

Reader's reactions

William D Maxwell

Concerning Worship

Oxford University Press

ASIN: B0007J5P4K

W D Maxwell was Minister of Whitekirk in the Presbytery of Haddington and Dunbar until 1956 when he was invited to become Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Fort Hare University, South Africa. Maxwell published a number of books including this excellent work on the conduct of public worship.

Concerning Worship is a small, short book (153 pages) with 20 brief chapters. These include: *The Structure of the Eucharist*, *The Sunday Morning Service in the Reformed Church*, *Modern Reformed Worship*, *The Conduct of Worship* and *The Place of the Sermon*. While some of the comments made by Maxwell are dated, the reader is offered a very clear exposition of the nature of public worship and how it ought to be conducted. If a Minister is to depart from the inherited tradition of our Church, it is important that the Minister understands the tradition in the first place and can offer reasons for his/her departure.



Maxwell's book is not at all theoretical and abstract. It is a practical guide to conducting worship in which the author identifies common mistakes and temptations to be avoided. For example, following a reading of Scripture, it is theologically wrong to say, 'The Lord *add* His blessing to the reading of the Word.' Rightly, Maxwell states, 'The blessing is in the Word.'

Maxwell deals with each item of worship that may be included in a typical Sunday Service. He explains the function of each item – which is extremely helpful – including differentiating between General Prayers, a Collect, Bidding Prayers, a Litany and extemporary prayer. He illustrates good practice for the Minister in how to conduct the Sacrament of Holy Communion. There is also a very informative chapter on the church building, in which Maxwell explores the purpose of the building and aspects within in; for example, the sanctuary, the Holy Table, the Nave and the Choir.

Throughout this work, we gain a true sense of the importance and dignity of public worship, its worth as a vehicle of grace, and the skills and discernment necessary to conduct public worship. Maxwell has his prejudices but I know of no better work which has come from within the Church of Scotland offering a history and practical guide to the conduct of public worship. Maxwell has a thorough understanding of his subject.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.



Additional Resources

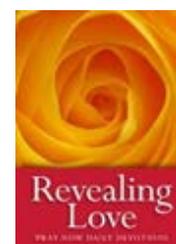
Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Revealing Love](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#).



Starters for Sunday



[Starters for Sunday](#) offer a range of suggested material which can be used each week for individuals and congregations to develop. All of the material is written by people who are experienced in leading worship regularly though not all are ordained.

Music Resources

For some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music resource [Different Voices](#).



Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

