

THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1865 at a time when many ministers and members were dissatisfied with the generally bare, verbose and unordered worship of the Kirk. It was the brainchild of three young ministers, George Campbell, J. Cameron Lees and R. Herbert Story but very rapidly it attracted a large membership from parish ministers to college principals.

The stated object of the Society was "the study of the liturgies - ancient and modern - of the Christian Church, with a view to the preparation and publication of forms of prayer for Public Worship and services for the administration of the Sacraments, the celebration of marriage, the burial of the dead etc."

In 1867 the Society published "Euchologion", the first service book since Knox's "Book of Common Order". It had an immense circulation running to nine editions. This marked the beginning of liturgical renewal in the Church of Scotland and the Society's work paved the way for official General Assembly committees and the present Books of Common Order. As a voluntary body the Society continues to have an important role, complementing the official one of the Panel on Worship.

The Church Service Society is not, and was never intended to be, a party. But it may and should be a pressure group as well as being a fellowship offering mutual support. Today's members have various liturgical and theological emphases but can be taken to be united in the common conviction that the Church's worship is of fundamental importance and that, true to our Reformed and Catholic heritage, freedom and the best common order are complementary premises.

The Society's activities include regular conferences and, each second year, a Centenary Lecture when a liturgical scholar of international repute is appointed.

"The Church Service Society Record" is mailed to members three times per year. The magazine contains scholarly articles, book reviews and, increasingly, material often submitted by members themselves of immediate relevance to the local parish and its worship.

C R W