



Recent sacramental developments in the Kirk

Mark MacLeod

One question that has vexed theologians greatly in recent decades pertains to whether or not children should be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion or the Eucharist.¹ Some denominations have recently legislated for change, like the Church of England did in 2006.² For Anglican congregations to adopt change by admitting unconfirmed children to the Eucharist, they must satisfy particular conditions. Before giving permission for a parish to admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation, the Bishop must be satisfied that there has been extensive and substantial discussion in the parish about the issue, and that there is agreement within the Parish Church Council for such a change to take place and children to be admitted must take part in a suitable preparation course. This should form part of a continuing programme for the education and nurture of children and their families from baptism, through the welcoming of children to Holy Communion and on to Confirmation and beyond. "The Rite for Admission of Children to Holy Communion Before Confirmation" is prescribed, and includes several questions to be put to the child to be admitted, whereby she expresses her desire to be admitted, to follow Jesus and to grow in the Christian faith and ultimately be confirmed by the Bishop. This rite also includes a commitment on the part of the congregation to 'support and nurture these children in their journey of faith'.³ The age limit is eight years old, and once a child has been admitted in one congregation, she has the right to participate in any other congregation, whether or not that particular congregation has secured permission to generally admit children from the Diocesan Bishop.⁴

This study, however, is primarily concerned with the procedure of the Church of Scotland in relation to the admission of children to

the Eucharist before they make a public profession of faith, though this may sometimes seem rather untidy in practice. Some historical texts will be referred to, especially in relation to Reformation and post-Reformation practice in Scotland, including a case study of an eighteenth-century minister, John Willison. However, the key source for this discussion will be legislation from the General Assembly of the Kirk and transcripts of the discussions which led to the formation thereof, both of which the author collected over several visits to the central offices of the Church of Scotland in George Street, Edinburgh.⁵

The discussion will, first, consider the current legislation on paedocommunion in the Church of Scotland. Secondly, the theological background of the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments will be considered, with particular reference to the understandings of Knox, Calvin, and the sacramentology of Reformed confessions. Thirdly, before discussing the contemporary debate, a case study of John Willison, an eighteenth-century Reformed minister and theologian who responded to the question of paedocommunion, will be considered. Fourthly, the context of the debate of the 1980s and 1990s in the Kirk will be set out, looking especially at the milestone report on baptism of 1958, and the subsequent discussions of paedocommunion in the General Assembly. Fifthly, the influence of the sacramentology of Karl Barth will be considered in relation to that of the Church of Scotland since legislation was altered in 2000. Points of convergence and divergence will be indicated, and considered further in light of the practice and doctrine of the Kirk. Some conclusions will then be laid out.



The Church of Scotland's current legislation on paedocommunion

In the important tradition of *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, the sacramental theology of the Church of Scotland has been subject to change and revision over many years. Acts of the General Assembly related to the Kirk's sacramentology have been passed in the five most recent decades, in 1956, 1963, 1975, 1985, 1992, and 2000,⁶ demonstrating that the spiritual leaders of the denomination perceive a need for her understanding of the sacraments to be constantly subject to revision and scrutiny. This paper is primarily concerned

with the legislation that was passed in 1992, when the Kirk took the monumental step towards permitting the admittance of children to the Lord's Supper. This permission showed a marked departure from the decision reached a decade earlier, when similar legislation failed to garner the support of a majority of Presbyteries when passed under the Barrier Act. During that decade, not only were Kirk elders revising their understanding of children and childhood, but the United Nations attested and adopted their Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989–90, which enshrined in law 'the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion'.⁷

The language of children's 'rights' was not new to leaders of the Church of Scotland, since that same year (1990) there was a move towards reintroducing an old wording from 1933 into church law, by speaking of the 'right' of an infant to baptism.⁸ This was undoubtedly a reaction to the austerity of the 1963 *Act anent the Administration of Baptism to Infants*, which legislated strict conditions that had to be met for a child to be baptised, including a thorough examination by the Kirk Session of how qualified the parent(s) were to undertake the Christian upbringing of the child presented for baptism.⁹ The legacy of the 1963 legislation was discontent in the Kirk over such strict policing of the sacrament of initiation. Twenty years later, the Panel on Doctrine, in a report on baptism, admitted that in the Church of Scotland at large there was 'dissent in its midst, surfacing intermittently in special cases'.¹⁰ This watershed report also recognised the diversity of practice in the Kirk in terms of ecclesiastical discipline, and sought to strike a balance between guarding baptism and the free and unconditional love of God symbolised therein. The importance of this report for the subsequent doctrine of the Kirk cannot be understated. In addition, its timing was significant for other reasons.

During the previous year (1982), the World Council of Churches published the monumental ecumenical text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, wherein paedobaptists were counselled both to 'guard themselves against the practice of apparently indiscriminate baptism and take more seriously their responsibility for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ'.¹¹

It may seem peculiar that so much time and space was being spent on the sacrament of baptism in a discussion devoted to admission to the

other sacrament, that of the Lord's Supper. It is, therefore, important to state that, at least in the law of the Kirk, the two are inseparable, and one cannot participate in the second sacrament (the Eucharist) without having been initiated in the first (baptism). The conditions for admission to the Lord's Table are baptism, love for the Lord, and a response in faith to the invitation, 'Take, eat'.¹² The vital doctrine that underlies the necessity of baptism before admission to the table of the Lord is the conviction that the Body of Christ is made up of those who have been initiated into it in baptism, and it is improper for those who are not members of His body to partake of His body in His holy Supper.¹³ This has been the Christian tradition since at least the time of Justin Martyr, and 'The norm is quite properly admission to the Body before receiving the Body.'¹⁴

The 1983 report on baptism was strongly opposed to the idea that some alternative to paedobaptism, such as infant dedication, should be introduced in the Church of Scotland. It stated, 'For the Church to invent something of the sort [...] could only result in increased theological confusion.' Not only would it tend to cause confusion, but also 'Anything which might tend to [...] promote an apparent alternative to, a watered-down version of, or a half-way house towards baptism,' the report declared, 'is a disservice to Christ and to his message.'¹⁵

Twenty years later, the Kirk changed her mind and, at the General Assembly of 2003, the Panel on Doctrine's report on baptism¹⁶ claimed that it was necessary to have a ceremony wherein parents who were not members of the church could celebrate the gift of a child, whether by adoption or birth. The report recognised the growing contemporary trend that parents often wanted to leave the decision concerning baptism to their child in later years. The report also acknowledged that these same parents might want a rite of reception for their child to be received into the family of the Church.¹⁷

Notwithstanding, the law, which limits those who may participate in the Lord's Supper to the baptised, remains unchanged. Therefore unbaptised children (be they dedicated, blessed or given thanks for) are not eligible to partake of the Lord's Supper.

