)	Revised book of services based on the version of the *Book of Common Prayer* used by the Countess of Huntingdon. As well as liturgies for morning and evening prayers, it offers liturgies marriages, baptisms and burials. It offers discretion to the minister and gives liberty to the use of extemporaneous prayer.
Let us Pray	1897 (2nd ed.)	Individuals (C. S. Horne and T. H. Darlow)	A collection of prayers for use by free churches. The prayers are grouped under the headings: 'Opening prayers', 'Intercessions' and 'Collects'. Included are an 'Order of Service' and an 'Order of Morning Service'.

[793] Forsyth, 1896, p.4.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
Divine Service	1919 (2nd ed. 1926)	Individual (Revd Dr W E Orchard)[794]	A collection of services for morning and evening, and special services and litanies for offices of the church and times throughout the liturgical year. Included are prayers for specific situations. Although the liturgies were written with the purpose of encouraging the devotion of the whole congregation, space is set aside in the liturgies for silent and extemporaneous prayer.
Book of Congregational Worship	1920	Congregational Union of England and Wales	Orders of service and liturgies for public worship and special occasions, including additional prayers and collects. A place is given in each order for extemporaneous prayer. The book was issued for optional use by Congregational churches.
Intercession Services for Congregational Use in Public Worship	1923	Individual (G H Russell)	Thematic intercessions for use with worship encouraging vocal participation of congregation. They are not intended to supplant extemporaneous prayer, rather enhance the fellowship of the congregation as they worship.

[794] The Revd W E Orchard was trained as a Presbyterian Minister, however, at the time of writing the *Divine Service*, he was serving as the minister to the historic King's Weigh House, a Congregational Church in central London.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
Ten Orders of Worship from the Book of Congregational Worship with Music	1930	Henry Walford Davies (music selected and composed by)	This book takes the ten orders of worship from the Book of Congregational Worship and adds 'simple' musical versions of parts of prayers ad responses. There are some additional prayers at the end to be used by the whole congregation.
The Rodborough Bede Book	1930 (Revised ed. 1971)	Rodborough Tabernacle	A collection of short responsive offices that can be used alongside other items in worship. It offers responses for throughout the liturgical year, special occasions and general offices found within worship. The content is not intended to substitute extemporaneous prayer, rather expand the resources available to ministers. The revised edition connected responses with a liturgically ordered pattern of worship.
A Manual for Ministers	1936	Congregational Union of England and Wales	A book to support ministers in preparing worship, offering a collection of devotional material to enhance weekly worship and guide worship on special occasions.
The Church meets for Worship	1943	Derby Street Congregational Church, Bolton	A collection of services. Each service is designed to be followed in its entirety.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
A Book of Public Worship compiled for the use of Congregationalists	1948 (2nd ed. 1949)	Individuals (J. Huxtable, J. Marsh, R. Micklem and J. Todd)	A collection of services for public worship include special occasions and additional material. Although it contains full liturgies, the compilers perceived the book as a directory, therefore, to be a reference for ordering worship and not as something to be only used verbatim.
Prayers and Services for Christian Festivals	1951 (2nd ed. 1959)	Individual (J M Todd)	A companion to *A Book of Public Worship* offering scripture sentences and prayers, liturgies for Holy Communion and special forms of worship, all for specific times in the liturgical year. As with *A Book of Public Worship,* it is intend to help ministers and lay preachers in their preparation, offering examples that could be built upon.
Prayers for Public Worship	1957	Kingston Congregational Church	A collection of litanies to be used completely or in part within acts of worship. They encourage vocal response in the congregation.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
A Book of Services and Prayers	1959 (Revised ed. 1969)	Congregational Union of England and Wales	A collection of services and prayers for public worship including special occasions. It was intended to 'provide ministers and lay preachers with guidance in the ordering and conduct of worship'[795] and give resources for throughout the liturgical year.
Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship	1967	Individuals in response to recommendations of the Nottingham Faith and Order Conference (1964) (A Coates, J Gregory, C Micklem, W Sewwell, D Stapleton, R Tomes and B Wren)	A collection of prayers that relate to aspects of liturgical order and times in liturgical year. Orders for the sacraments and ordinances of the church are included. The prayers are designed to encourage the minister/worship leader in their preparation, not to be a substitute for conceived prayers. Some of the prayers and liturgy include congregational responses.

[795] Robinson, et al., 1969, p.xi.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
More Contemporary Prayers	1970	Individuals (A Coates, J Gregory, C Micklem, D Stapleton and R Tomes	A collection of prayers that follows on from *Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*. Prayers are sorted by theme. Under each theme the prayers are grouped by adoration and confession, and intercession. There are no responsive prayers in the collection as the authors felt this type of prayer only make 'a small contribution to the participation of the congregation in prayer.'[796]
An Order of Public Worship	1970	The Congregational Church of England and Wales	A single order of worship giving the general shape for public worship with optional prayers and responses.

