

# ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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**PARADIGMS OF WORSHIP: WHAT'S THE QUESTION?**



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IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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## editorials



### A Plea for Creativity, Challenge, and Excellence

FORTY-ONE YEARS AGO, when I began serving as a parish pastor, I tried valiantly to lead God's people in their weekly Sunday expression of what I believed to be the ideal form for Lutheran worship. But as the years passed, I gradually discovered that there is no one universally ideal Lutheran expression of worship. (I have also come to regard any attempts to make every congregation's worship a clone of every other one as being not only impossible, but also ill-advised.) We do need to cultivate and maintain a respect for the Christian calendar and for our Lutheran liturgical and hymnic traditions. But our congregations across the land also ought to be urged to recognize and give expression to their cultural diversity.

I am not advocating the so-called market mentality, which deliberately sets out to "give the people whatever they want" in public worship in order "to bring them in and keep them coming." I am saying only that as long as worship leaders respect and retain the structure of our historic Lutheran Worship Rites, we ought to encourage and bless their individual creative activity.

But that activity ought not be expended exclusively (or even primarily) for the benefit of the children who are present. While we certainly want our worship to relate to the children, a weekly diet of spiritual "milk" for the entire congregation eventually becomes bland, even tasteless, for the "over thirty" generation who are also present. Not all of our adult worshippers are musically and liturgically illiterate. Some may be, but many others are not. And this latter group delights in being challenged. Pastors and parish musicians ought to be comfortable from Sunday

## reflections

AS I TRAVEL THROUGHOUT OUR BELOVED SYNOD, I receive more feedback, encouragement, and statements of appreciation from fellow members of the LCMS regarding *Issues in Christian Education* than any other single aspect of this institution of higher learning. One pastor said, "I look forward to each copy of *Issues*, and I read it from cover to cover." A district president complimented, "Thank you for being willing to address important and sensitive issues that many in our church seem reluctant to discuss." The letters of appreciation are numerous. There also are occasional letters expressing unhappiness with a single article or an entire edition. Curiously, the most frequent complaint is not about what an author or editorial writer has written, but rather, regarding the writer.

This edition of *Issues*, "Paradigms of Worship: What Is The Question?" defines well a major purpose of this publication. In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today, changes in the worship style and music of congregations, discussion and debate by worship leaders, and a host of publications reflect ferment in the worship of the church. A theological heritage and a bank of experiences provide a basis for exploring questions focusing on worship in Lutheran congregations today.

Among questions raised by new paradigms of worship are those relating to theology, music, and outreach. If you are like me, as you read the articles and editorials in this *Issues*, there will be sentences or paragraphs which will cause you to say, "I like that. Why didn't I say that?" There are also statements in this edition which caused me to think, "I don't agree. That's too harsh!"

You may experience similar feelings, but I hope you understand that this *Issues* is just that—an avenue to stimulate our minds to reflect on important issues/questions facing our church and its Gospel proclamation today and into the next century.

Charles Ore's encouragement as we consider various paradigms of worship summarizes my feelings about questions on worship: "With all of the talent, skill, and technology that God has bestowed upon the Church there must be some way to carry out the Great Commission while at the same time: 1) maintaining orthodox theology; 2) utilizing carefully crafted worship materials; and 3) generating diverse musical expressions that resonate throughout the church with multi-generational and multi-cultural ease. This pursuit is worthy of our best God-given efforts."

Orville C. Walz, President



to Sunday serving "meat along with milk"—occasional "fine wine" as well as the more common "jug wine"—musical-liturgical-textual worship elements which stimulate and stir up as well as those which comfort and soothe.

Finally, a word regarding excellence in the weekly planning and conducting of public worship. Congregations ought not be helped to nurse the notion that excellence is not important "as long as our hearts are in the right place." We demand excellence from educators and athletes and entertainers. Surely, for God's sake we ought to foster and promote a similar excellence in our leaders in public worship. And in case a reminder is needed, "foster and promote" includes of necessity a willingness on the part of our lay leaders to allocate a substantial part (at least 10 percent) of the annual congregational budget for the financial support of worship persons and programs.