A key issue at stake in all of the discussions about the sacraments is how an individual's response in faith may be measured. Whilst

legislation states that ‘a Kirk Session is obliged to test the response in faith of a baptised person before authorising admission to the Lord’s Table’,¹⁸ it never clearly defines how that response may be tested or measured. There was an important exception made to this in the mid-eighties, whereby the General Assembly stated that welcoming ‘mentally handicapped adults’ [*sic*] not only into the fellowship of the Lord’s Table, but to ‘the full rights, privileges and responsibilities of Church membership’ was ‘quite unambiguously [...] both possible and desirable.’¹⁹ The other exception, the primary concern of this paper, was of a similar nature, allowing individual Kirk Sessions to admit baptised children to Holy Communion, but only ‘after pastorally overseeing the response of faith of such children to see when it is right for them to come to the Lord’s Table.’ This was to take place before their profession of faith and apart from the rights, privileges and responsibilities of church membership.²⁰



The theological background of Reformed sacramentology: Knox, Calvin and Reformed confessions on paedocommunion

But we hold that the Supper of the Lord is only for those who are of the household of faith and can try and examine themselves both in their faith and their duty to their neighbours. Those who eat and drink at that holy table without faith, or without peace and goodwill to their brethren, eat unworthily. This is the reason why ministers in our Kirk make public and individual examination of those who are to be admitted to the table of the Lord Jesus.²¹

With these words, John Knox specified who the proper recipients of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper are. They are those, he says, who examine themselves as to their faith and their responsibility to others. Not only are they subject to their own scrutiny, but also to the scrutiny of the minister of the Kirk, the prospect of which sounds quite daunting. One wonders why ministers are specifically mentioned, but not the other elders of the Kirk, since it seems apparent that the Kirk Session are responsible for testing and measuring the response of faith in an individual. Maybe this is a nod to the sacerdotalism to which

Knox had become accustomed in the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Knox did not specifically address paedocommunion, he did clearly state that the Lord's Supper is only intended for those who have faith and have examined themselves in relation to it. Whilst he did not elaborate on this to clearly state that children ought not to be admitted to the Lord's Table, his close comrade John Calvin did have something to say on this topic. Calvin posits, 'In the early Church, indeed, the Lord's Supper was frequently given to infants [...] but the practice justly became obsolete.'²² It seems unlikely that Knox and Calvin would be at odds with one another on this point, especially given their desire to return to the scriptural mandate laid down by St Paul, that those who ought to participate in the Lord's Supper are of an age and sensibility to examine themselves before approaching the Table of the Lord. 'Let a person examine himself, then,' the Apostle writes, 'and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.'²³

Calvin, in expounding this text, further elaborates the exact required conditions before one comes to the Lord's Table as: fitness to discern the Lord's body and blood; testing one's own conscience; demonstrating the death of Christ and understanding well its power. 'Examination, therefore, must precede, and this it were vain to expect from infants', he contends, further arguing that giving the elements to unworthy and undiscerning infants is poisonous to them.²⁴ Furthermore, in correspondence to persecuted Reformed communities, including that of Scotland, Calvin counselled caution in rushing to celebrate the Eucharist in a Protestant manner, not because of its lack of importance, but rather because of the risk of people participating unworthily.²⁵ This conviction was firmly based on St Paul's warning that 'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.'²⁶

Likewise, in Luther's Small Catechism, in answer to Question 305, which concerns those who *must not* participate in the Lord's Supper, the fourth and final answer is, 'Those who are unable to examine themselves, such as infants, people who have not received proper instruction, or the unconscious.'²⁷ The Lutheran argument, then, is that infants are unable to examine themselves, so their participation in the Eucharist would be deemed unworthy.

In common with the Scots Confession, the Westminster Confession, which is the subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland, does not specifically mention the issue of admitting children to the Lord's Table, although it does speak at length about the characteristics of 'worthy receivers'.²⁸ The Larger Catechism (contained in the same volume as the Westminster Confession) asks, as Calvin does in the *Institutes*, at what points the two sacraments differ from one another. The answer given is that baptism may be administered 'even to infants', whereas the Lord's Supper should be administered 'only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves'.²⁹

The Church of Scotland of the seventeenth century made the same requirements of first communicants as she did of all adult members: 'an adequate knowledge of the Christian faith and the doctrine of the Sacraments, and an ability to examine themselves and to renew the covenant of their baptism.'³⁰ Notwithstanding these prerequisites for admission to the Lord's Supper, some first communicants were as young as eleven, twelve or fourteen years old.³¹ By the eighteenth century, although children did not generally become communicants until they were over twelve years of age, the parameter of age range was fairly fluid, and 'the communion season acted as a ritual of confirmation that attested to the spiritual maturation of the children'.³²



Examination as Confirmation in Reformed churches

Examination of this kind seems to have been a key feature of early Reformed churches. Minister and elders examined the worthiness of recipients, and the Scottish Kirk undoubtedly inherited (at least in part from Knox) an high, reverent esteem of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.³³ It is unsurprising, then, that steps were taken in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to discourage children from Eucharistic participation, as they were generally considered to be 'unworthy'. The Church of England essentially prohibited the participation of children in the Eucharist by requiring a preceding knowledge of the catechism (as of 1552) and Episcopal Confirmation (as of 1549) for admission to the Lord's Table. Puritans were not so keen on the rite of Confirmation *per se*, but required a personal

public profession of faith from any (including children) who sought admission to Holy Communion.³⁴

In early modern Scotland, going to one's first Communion was seen as an important rite of passage from childhood into adulthood. The average age for this was fifteen or sixteen years old, although there were a few exceptions. Four years of catechetical preparation preceded admission to the Lord's Table, and a catechetical examination or performance that received the approbation of the congregation served as a non-episcopal rite of Confirmation. It was at this point that a young person would be rewarded with a Communion token from the minister, a symbolic action signifying their passage from childhood to adulthood, further demonstrated by their subsequently joining their elders at the Lord's Table.³⁵