[796] Coates, et al., 1970, p.viii.

APPENDIX III. WORSHIP AND SERVICE BOOKS WRITTEN FOR USE IN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
The Directory for the Public Worship of God	1889	Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England	Identified as a revision to the Directory of Worship prepared by the Westminster Divines in the 17th century. What was published went beyond the limits of what might be understood as revision but was essentially a directory and not a liturgy. Set word were given, with reasoning, for the sacraments but otherwise only direction on what should be included at specific points. This publication was a draft for circulation around the Synod. It contained an order of service and gave addition material for the Lord's Supper, services of Baptism, Marriage and Burial.
The Directory for the Public Worship of God	1892	Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England	The second draft edition of the revision to the Westminster Directory of Worship. This version included services for the ordination and induction of minister, elders and deacons, a service for the admission to full communion, a service for the dedication of a church and the articles of faith.
The Directory for the Public Worship of God	1894	Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England	The third draft edition of the revision to the Westminster Directory of Worship. Contained the same services as detailed in the 1892 version but did not include the articles of faith.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
The Directory for the Public Worship of God	1898	Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England	The first full publication of the revision to the Westminster Directory of Worship. Along with the order for public worship, administration of the sacraments and the forms of service for occasions mentioned in the overviews of the draft editions, there was a chapter on the 'preaching of the word' and three appendices: a table of the order of service in public worship; 24 articles of faith; and a lectionary.
Order of Public Worship and Prayers for Various Occasions: from the Revised Westminster Directory of Public Worship and the Book of Common Prayer	1909	St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Redhill and Reigate	A collection of prayers to be used within public worship and liturgies for use in the sacraments, admission to full communion, marriage and funerals. There are no responsive prayers and the book appears to be only for the use of the minister.
The Directory for the Public Worship of God	1921 (pocket ed. 1923)	Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England	This revision to the 1898 Directory, although published with the intention that it be a directory not a liturgy, contains more prayers and litanies for use in public worship and at specific times of the year. Very little change in the services provided for in this Directory compared to 1898. Addition of 'licensing of probationers' and 'setting apart the diaconate as managers'. There is no chapter on preaching or the articles of faith.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
Sacramental and Other Services (including Children's Litanies)	1927	Individual (Revd Eric W Philip)	A collection of alternative prayers and litanies for use in the sacraments, at the admission of new communicants and at weddings and funerals. There is also a section of prayers and litanies that encourage the vocal participation of children in worship. This book was not compiled for use in a particular congregation. The author stated it came out of profiting themselves from exploring 'collections of prayers and suggested forms of services issued by others.' The hope of this book was to give help and suggestion.[797] The Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion make reference to it as a resource when reviewing the process of rewriting the 1948 edition of the *Presbyterian Service Book*.[798]

[797] Philip, 1948, Preface.
[798] Minutes for the meeting held on 17 July 1957 of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, Presbyterian Church of England.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
The Presbyterian Service Book	1948	General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales	This was a new service book compiled to replace the 'Directory of Public Worship' in the Presbyterian Church of England and meet the need felt in the Presbyterian Church of Wales for such a book. It attempted to hold what was valued in each of the churches in regard to their worshipping traditions, whilst incorporating some of the 'liturgical traditions of the Church Catholic and Reformed.'[799] The book included liturgies for morning services, the sacraments and ordinances of the church, services relating to the ordination, induction or commission of officers in the particular churches, services for special occasions, and services of dedication. There are also prayers for the Christian year. Congregational response as part of the liturgy was included in the first order and as part of the liturgies for Holy Communion.

[799] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1948, p.1.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
The Presbyterian Service Book	1968	General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales	A complete revision of the 1948 service book. As well as providing model services for morning worship, this edition includes two evening services. As in the 1948 service book, orders are given for the sacraments and ordinances of the church, and for specific ordinations, inductions and commissioning of officers or other roles in the Presbyterian churches in England and Wales. This edition does not include the same 'services for special occasions' as the 1948 edition and recategorizes the 'services of dedication' as these. There is also a collection of intercessory prayers, 'ascriptions to glory' and benedictions. The use of language in worship is considered and the editors aimed to use everyday speech. The general order of worship was was reflected in the first order of morning service. In this order the attempt was made to stress that worship was based on the 'Word of God, of which the Minister is the servant'.[800] These meant that the sermon came after the reading of scripture and not at the end of the order as is found in the orders in the 1948 edition. Congregational response was encouraged in some of the prayers, mainly intercessory prayers.

[800] The Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales, 1968, p.iv.

Title	***Year***	***Commissioned by***	***Brief overview***
Service Book	Unknown	St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Enfield	Six orders of service for morning worship, an order for Holy Communion and collections of psalms and hymns. The intention of them looks to be that they were used as written and copies of the service book were in the hands of the congregation as well as the minister. Included are responses to be made by the congregation.