In our worship we try to follow St. Paul's example by "being all things to all people," and rightly so. But should we not be utilizing worship materials our people will gradually "grow into" along with those which they will quickly "grow out of"? We cherish worshipping "in the beauty of holiness," and rightly so. But can we not also learn to cherish worshipping "in the holiness of beauty"? SOLI DEO GLORIA

**Louis Nuechterlein, Pastor**  
Cheshire Lutheran Church  
Cheshire, Connecticut

## So Much To Do

WORSHIP SEEMS TO BE A REAL "HOT BUTTON" in the church these days. As I have had the opportunity to travel around the country in the last few years, again and again I hear concerns about worship and sermons that leave our people longing for something that speaks their language and empowers them in their faith.

We live in a culture that is more open to spiritual things than ever before! The Word of God is *relevant* to our culture, as is worship in our church when it is born of the Spirit and truth, as Jesus speaks of in John chapter four!! The brokenness of people today, their hurt and pain, are deep. They know there is a void and long to have it filled. But past experience has taught them the church has no "real" answers for their "real" problems . . . because they can't understand the language in the church.

The word, when preached in a way people can

understand, is the very *power* of God. It is relevant! Being relevant only means that the truth is told so people can understand. It has nothing to do with changing what the Word of God says because people maybe will not like it. When the liturgy of the church is sung in the cultural context in words drawn from the Word, it is engaging. It is the means by which the heart of the worshiper soars in praise and adoration of the one true God. When these things happen, by God's grace the roadblocks to the Gospel of Christ changing people's lives are removed, and the church grows spiritually and numerically.

Let me be clear. I do not believe any man or process can cause the church to grow. But we can stop or slow down the church from truly growing, both spiritually and numerically, by putting up all kinds of "roadblocks." Hence, people are not able to hear the Gospel and are lost. Here are a few "problems" that can and do become roadblocks that prevent a clear communication of the Gospel.

1. **Cultural arrogance** is an attitude of believing Northern Europeans do it "correct" and "right." For instance, not long ago I heard a professor say that the organ was, and is, and always will be, the principal instrument for leading worship. Not only is this statement historically inaccurate, but it is very arrogant. The truth is, the organ has not always been around. It may have been the principal leading instrument of worship within our circles; however, it has not been the leading instrument world-wide. The organ has been one choice, and for some people it will continue to be the instrument of choice, but that does not make other instruments "inappropriate!"

I have heard it said that the use of band-like instrumentation, and people singing in microphones "up front," is nothing more than entertainment. That is a matter of perspective and "cultural bias." After all, we have heard four-minute introductions played on organs that could be seen as entertainment. We have all experienced music led from the balcony that commanded such attention by its dramatic pauses and musical renditions of traditional tunes that it warranted applause from the congregation at the end of the worship service. Viewing a style as entertainment is really a matter of perception.

2. **Religious idolatry** is a roadblock that can be ever so subtle. This is when the "ways and means" God has provided for the church become the end. Worship is not a form, but rather something that happens in the heart of the believer. It is worked by the Holy Spirit through the Word, heard and sung in a "form." It becomes religious idolatry when we insist that a certain form be used. In a

sense, we are saying that the form is the end. The goal, then, becomes people being brought to understanding the form (worship of the form) instead of the form being a means for the person to worship the Lord.

3. **Passionless passion** is a roadblock that can really be a problem. This is when people have passion, but not about those things which the Lord has commanded us to be passionate about. For instance, too often we are very passionate about things being done "right," to the exclusion of any alternatives. Yet Jesus directed us to be passionate about loving one another. Our "passionate" caution toward change can cause us to miss the very thing Jesus has asked us to have a passionate urgency about—reaching the lost for Him! Paul encourages us to do whatever it takes to reach out to them (1 Cor. 9).

Please understand that I am not suggesting we throw out the substance. But I firmly believe we need to look at new indigenous forms and styles for our world today. In my thinking, the issue is not "if" we need to, but how will we go about it and which ones will we use.