It is worth noting that, although some attempted to reclaim and reconstruct it, there was in fact no agreement amongst the European Reformers about the rite of Confirmation. However, one point upon which all of the Reformers were agreed was the importance of catechetical instruction. They sought to establish a form of doctrine that would be understood and affirmed by every baptised Christian, so any Confirmation rite was firmly linked to catechesis. Such catechesis was deemed the criterion by which someone could be admitted to the Lord's Supper. Only Bucer clearly distinguished between the education of the catechumen and the personal pledge and profession of faith related to the endorsement of the covenant of baptism given in Confirmation. His theology influenced both Cranmer and Melancthon, subsequently underpinning the understanding of Confirmation in Anglican and Lutheran churches. Whilst the Reformers initially sought to reform the Mass, their attention later turned to baptism because of the challenges that the Anabaptists presented to their paedobaptistic doctrine and practice. Baptism came to be viewed not only as the Sacrament of initiation, but also the Sacrament of education. Catechetical instruction gave the Reformers room to defend their practice of paedobaptism, whilst also concurrently emphasising the importance of a personal profession of faith.³⁶



A case study: John Willison

One minister of the Kirk in the early eighteenth century who was particularly exercised about catechetical instruction was John Willison. He took a rather dim view of Confirmation. In a volume describing him as ‘a Lover of the Church of Scotland’, he articulately, though intolerantly, described the rite as ‘one of the Papists’ bastard Sacraments’.³⁷ Willison criticised the church for the way that knowledge of the Catechism was reckoned ample preparation for admission to the Lord’s Supper, since a young child could easily recite the Catechism without understanding the import of its meaning. A merely intellectual knowledge, he contended, was not necessarily a sign of divine life, nor did it guarantee the catechumen’s spiritual regeneration or sanctification.³⁸

On the other hand, Willison, whilst a minister in Dundee, also condemned the stringent requirements that Independent churches demanded for individuals to be admitted to ecclesiastical membership and the Lord’s Table. He believed that their demand for certain signs of conversion and spiritual experience undermined God’s right to judge the hearts of those who numbered themselves with His covenanted people. Indeed, Willison argues, there are those who adhere to the truth of the Gospel, but lack the assurance of faith, and they should not be excluded from the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper.³⁹

Although Willison did not designate those to whom this treatise on Independent churches was specifically addressed, it evoked a furious response from John Glas, who had left the Kirk in Tealing to found a new congregation with some of his parishioners, based on what they reckoned was a more spiritual, New Testament, pattern.⁴⁰ Robert Wodrow, who was the son of a professor of Divinity and himself a parish minister in Glasgow, had very particular opinions on Glas’ innovations.⁴¹ He characterised the kiss of charity, using the Lord’s Prayer and saying Amen, as ‘surprising novelties’.⁴² In the same breath, Wodrow expresses surprise that an innovator such as Glas had not reintroduced a practice for which there was an abundance of evidence in early church history, ‘that is, the giving [of] the Eucharist to infants’.⁴³ Here is a direct reference to paedocommunion, and it sounds as if Wodrow, a Scot, had reached the same conclusion as the

Genevan Reformer John Calvin, that the practice of admitting infants to the Eucharist had become justifiably obsolete.⁴⁴ It is clear, then, that in the post-Reformation era, children were not participating in the Lord's Supper without first undergoing rigorous catechesis and making a personal public profession of faith, accompanied by a rite of passage in some ways equivalent to Confirmation. Willison's sacramentology was thoroughly covenantal, in keeping with that rich Reformed tradition, and he demonstrated this in his multifarious catechetical publications.⁴⁵ The language Willison employed in explaining the Lord's Supper is reminiscent of Calvin.

John Calvin: But as this mystery of the secret union of Christ with believers is incomprehensible by nature, he exhibits its figure and image in visible signs adapted to our capacity, nay, by giving, as it were, earnest and badges, he makes it as certain to us as if it were seen by the eye; the familiarity of the similitude giving it access to minds however dull, and showing that souls are fed by Christ just as the corporeal life is sustained by bread and wine.⁴⁶

John Willison: Q. *Why hath God adjoined sacraments to the word?*
A. [...] That they might serve to awaken the affections and excite grace. Sacraments are, as it were, a visible gospel, the offers of free love, and benefits of Christ's purchase, are thereby exposed to the eye, as the word doth sound them in the ear. God knows our stupidity and dullness, that we are much more affected with things that we see with our eyes, than that which we only hear.⁴⁷

Willison, however, had more to say than Calvin did on the subject of paedocommunion. In his *Sacramental Catechism*, after having established the case for covenantal paedobaptism, Willison poses the question, 'Ought not infants according to this argument, to be admitted to the Lord's Supper also?' His answer was unequivocal,

‘The infants of believers have indeed upon the same account a remote right to this seal likewise; though for the present they are incapable to receive it, as wanting [i.e. lacking] the actual exercise of reason, which is absolutely necessary in order to our examining ourselves, and discerning the Lord’s body; these being the indispensable duties of all such as partake of the Lord’s supper, I Cor. xi. 28, 29.’⁴⁸ Later, he further elucidated that, under the Old Covenant, Jewish infants partook of the initiatory sacrament of circumcision as a right (which was later superseded by baptism). This may have set an historical precedent for the use of the language of rights in relation to the sacrament of Holy Baptism. According to Willison, children of the Old Covenant were subsequently denied the sacrament of the Passover because they lacked ‘the actual exercise of reason’ which he contended was necessary for the commemoration of the benefit of Passover. He cited Exodus 12:26 in support of this, that no child would be allowed to partake of the Lord’s Passover until she was of an age and sensibility to ask the meaning of the rite.⁴⁹ One of the consequent weaknesses of this position is that it may not admit individuals with learning difficulties to the Lord’s Supper or church membership, which the Kirk legislated for in 1985 (as stated above).

The aforementioned historical data gathered from Knox, Calvin and the Reformed confessions, as well as this case study of John Willison renders the claim of the Kirk’s Board of Education 1991 report that ‘In Post-Reformation Scotland the Lord’s Supper was open to children’ as preposterous.⁵⁰ Little wonder then that David Wright stated that, ‘at the very least that [this assertion] cuts a lot of very sharp corners’.⁵¹ He deemed the ecclesiastical history and theology contained in the report to be dubious and subjective. Wright, however, urged the General Assembly to support the proposals and participated in further editing the text as it now stands in Church Law.⁵² Whatever the case, it seems very unlikely that the Church of Scotland could substantiate any statement of an historical precedent for her current practice.



