

THE RECORD

The Editor writes:

INNOVATIONS – AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE

After a disputed election, John Logan was ordained on 2nd April 1773 and inducted to the 2nd charge in the parish of South Leith. In 1775, he became a member of the General Assembly's Committee on the Paraphrases and it appears that he was the principal assistant to William Cameron (then only a licentiate) in the Committee's work. In 1781, *Translations and Paraphrases, in verse, of several Passages of Sacred Scripture* was published.

The minute of the meeting of the Kirk Session of South Leith held on 17th January of the following year, at which the minister of the 1st charge was Moderator, records that:

The Session taking into their consideration the intimation made from the pulpit last Lord's Day that the additional Psalmody was to be introduced into the public worship Sabbath next without consulting either his Colleague or the Session, they apprehend that this precipitant manner of introducing it will by no means answer the design of the General Assembly, the Session are unanimously of the opinion that it should be deferred for some time until the congregation are provided with books. The Session appoint the Clerk to write Mr Logan this evening and acquaint him of this their resolution.

It is clear from his reply that Mr Logan was greatly offended. At the next meeting the Clerk (who was also Precentor and Schoolmaster) was asked to read out the reply which he had received. It was recorded thus:

Leith, Jan. 19th 1782

I charge you Mr Alexander Lindsay to sing the Psalms or Hymns which are to be read out in the pulpit of South Leith tomorrow. As Session Clerk you are to obey the orders of the Session, as Precentor you are amenable only to the minister who presides in the public worship. If

you refuse to comply with this order I will prosecute you before the Presbytery of Edinburgh for disobedience to the Laws of the Church.

Signed
John Logan

While Logan's statement of the Law of the Church is no doubt correct, his subsequent threat hardly seems justified by the terms of the Session's resolution. Minutes, however, seldom tell the whole story and one cannot be sure what other tensions and difficult relationships lay in the background. Of one thing one can, however, be certain – and that is that 'innovations' have been a recurring feature of church life, and that they have seldom been introduced without controversy.

Several items in this issue of *The Record* deal with 'innovations' of our own day. The 'new' hymn book, *CH4*, which makes some provision for changing styles of hymnody, is reviewed by our Secretary after a couple of years' use in two parishes. In her Presidential address, Marion Dodd, with a modest use of electronic gadgetry, defended like use in 'Communicating the Word' to the assembled congregation. With other use of such aids, it, like all our articles, is reproduced here. And we are happy to include the paper which John Hume, who has in recent years both reviewed and been reviewed on these pages, gave to the Annual Meeting last May. Writing from the perspective of one who, as Convener of the Committee on Church Art and Architecture has to deal with many proposals for the re-ordering of churches to make provision for changing aids to worship both musical and visual, he deals with 'New Technologies, New Ways'.

A Society which was thought by some at the time of its formation in 1865 to be dangerously innovative cannot properly heed the legendary beadle's advice to his successor ('Resist a' innovations'), but neither should it be uncritically welcoming. The work of our founding fathers was based both on pastoral concern and on historical and liturgical knowledge and perspective. It may be hoped that the dissemination of such concern and perspective, evident in the measured attitude taken by our contributors may help to save us from the sharpness of controversy evident in South Leith in 1782.

J.C.S.