When it comes to the type of music used, this becomes more subjective. This is the area we must be the most open to. For example, instrumentation is really a matter of choice. Remember, the Bible does not even speak of organs; however, it does speak of drums, trumpets and stringed instruments. I have also heard many raise the concern that so much of the "praise music" is filled with repetition. I would have to agree. However, let's be careful. After all, many of the phrases that are repeated are Scriptural quotes or paraphrases. How often do we repeat "This is the feast . . ."? And what does it mean to repeat the same liturgy week after week, year after year?

Finally, can worship be an effective outreach tool? Yes! I do not believe worship is for the unbeliever. After all, how can one worship if a person does not yet believe in the One being worshiped? I do believe, however, that when one witnesses the worship of believers, hears the truth being spoken, sees and experiences love, that the Spirit of God, through the means of grace, begins to work. I have personally seen this over and over again. When "members" know their church is a safe place to bring their friends and, while present in worship, their friends will hear the truth of God's redeeming Gospel in a way they can understand, they will invite their friends without exception. In the ministry of the congregation I serve, we average about 290 visitors every Sunday. In the last three years, our worship attendance has grown over 100 percent. We have not had one class on

"how to bring your friends to church," and we have not made one door-to-door evangelism call within this period of time. I know numbers are not important, but the lives and the people they represent are!

While you spend ten minutes in reading editorials, approximately 45 people have died in the United States alone. Too many of them did not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Is it not time we take the all-powerful Word of God to those who have yet to believe, meeting them in the culture of today, and giving them the only Good News that will make any difference in their lives? Time is short. There is so much to do!

**Brad Hoefs, Pastor**  
King of Kings Lutheran Church  
Omaha, Nebraska

## Lutheran Worship: It Can Be Done

I RECENTLY CAME ACROSS A BRIEF TRACT titled "How Lutherans Worship." This pamphlet headlines the fact that "Lutheran worship is liturgical, following a common order of service adopted by the church." Within my lifetime this statement was probably true. Actually Lutherans do have an official book of worship adopted by the church; however, in practice fresh-off-the-printer orders of worship and borrowed hymns containing spurious theology are common. Some individuals feel very threatened in this environment ("We are all going to hell in a handcart"), and yet others rally around what they perceive as creativity (the best of Evangelical style-Lutheran substance). While it may be impossible to stand back far enough to see the forest because of all the trees, I believe that we have gone far enough down the road so that it is possible to make some observations about the emerging scene.

1. **Things will never again be exactly the way they were.** This statement brings with it good news and bad news. The good news is that we are leaving behind a lot of boring, repetitive, canned services (liturgy lacking in variety indifferently served by individuals having little formal training in matters pertaining to worship). The bad news is that we are currently in danger of leaving behind our theology and heritage (cultural identity) in favor of doing something different (served sincerely and somewhat insensitively by individuals having little formal training in matters pertaining to worship).

### 2. What has changed?

a. **Technology.** Diverse television and radio broadcasting coupled with a plethora of pan-Christian printed materials and recordings have brought before a consumer-driven public the diverse paths of church culture and entertainment ("My neighbor did it at his church." "Why can't we do it here?" "I even saw it on TV from L.A." "It's fun!") Desktop publishing via computer software has given worship planners the opportunity to create, recreate, and duplicate almost anything regardless of origin and original intention.

b. **Sociology.** As a church society we have come to accept, tolerate or allow space for the attitude generally understood in secular society as "Do your own thing." We also have become somewhat inclined to cloak our cultural scene in terms of how the uninitiated in Lutheranism might be inclined to perceive us in a more positive manner. In more recent times the church has also begun to count the flock, study statistics and develop strategies in order to determine which worship style or approach is most effective in reaching and converting. This concept has also embraced some elements associated with the doctrine of synergism, for example, "Accept Jesus as Your Savior" or "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." Historically, worship materials have been developed from the top down (assumed enlightened professionals have assembled or commissioned appropriate materials that are approved at synodical conventions and made available to the church-at-large through official publishing houses, e.g., Paul Bunjes/LCMS/Concordia Publishing House=*Lutheran Worship*). In today's market, however, worship materials are frequently consumer-generated and marketed from the bottom up without theological scrutiny by the church or official sanction (e.g., Dave Anderson/World Wide Publications=*The Other Songbook*).