Sacramental developments in the Kirk: the 1980s and 1990s

Having considered the historical theological discussion of paedocommunion in the context of the Reformed faith, with reference to the Church of Scotland in particular, it is now important to take a step into the twentieth century to examine the articulated position, and subsequent changes to, the Kirk's position on this topic. In 1958, under the convenership of T. F. Torrance, a Special Commission on Baptism of the Church of Scotland published a landmark volume, entitled *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*. Appealing to Calvin's language of 'divine accommodation', which was previously considered in comparison with Willison's sacramentology, the work differentiated between how God accommodates Himself to an 'infant' or a 'mature adult'.⁵³ It reckoned that the life of an infant who grows up within the Covenantal community of the Church would inevitably be influenced by the major themes of the Gospel symbolised in their baptism, including new birth and identification with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Himself. The Special Commission saw baptism as the incorporation of an individual into Christ, a reality that can only be fully known once Jesus returns, but is also revealed temporally in the further incorporation of Christ into the individual when she subsequently matures in faith and then participates in the Lord's Supper.⁵⁴ It is clear, within this doctrinal framework, that there is no expectation that infants would participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper before a profession of faith, which is further clarified later in the same document.

It may seem that, because children are integrated into Christ's Body, the Church, by virtue of their baptism that they should be, as a rational consequence, included in participation in the Lord's Supper.⁵⁵ Such a practice would be consistent with particular aspects of Jewish and Christian tradition. Jewish male children are given a drop or two from the cup of thanksgiving at circumcision, and the Eastern Church gives infants Holy Communion upon their being baptised. Both Christian sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist, are symbolic of the individual being engrafted and integrated into the Body of Christ, His Church. Through baptism, an individual is integrated instantaneously and permanently into Christ's Body; through the Supper of the Lord,

the baptised individual signifies her on-going communion within the Body. The Special Commission on Baptism distinguished between the two sacraments particularly, as Reformed confessions have historically done, drawing a differentiation ‘that is fundamental for our practice.’⁵⁶ This distinction rests on the fact that an individual, whether an infant or a mature adult, is passive in baptism. She is baptised by someone else. However, in the Lord’s Supper, the baptised individual is an active partaker, responding in faith to Christ’s command, ‘This *do* in remembrance of Me.’ According to the Special Commission, ‘This provides a justification for the practice of the greater part of the Church in postponing participation in the Lord’s Supper until the child is able to “do this” in conscious understanding.’⁵⁷ This distinction and articulation clarifies the position of the Church of Scotland, as it stood at 1958. The Kirk was, in common with the major part of the Church catholic, actively delaying the communication of baptised children in the Eucharist until they were definitely able to participate with ‘conscious understanding’, something that, according to the tradition of the Church of Scotland, would be assessed by the Kirk Session.⁵⁸



The 1980s: A new position is articulated but fails

The first substantial doctrinal challenge to the position outlined above came in 1982, when the Kirk’s Board of Education produced and presented a report on “The Lord’s Supper and the Children of the Church” to the General Assembly. The reasons underlying this report were challenges presented by the Special Committee anent Church Membership in 1972. Between 1972 and 1976, Presbyterian responses relating to ‘baptism, Christian initiation, professing the faith and admission to Holy Communion’ were gathered.⁵⁹ The replies clearly indicated that the majority of Presbyteries believed that personal profession of faith should precede admission to the Lord’s Table. However, when Presbyteries were asked if the Kirk should begin admitting children to the Eucharist, twenty-one responded affirmatively, and eighteen negatively; one responded affirmatively on the condition that twelve years should be the age of admission, whilst another was divided; three responded that authority to decide should be delegated to Kirk Sessions and one Presbytery replied negatively, but

suggested that the age of admission should be set lower.⁶⁰ The question of admitting children to Holy Communion was also raised in 1975, under the report of the Parish Education Committee. At that stage, the Committee agreed to consider the developmental possibilities of children communicating in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but, since the Special Committee on Church Membership was already working in this area, Parish Education declined to comment until after the General Assembly of 1976.⁶¹ Subsequently, an interim report of 1977 by the Parish Education Committee posited that there could be no genuine theological objection for admitting children to the Lord's Table, since the Eucharist includes nurture as a means of grace.⁶²

Notwithstanding the doctrinal framework laid down in 1958, the Parish Education Committee, having consulted with the Panel on Doctrine, the Legal Questions Sub-Committee of the General Administration Committee, and the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, presented these conclusions to the General Assembly of 1979:

- a) Baptised children capable of responding in faith to the invitation, "Take, eat", should be admitted to the Lord's Table.
- b) There can be no question of indiscriminate giving of the Supper to infants incapable of coming in faith – or of marching in a Sunday school, however educationally beneficial the experience might be deemed to be.
- c) In *exceptional* circumstances it may be right to admit the unbaptised, but this should also be pursued on a pastoral level with a view to baptism, so that the complementarity of the Sacraments is maintained.⁶³

Having secured the support of all the aforementioned Committees of the Kirk, this draft legislation was brought to the General Assembly of 1982. One of the key questions raised in the report regarded the precise point at which individuals become members of the church – whether this happens at baptism or later, on personal profession of faith, by virtue of which those individuals are admitted to the fellowship of the Lord's Table. This question involved both theological and administrative issues. While, in the common parlance of the Kirk,

only adult communicants were considered members of the church, it was observed that this implied that admission to Communion by a Kirk Session took priority over admission to membership of the Body of Christ by means of the dominical institution of Holy Baptism.⁶⁴ This etymological distinction between members and communicant members of the church may be seen as inconsistent with the teaching of the Kirk's subordinate standard, which explains, 'Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptised into the visible Church; but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace [...]'⁶⁵

This also seems consistent with the note struck by the 1958 publication, which posited, 'Baptism means *union with Christ*. It is [...] ingrafting into Him through the power of the Holy Spirit by which we become members of His Body.'⁶⁶ This may be further elucidated, 'The distinction between "member" and "communicant member" [...] is a distinction which occurs within the Church, not a distinction between those who are in the Church and those who are not.'⁶⁷

Having firmly established the belief that baptism is what makes individuals members of the church, the report proceeded to argue in favour of a change to the Kirk's doctrine, contending that children can and should be admitted to Communion. The prevenience of God's grace was emphasised, as expounded by St Paul and, later, by the Reformers. The report presented the danger of deeming the Lord's Table to be a recompense of the righteous instead of a means whereby individuals grow in grace, highlighting the precedence of the divine promise in both sacraments over the individual human response. The second argument in favour of paedocommunion was that, since all of the baptised are members of the Christian community, and the Lord's Supper is the community meal, Holy Communion is for all the baptised. The exclusion of children, therefore, would render the community incomplete. The third contention for admitting children to the Lord's Supper was one referred to previously, that of nurture and growth. In baptism, a child belongs to the church, and her sense of belonging grows through involvement in the life and worship of the church (presumably including, but not limited to, Eucharistic participation). Later, one may come to comprehend and profess that belonging publicly. Interestingly, the final proposition in favour of admitting

children to the Eucharist, was in relation to the Christian family, and Exodus 12:26. This text, which had previously been employed (as in Willison's *Sacramental Catechism*) to reject paedocommunion, was now used to support it, inasmuch as preparation between minister, parents or guardians and the child would take place beforehand.⁶⁸

Ultimately, although much time and ink was spent on the articulation of this new position and its draft legislation, it was rejected, as it failed to garner the support of the majority of Presbyteries under the Barrier Act. Subsequently, the 1983 General Assembly departed from the matter and the Board of Education declared that 'Despite the claim that children when presented for Baptism by their parents may be deemed to have entered into membership of the Church, the fact of the matter is that most of the privileges and responsibilities of membership are withheld until the baptised person makes a profession of faith.'⁶⁹ So, despite the attempted changes outlined above, the position of the Church of Scotland from 1958 was essentially reiterated.



The 1990s: A new position succeeds

In 1988, the issue of paedocommunion was raised again, and the General Assembly instructed the Board of Education to recommence study of it and present its findings to a subsequent Assembly. The subsequent Assembly took place in 1991, when the Board reaffirmed the findings of the earlier Working Group of 1982, emphasising, like them, the priority and prevenience of God's grace. It failed to identify any substantial theological argument against admitting children to the Eucharist, and identified the Lord's Supper as a means of grace whereby all those of the household of faith (including baptised children) are granted the opportunity to be spiritually nourished and nurtured. By the time that the subject was revisited at the 1991 General Assembly, many sister churches of the Kirk within the Presbyterian tradition had already adopted a change admitting children to the Eucharist. If, in fact, this movement in the Church catholic, was inspired and driven by God the Holy Spirit, as the Board believed it was, the Kirk was obliged to respond likewise to it, by concluding that baptised children may receive Holy Communion.⁷⁰

Much of the language employed in the early '90s was in many ways similar to what was used in the early '80s. In 1990, the Board of Education stated:

Indeed it is our hope that participation in communion from an early age, as part of the Christian nurture of the child, would lead more naturally to just such a public profession. Such a ceremony has great value for both the individual and the congregation. Removing this public profession from being a condition of admission to Holy Communion would display more clearly the true order and meaning of the Christian faith. First we belong to Christ by virtue of our Baptism. Then we come to accept and understand the nature of that belonging. Thereafter we are led to proclaim and profess it publicly.⁷¹

Here, the terminology used in the previous decade was reiterated, especially the language of 'nurture' and 'belonging', which were key to the 1982 arguments outlined above. However, one may wonder why, although the language was so similar to the previous discussion, it succeeded where a decade before it had failed. It is clear that, by the time the Kirk had discussed the matter in 1982, her sister church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had already adopted the change.⁷² This was referred to by the convener of the Board of Education, who recalled having met with American Deacons who commented that meeting with children who were to be admitted to the Lord's Supper and hearing their age-appropriate personal testimonies was one of the most significant experiences of their year. They contended that the only response in faith that should be required of a child was the ability to say, 'I love the Lord' and mean it.⁷³ It was also the case that, by 1991, there were congregations of the Church of Scotland who had already permitted children to participate in the Lord's Supper. Ministers had been so moved on the floor of the General Assembly to admit that they had already illegally adopted the change that the Principal Clerk had to stand to reprimand them as lawbreakers. He stated, 'I am rather worried that people are getting up in the General Assembly and confessing that they are breaking the law of the Church.'⁷⁴

Since the newly proposed legislation of 1991 succeeded under the Barrier Act, it was further discussed at the General Assembly of 1992, when it became the standing law of the Church of Scotland. In spite of warnings that permissive legislation such as this could lead to serious divisions between ministers and congregations, Kirk Sessions and others, the Kirk adopted this Act in 1992:

The General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries, enact, declare and ordain:

(1) The Lord's Table is open to any baptised person who loves the Lord and responds in faith to the invitation, "Take, eat".

(2) In accordance with the law and practice of this Church a Kirk Session is obliged to test the response in faith of a baptised person before authorising admission to the Lord's Table. The Kirk Session requires to be satisfied that the baptised person has received instruction in the faith and order of the Church, is of Christian character and is ready to make public profession of faith, whereupon such person is admitted to the Lord's Table and his or her name is added to the Communion Roll of the congregation.

(3) Notwithstanding the terms of section 2 and recognising the free discretion of the Kirk Session in this matter, where a Kirk Session is satisfied that baptised children are being nurtured within the life and worship of the Church and love the Lord and respond in faith to the invitation "Take, eat", it may admit such children to the Lord's Table, after pastorally overseeing the response of faith of such children to see when it is right for them to come to the Lord's Table. The names of such children shall be admitted to the Communion Roll of the congregation when they have made public profession of their faith.⁷⁵

As a direct consequence of this permissive, localised legislation, there is no uniformity with regard to the question of paedocommunion in the denomination. This may well present problems to parents who wish to relocate, and may also encourage people to bypass their local

parish church if the local practice does not accord with their own opinion on the matter. As noted in the introduction this is quite unlike the solution adopted by the Church of England, where a child who has been admitted in one parish may be admitted in all. Another objection raised was that passing this legislation meant that children were being propelled into adulthood instead of allowing them to be children. Some, it was argued, may object to possible pressurisation of children to communicate in the Lord's Supper.⁷⁶



The sacramental debate in the Kirk in the twenty-first century

Few Reformed theologians of the twentieth century were as influential as the Swiss-German Karl Barth. His thought has greatly affected subsequent Reformed doctrine. Barth's sacramentology has sometimes been referred to as Neo-Zwinglian, since he took the teaching of Ulrich Zwingli and led it to some new conclusions. His teaching on water baptism posited that it was merely a human response to a divine action and promise, and is not a sacrament or 'mystery' (as most mainstream Reformed churches teach), but is, instead, a *response*. For Barth, baptism marked the beginning of a life of obedience to God's claim and hope in His promise. In a long treatment of the New Testament term *mysterion* (that is, mystery or sacrament), Barth argued that it always relates to 'God's work and revelation in history, not to the corresponding human reactions.'⁷⁷ He contended that baptism was not a divine act at all, but an human response. This is the reason why Barth rejected infant baptism, since only those who are deemed capable of making a response to God's grace are suitable candidates for baptism. Talking of paedobaptism, Barth wrote,