### 3. A look into the future.

If you were the C.E.O. of an aggressive international franchise that had offered traditional ethnic cuisine from a restricted menu to a selective audience for several hundred years, you might want to consider the following as you established guidelines for expansion into diverse markets that you deem essential to the *raison d'être* associated with your corporation:

Question: How can I retain and cultivate faithful, long-time clients, while at the same time offer an expanded menu to attract new customers?

Answer: Train expert chefs, local representatives of the franchise, who have passion and dedication to both nutrition and ethnic traditions. These chefs must know the nuances associated with sauces, wines, and seasonings, and they must

believe in the product. These same chefs and their professional assistants and volunteers will also need to be charged with an attitude that allows, expects, and explores individual creativity and regional identity. All of the employees must work together to cultivate an environment where diversity is treasured, change is normal, and where meaningful traditions are respected and not threatened with extinction. Every restaurant should strive to attain at least a one star rating. This aspect assumes ongoing education and confidence in leadership. The franchise will also need to struggle with its own relevancy in relationship to those who own and operate the local business.

Sociologists state that identifiable groups within the social fabric gradually dissipate into the greater mass of society once they lose their common cultural bonds. Consider this observation in light of the fact that an increasing number of prominent leaders in Lutheran circles champion the concept that church growth is dependent upon shedding the recipes of Lutheranism as expressed in traditional worship forms and hymn styles found in *Lutheran Worship*. I suggest that if *Lutheran Worship* as currently configured is not the proper worship tool to approach the second millennium, then let the church be about the task of creating appropriate worship materials that can offer bold testimony to requisite theology, pluralism, outreach, and an intention to retain without apology a distinct Lutheran cultural heritage. It is frequently said that there is no accounting for (bad) esthetic taste. However, if Lutherans have a chance at retaining a national church body, all within the structure must refrain from continual negative judgmental posturing of one another and come to accept more variety in matters associated with worship style. On the other hand, the church must not ignore the fact that "relevant popular church music" is frequently found in the company of its unattractive handmaid, "relevant popular theology." It is true that God's creation is varied beyond comprehension and that common wisdom testifies to a future that offers more diversity, not more conformity. Accept it! With all of the talent, skill, and technology that God has bestowed upon the Church there must be some way to carry out The Great Commission, while at the same time 1) maintaining orthodox theology, 2) utilizing carefully crafted worship materials, and 3) generating diverse musical expressions that resonate throughout the church with multi-generational and multi-cultural ease. *This pursuit is worthy of our best God-given efforts.*

**Charles Ore**  
Professor of Music  
Concordia-Seward



# Theology: That's the Question!

Arthur Just

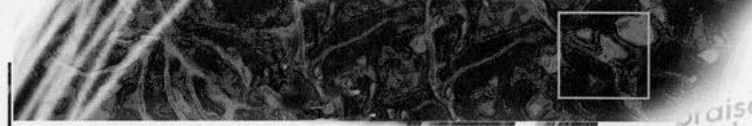
Dr. Arthur Just is Professor of Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana



**U**R DISTINCT LUTHERAN theology of worship is derived from the New Testament liturgical structures of Word and Sacrament. Christian worship could be described from the perspective of the Christian assembly or from the perspective of God. In most descriptions of *worship*, one hears the church's perspective, that is, the church gathers to praise, give thanks, and glorify God because of faith that grasps hold of the gifts of God in Jesus Christ. "Worship" is an appropriate word to describe our response to God's gracious activity in Jesus Christ, for worship defines our perspective, what we do in view of what God has done. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* defines "worship" as "the general idea of offering to God adoration and service; the concept can be extended to include offering prayers to God including petition and intercession, and it can also refer to obedient listening to God speaking."<sup>2</sup> Worship, then, describes our reverence and praise, our service and adoration.