It should also be noted that, if baptism is defended thus, if the grace of God is to be shown to be a free grace which precedes the human attitude of the candidate to it, this grace is at least set in motion by the minister and is thus transformed into a grace which works automatically and which is simply poured over the person baptised. Furthermore, it is hard to see why, if this is a good reason for infant baptism, the admission of infants to the Lord's Supper may not be required too. Indeed, since they

become Christians in baptism, this ought to be demanded – one is reminded of the increasing tendency to ‘early’ communion in the Roman Catholic Church. The logical leap which Luther permitted himself at this point, however, is not to be imitated. Infant baptism, if allowed and commanded, might well be most edifying in this respect. This excellent by-product, however, does not prove that it is actually allowed and commanded.⁷⁸

It would seem, then, that Barth opposed both paedobaptism and paedocommunion, although he understood well the argument of prevenient grace. If, as Barth suggested, a church believes in baptismal regeneration, that in baptism an infant is made a Christian by the human act of the minister applying water to her, then admitting such infants to the Lord’s Supper would be a logical consequence of that doctrine. David Wright warned the General Assembly of this doctrine, claiming that it ‘confuses the sign with the thing signified’, before further elucidating that ‘for baptised children, as any other age group, have to be born again before they are admitted to the Lord’s Table. They need to experience the regenerating grace of God to make a profession of faith in their Saviour that is acceptable to the Kirk Session.’⁷⁹ Furthermore, since the Church of Scotland does not, and never has, believed or taught baptismal regeneration, justification for practising paedocommunion must be sought elsewhere.

The most likely justification, one would expect, would be from the covenantal and federal theology that underpins the Kirk’s subordinate standard. Whilst the Westminster Confession closely followed Calvin’s understanding of the sacraments,⁸⁰ Torrance argued that there were different emphases between the Confession and Calvin on the one hand and the older Scottish tradition on the other. According to Torrance, the Confession teaches that the sacraments ‘are not seals of the Word of the Gospel, but seals of faith in the Gospel’, and although the sacraments are consequently ‘seals of the covenant of grace [...] the evangelical character and range of that covenant are restricted.’⁸¹ Federal theology, in Torrance’s thought, means that the sacrament of baptism ‘be regarded as a contractual union demanding a contractual response’.⁸² If such a contractual union is enacted in baptism, it is not enacted by an human being, but rather by God in Christ, in the

power of the Spirit. However, the response that is required by this union is the human reaction of a baptised individual when she makes a personal profession of faith.

The Kirk's baptismal theology was so different to that of Karl Barth that unequivocal lawful provision for the baptism of an unbaptised individual upon 'personal profession of faith' was not given until 2000.⁸³ Interestingly, like the language employed in the Special Commission Report of 1958, the language used in subsequent Church law stresses prevenient grace over covenant, and highlights the person of Christ instead of covenant with Christ. These linguistic nuances, furthermore, should not be understated, since the etymological shift conforms more closely to the language of Barth than that of Calvin or the Westminster Confession. Moreover, it was not until the Kirk produced a baptismal liturgy in 1986 that the federal theology that preceded the Special Commission Report of 1958 was finally eradicated, and the unilateral nature of the covenant (or contract) of grace was fully emphasised, much in accord with the convener's understanding outlined above.⁸⁴ In baptism, the Church of Scotland now teaches, an individual is given God's free grace through the vicarious work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is well emphasised in the baptismal liturgy produced in 1994.⁸⁵

It should be pointed out, as Nimmo did, that Barth and Torrance shared many engagements and interactions together, which may account for their similar sacramentology in many respects.⁸⁶ Their common emphasis on the Christological nature of baptism, the prevenience of grace, and the vicariousness of Jesus' life and death in baptism has been highlighted. The two theologies diverge, however, on how they handle the relationship between water and Spirit baptism, and, more obviously, the appropriateness of paedobaptism in the Christian Church. Whilst the Kirk's 1958 report saw ecclesiastical baptism as facilitating our baptism by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, Barth made the distinction that baptism in water is a human action, but baptism in the Spirit is a divine action.⁸⁷

Whilst, for the Kirk, paedobaptism was normative, for Barth it was abnormal. However, one of the distinctions between the failed legislation of the early 1980s and the successful legislation of the 1990s was that the former did not require baptism for admission to

the Eucharist, whilst the latter clearly did. So, without paedobaptism, there can be no paedocommunion.



Does the Kirk's current legislation reflect a Barthian perspective?

If one reads the sacramental legislation passed in the Church of Scotland since the turn of the millennium, it appears that there is an expectation that adult believer's baptism has or will become normative, since it is given priority over paedobaptism. It was not until the year 2000 that the Kirk introduced legislation that particularly favoured the baptism of adult believers. This is treated at the beginning of the legislation, leaving the possibility of paedobaptism to a later point. This may have marked 'a paradigmatic change' in the Church of Scotland's understanding of the sacraments.⁸⁸ This is also, perhaps, an acknowledgement of the missional context of the Kirk in a post-Christian Scotland. In addition, since 2003 the Kirk has offered alternatives to paedobaptism, which would appear to accommodate those who, like Karl Barth, have theological objections to the practice. Apparently, these were not meant as 'an alternative to the celebration of Baptism, but in recognition of the need to provide a flexible response to the situation of primary mission which is the Scotland of today.'⁸⁹ It appears, however, that the implications of this may not have been considered, since, if only baptised children may be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but not those who have participated in another, dry, rite, this may create two classes of children in congregations, one set of children who may communicate in the Lord's Supper, and another who may not. The question that inevitably arises is whether such a distinction between the baptised and the unbaptised children may actually exist in the practice of local congregations. That is to say, do ministers or Kirk Sessions actively differentiate between children who have been baptised and those who have been otherwise blessed or given thanks for, when it comes to admitting them to the Lord's Table? And if ministers can be lenient with one precondition for admittance to the Lord's Supper (i.e. baptism), could that not lead to further leniency with the other two conditions, namely love for the Lord and a response in faith?

The 2002 Panel on Doctrine's Report on Baptism considered 'the

contributions of continental theologians’, and specifically mentioned Barth, whose ‘Reformed perspective is one that we would share, but whose conclusions, with respect to the practice of baptism, would be at odds with Church of Scotland current practice.’⁹⁰ This is reassuring, since Barth did not believe in paedobaptism.



Conclusion

When it comes to the Lord’s Table, ‘to fence or not to fence – that is the question’. If the Kirk is to counter the accusation that she practices *indiscriminate* Communion, this is a question that requires a serious response. While, historically, ministers and elders, in preparation for the Communion season, undertook the examination of individual communicants, it may be that the Kirk needs to reconsider if or how she may prepare children, young people or other interested individuals for participation in the Lord’s Supper. To what extent, for example, should the Kirk Session have the final say on who may or may not be admitted? And how exactly can they become satisfied that an individual who applies to become a communicant is of Christian character?