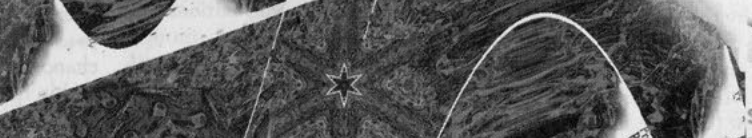
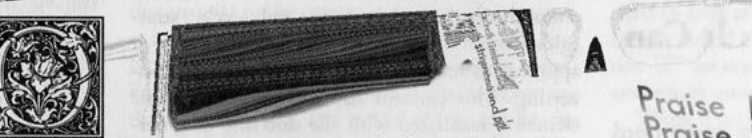
But this description of the Christian community's communal activity on Sunday flies in the face of our Lutheran theology. Lutherans seldom began theology from below, from man's perspective, but always from above, from the perspective of God. Luther and the Reformation gave us *Gottesdienst*, Divine Service, to describe a Biblical theology of worship. After all, what is foremost here is not our service and sacrifice to God, but his service and sacrifice to us. God does not need our worship and praise and service. We need his service, his gifts, his presence. Whatever praise we give to God, whatever honor that is due his name is *our response* to God's service to us. But what is this service that God gives, how does he serve us with his gifts, and what are those gifts that he gives?

THEY HAVE BEEN  
SANCTUARY



Praise God in His sanctuary;  
Praise Him in His mighty expanse.  
Praise Him for His mighty deeds;  
Let everything that has breath  
praise the Lord.

I will give thanks to Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth;  
For Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name.



O God, Thou art my God; I  
shall seek Thee earnestly;  
My soul thirsts for Thee,  
my flesh yearns for Thee,  
in a dry and weary land  
where there is no water.  
Thus I have beheld Thee  
in the sanctuary,  
To see Thy power  
and Thy glory.

praise while  
sing



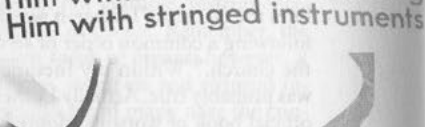
praise Him with trumpet sound;

praise Him with harp and lyre;

praise Him with timbrel and dancing;

praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.

Praise Him with trumpet sound  
Praise Him with harp and lyre  
Praise Him with timbrel and dancing  
Praise Him with stringed instruments



praise the Lord!

praise the Lord,  
O my soul!

praise the Lord!

praise the Lord!

praise the Lord!

praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord,  
O my soul!  
I will praise the Lord  
while I live;  
I will sing praises  
to my God  
while I have my being  
The Lord opens the eyes  
of the blind;  
The Lord raises up those  
who are bowed down;  
The Lord loves  
the righteous;  
The Lord protects  
the strangers;  
He supports  
the fatherless  
and the widow;



## The Biblical Context of Lutheran Worship

HERE WE MUST PLACE OURSELVES in the context of Biblical history and ask, "What is significant in the worship of the Old and New Testaments, of Israel and the church?" This is surely debatable, but one possible choice would be the gathering around the presence of God who offers himself to his people. In a very real sense, Old Testament worship consisted of simply standing in the presence of God and receiving from God his Word, his direction, his guidance. God's presence was always tied to his salvific intentions, for God was always present to save his people from their sins. The entire Old Testament cultic system and the elaborate Passover liturgy that marked the height of Israel's worship were shaped by the presence of the One who would come to end death by the sacrifice of his very own Son. The life of our first parents in the Garden before the Fall was a life

"If salvation is now and today, if the presence of salvation is here because Jesus Christ is present in our worship, then the parousia can come today, tomorrow, or in fifty years."

of worship, and the essence of that worship was their stance in God's glorious presence, the blessings of that presence, and their response to that presence. Adam and Eve were created to behold the presence of their Creator in his creation and worship him. Admittedly, worship in all these instances essentially describes the response of the people of God to the presence of God, *but the response is dependent on the presence and the blessings that proceed from that presence.*

In the New Testament the presence in the world of the Word made flesh marks the redemption of the world. With the incarnation, a radical shift takes place, for worship is not that of the people of God gathered in expectation and hope for the salvation soon to be revealed. Rather, worship is the celebration of the presence of salvation that has broken through in Jesus Christ and now permanently resides in the world. Salvation has come *now*—it is here *today*. The entire creation receives *now* the benefits of the new, second, greater Adam who has come to recreate, renew, and redeem.