When the issue of admitting baptised children was discussed in 1992, one influential minister who expressed a clear opinion was Duncan Forrester:

Above the law and practice of the Church there stands a higher authority, the will and practice of our Lord. And if we attend to our Lord’s pattern of table fellowship an immediate oddity occurs, a discrepancy between our practice and His. He put no fences around His table, He admitted all sorts of people to eat with Him. When He gathered with His disciples in the upper room, including the disciple who denied Him and the disciple who betrayed Him, He was celebrating the great Feast of Passover at Passover time, a feast in which to this very day amongst the Jewish people the youngest child present has an indispensable role; it is a family feast. Our loss of this tradition, of this strength of the Passover tradition, has been a colossal impoverishment of our tradition of the Lord’s Supper, and

this overture gives us the possibility of beginning to recover something of the fulness and the authenticity of that tradition.⁹¹

Forrester's appeal was based on a return to a covenantal theology of the Lord's Supper, a theology the Kirk seems to have departed from in current legislation. However, his point that the Lord Jesus did not fence His own table is still valid. Yet, according to the law of the Church of Scotland, those who are admitted to the fellowship of His Table must be baptised, must love the Lord and must respond in faith to His gracious invitation. If, in practice, this is maintained, then the Lord's Table is legally fenced in the Kirk, even for children.

From the above sketch of the sacramental history of the church, no unequivocal historical precedent has been identified for the current practice of admitting unconfirmed children to the Lord's Supper in the Church of Scotland. From the discussion of the current and past legislation of the Kirk, a mixed economy is apparent, where a child may be admitted in one congregation, but not in another. Consideration should be given to the possibility that if such a child is admitted to the Eucharist somewhere, she may be admitted anywhere, whether or not the local congregation or Kirk Session have adopted the change, otherwise the communion of the denomination is divided. A solution similar to that in the Anglican Church might be adopted here.

It is regrettable that the regular use of catechesis and communicant's classes in preparation for participation in the Eucharist has almost disappeared. These were, historically, a vital part of Scottish Presbyterian life, which made Confirmation and admission to the fellowship of the Lord's Table an important rite of passage for teenagers entering adulthood. As the legislation currently stands, there seems to be little incentive for young people to become members of the church, since they already have the privilege of participating in the Lord's Supper. What kind of preparation can, or should, the Kirk expect children to undertake before becoming *de facto* communicants? To what extent are Kirk Sessions being equipped to oversee such preparations? These are questions yet to be answered.

In conclusion, if the Church of Scotland continues to identify herself as a church adhering to the Scottish Reformation, she ought

to hold, in principle, to a covenantal and federal theology of the sacraments, as expounded in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is her subordinate standard. She should, consequently, hold to a Calvinistic, not Barthian, sacramentology. The best arguments in favour of paedocommunion were drawn from the covenantal tradition, but in departing from that understanding the position of the Kirk is now ambiguous.

Notes

- ¹ These three appellations shall be used interchangeably throughout.
- ² Church of England, General Synod, *Admission of Baptised Children to Communion Regulations 2006* (Canterbury: Diocesan House, 2006), <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/37205/childrencommunion.doc>.
- ³ Diocese of Chester, *Admitting Children to Holy Communion Before Confirmation: Guidelines for Parishes* (Warrington: Church House, 2007), 17, http://www.chester.anglican.org/dev/docs/children/Children_and_HC_guidelines.pdf.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁵ For full bibliographic information, please refer to the Manuscript Sources section of the Bibliography below.
- ⁶ All of these Acts (XXI 1956, XVII 1963, IV 1975, III and XV 1992) were incorporated into Act V 2000, *Consolidating Act Anent the Sacraments (as amended by Act IX 2003)*, hereafter referred to as *CAAS*.
- ⁷ United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (London: UNICEF, 1990), Article 14.1.
- ⁸ *Reports to the General Assembly* [hereafter *RGA*] (1991), 222.
- ⁹ Act XVII, 23 May 1963.
- ¹⁰ *RGA* (1983), 154.
- ¹¹ World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), B.16. Cf. Paul Nimmo, “Baptismal Theology and Practice in the Church of Scotland”, in *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and*

- Practice*, ed. Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay (London: SCM Press, 2009), 102f.
- ¹² CAAS, section 12, as incorporated from Act XV (1992) *Anent Admission of Children to Communion*, section 1.
- ¹³ See 1 Cor 12:12–13 and Eph 4:4–6.
- ¹⁴ Lindsay Urwin OGS, “What is the Role of Sacramental Ministry in Fresh Expressions of Church?”, in *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today’s Church*, ed. Steven Croft (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 35.
- ¹⁵ RGA (1983), 160f.
- ¹⁶ RGA (2003), section 13/1.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. Cf. Church of Scotland Office for Worship and Doctrine, preface to *A Welcome to a Child: Four Orders for Thanksgiving and Blessing* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2006), iv–v.
- ¹⁸ CAAS, 13.
- ¹⁹ RGA (1985), 437; see also CAAS, 14.
- ²⁰ CAAS, 15.
- ²¹ *The Scots Confession, 1560* (ed. G. D. Henderson; trans. James Bulloch; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1960), Article 23.
- ²² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. Henry Beveridge; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), IV.xvi.30 (p. 549f.).
- ²³ 1 Cor 11:28. Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.
- ²⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xvi.30 (p. 550).
- ²⁵ Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 141.
- ²⁶ 1 Cor 11:27.
- ²⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism, With Explanation* (ed. Theodore G. Tappert; St Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1991), 241.
- ²⁸ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (ed. S. W. Carruthers; Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, [1646] 2003), Chapter 29.7 (p. 118).
- ²⁹ *Westminster Larger Catechism* (in *ibid.*), Q.177 (p. 267).
- ³⁰ George B. Burnet, *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland, 1560–1960* (Edinburgh; London: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), 168.

- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 84.
- ³³ J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 158.
- ³⁴ James F. White, *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999), 92.
- ³⁵ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), 90f.
- ³⁶ Richard Robert Osmer, *Confirmation: Presbyterian Practices in Ecumenical Perspective* (Louisville, Ky.: Geneva Press, 1996), 59–65.
- ³⁷ John Willison, *Queries to the Scots Innovators in Divine Service, and Particularly, to the Liturgical Party in the Shire of Angus, and Places Adjacent Thereto* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1712), 17.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 21.
- ³⁹ John Willison, *A Defence of National Churches: and Particularly of the National Constitution of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: James M'Euen and Company, 1729), 148, 162–4.
- ⁴⁰ Henry Sefton, “Revolution to Disruption”, in *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland*, ed. Duncan B. Forrester and Douglas M. Murray (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 68.
- ⁴¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. “Wodrow, Robert”.
- ⁴² Robert Wodrow, *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow [...] vol. 3, 1723–1731* (ed. Thomas McCrie; Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1843), 460.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xvi.30.
- ⁴⁵ See, for instance, John Willison, *A Sacramental Catechism* (Glasgow: David Niven, 1794). Elsewhere, John Willison, *A Sacramental Directory* (Edinburgh: Alexander Donaldson, 1761). Also, Willison owns the Westminster Shorter Catechism and expositis it in *An Example of Plain Catechising* (Glasgow: David Niven, 1790). Two further volumes, *Sacramental Meditations and Advices [...] Proper for Communicants* (Wilmington, Del.: Bousal & Niles, 1803) and *The Young Communicant's Catechism*

- [...] (Philadelphia: Russell and Martien, 1831) were published posthumously.
- ⁴⁶ Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xvii.1.
- ⁴⁷ Willison, *A Sacramental Catechism*, 39.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 49f.
- ⁵⁰ *RGA* (1991), 523.
- ⁵¹ *Report of Proceedings at General Assembly* [hereafter *RPGA*] *held on Saturday, 18th May, 1991 and following days*, 37f.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism: A Study Document issued by The Special Commission on Baptism of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1958), 31.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *RGA* (1976), 466.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ *RGA* (1982), 467.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*
- ⁶³ *RGA* (1979), 412
- ⁶⁴ *RGA* (1982), 469.
- ⁶⁵ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 28.1 (p. 112f.).
- ⁶⁶ *Biblical Doctrine of Baptism*, 21.
- ⁶⁷ *RGA* (1977), 461.
- ⁶⁸ *RGA* (1982), 469–71.
- ⁶⁹ *RGA* (1984), 493.
- ⁷⁰ *RGA* (1991), 522f.
- ⁷¹ Church of Scotland, Board of Education, *Children and Holy Communion: Book One: A General Statement* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland Education, 1990), 10.
- ⁷² Catherine G. González, Preface to *A Theology of the Lord's Supper* (Atlanta, Ga.: General Assembly Mission Board, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1981), iii.
- ⁷³ *RPGA* (1991), 360f.

- ⁷⁴ Ibid. 386f.
- ⁷⁵ Church of Scotland, *Acts of the General Assembly from 1929* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 1992), Act XV.
- ⁷⁶ *RPGA* (1991), 381f.
- ⁷⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–75), IV/4, 108.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 190.
- ⁷⁹ *RPGA* (1992), 355.
- ⁸⁰ John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology* (Louisville, Ky.; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 84f.
- ⁸¹ Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 146.
- ⁸² Ibid., 148.
- ⁸³ *CAAS*, 4.
- ⁸⁴ Bryan D. Spinks, “‘Freely by His Grace’: Baptismal Doctrine and the Reform of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Church of Scotland, 1953–1994”, in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 236f.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 241. See also *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1994), 83ff.
- ⁸⁶ Nimmo, “Baptismal Theology and Practice in the Church of Scotland”, 100.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 101.
- ⁸⁸ John L. McPake, “Contemporary Developments in Baptismal Theology Within the Church of Scotland” (unpublished paper), 1. The author here records gratitude for permission to use and refer to his paper.
- ⁸⁹ *RGA* (2003), 13/6.
- ⁹⁰ *RGA* (2002), 13/14–13/15.
- ⁹¹ *RPGA* (1992), 362f. See also Duncan B. Forrester, James I. H. McDonald and Gian Tellini, eds., *Encounter with God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 110–26.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

The Principal Clerk's Office, Church of Scotland (Central Offices,
121 George Street, Edinburgh).

“Blue Books” (RGA)

Church of Scotland. *Reports to the General Assembly 1982.*

———. *Reports to the General Assembly 1984.*

———. *Reports to the General Assembly 1985.*

———. *Reports to the General Assembly 1991.*

———. *General Assembly 2003.*

Transcripts (RPGA)

Church of Scotland. *Reports of Proceedings at General Assembly held
on Saturday, 18th May, 1991 and following days.*

———. *Reports of Proceedings at General Assembly held on
Saturday, 16th May–Friday, 22nd May, 1992.*

Additional Secondary Sources

Barclay, Alexander. *The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper:
A Study in the Eucharistic Teaching of Luther, Zwingli and
Calvin.* Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie & Co., 1927.

Barth, Markus. *Rediscovering the Lord's Supper: Communion With
Israel, With Christ, and Among the Guests.* Eugene, Or.:
Wipf & Stock, 2006.

Bruce, Robert. *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper: Sermons on the
Sacrament Preached in the Kirk of Edinburgh in A.D. 1589.*
Edited by T. F. Torrance. 2nd ed. Tain: Christian Focus;
Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005.

Champlin, Joseph M. *The Breaking of Bread: An Updated Handbook
for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.* New York;
Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005.

- Church of Scotland, Office for Worship and Doctrine. *By Water and the Spirit: What it Means to be Baptised: A Commentary on the Services of Baptism and Confirmation*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2006.
- Davies, Horton. *Bread of Life and Cup of Joy: Newer Ecumenical Perspectives on the Eucharist*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993.
- Herron, Andrew. *The Law and Practice of the Kirk: A Practical Guide and Commentary*. Glasgow: Chapter House, 1995.
- Hodge, A. A. *The Confession of Faith: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine Expounding the Westminster Confession*. London: Banner of Truth Trust, [1870] 1958.
- House of Bishops of the Church of England. *The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity: An Occasional Paper*. London: Church House Publishing, 2001.
- Lake, Stephen. *Let the Children Come – To Communion*. London: SPCK, 2006.
- Lawrence, John W., et al. *A Critique of Eucharistic Agreement*. London: SPCK, 1975.
- Mathison, Keith A. *Given for You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2002.
- McManus, Jim. *The Healing Power of the Sacraments*. Rev. ed. Chawton, Hampshire: Redemptorist Publications, 2005.
- Marcel, Pierre-Charles. *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism: Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace*. Translated by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. London: James Clarke, 2002.
- Shaw, Robert. *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*. Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1877.
- Sproul, R. C. *Truths we Confess: A Layman's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith [Volume Three]*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2007.
- Strawbridge, Gregg, ed. *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2003.
- Watson, Thomas. *The Lord's Supper*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, [1665] 2004.

Withers, Margaret and Tim Sledge. *Creative Communion: Engaging the Whole Church in a Journey of Faith*. Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008.