How did the New Testament church know this? Was it fretting over the delay of the parousia as so many New Testament scholars insist today? Nonsense! Why should

the early church be overly concerned about the parousia when it already had *now*, at this moment, the presence of the endtime blessings in its simple liturgy of Word and Sacrament? If salvation is *now and today*, if the presence of salvation is here because Jesus Christ is present in our worship, then the parousia can come today, tomorrow, or in fifty years. It does not matter, since we have already *now* the blessings of the *not yet*; that is, the blessings for which we wait are ours already. The recent CTCR document on eschatology articulates the New Testament understanding of inaugurated eschatology that underlies the very nature of Christian worship:

The term inaugurated eschatology embraces everything that the Old and New Testament Scriptures teach concerning the believer's *present* possession and enjoyment of blessings which will be fully experienced whenever Christ comes again. . . . Therefore, the Christian lives in the proverbial tension between the *now* and *not yet*. This tension underlies everything that the Scriptures teach about eschatology. On the one hand, the end has arrived in Christ. The believer now receives the promised eschatological blessings through the Gospel and the Sacraments. On the other hand, the consummation is still a future reality. The Christian has *not yet* entered into the glories of heaven.<sup>3</sup>

## Biblical Eschatology and Worship

MISSING IN MANY DISCUSSIONS about worship and liturgy today is a Biblical eschatology that reflects New Testament and early Christian worship. A clear sign of this loss of Biblical eschatology is our thorough neglect of Sunday as the central day of worship. For the first three hundred years of Christianity the church organized time by the week, and Sunday was the day of celebration of God's restored creation because God's Son rose from the dead on that day. As Paul Marshall says in his article, "The Little Easter and the Great Sunday," Sunday was regarded by early Christians as "the Lord's day . . . an eighth day of creation, a day beyond the Sabbath rest, 'the beginning of another world' . . . the beginning of both the first and the new creation . . . 'the image of the age to come.'"<sup>4</sup> God's re-creation came to completion in the resurrection of Christ. Reverence for Sunday as the holy day was the way early Christians *gave thanks* to God for the redemption of all creation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and *petitioned* him to continue to act redemptively in their midst through the Gospel and the Sacraments. The church saw Sunday as the day in which the future blessings of the kingdom were now present in the midst of the worshiping assembly. Its view was eschatological. The celebration of

the Lord's Supper on the Lord's day demanded this eschatological view of Sunday and of Christian worship. Again, as Paul Marshall says:

In the eucharist the church met the sacramentally present Christ, risen and bringing the new creation, risen and revealed to his disciples in the breaking of bread. Eschatologically the meal was a participation in the end time—a foretaste of the kingdom rather than an expectation of its coming. Historically, it was a meeting with the crucified and risen Christ now present with his church rather than a recollection of the events of his career. Until the sixteenth century, we have no evidence of a significant Christian community that did not celebrate the eucharist on the Lord's day. But in the first century and the second, we have no evidence that any commemoration of a particular event ever helped shape a Lord's day celebration of the new creation. General commemorations of specific points in sacred history were not present until well into the fourth century. Until then, and for a long time after, the Lord's day simply marked the presence with his church of the resurrected Christ.<sup>5</sup>

In our liturgy we join all saints in one worshiping assembly *because Jesus Christ is present both in heaven and in liturgy*. The "both" should be removed because heaven and the worshiping congregation manifest their unity in the one liturgy. In the liturgy we hear that the Christian story is an eschatological one since the presence of the kingdom of God in the world's midst in Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The liturgy places us on an historical and eschatological line through God's great, objective, cosmic act of justification in Jesus Christ. We now have the same status in the kingdom of God as both the prophets of old and the saints in glory. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, and as Lutherans, we must learn to be comfortable in their presence. They are standing with us and joining their voices with our voices in one glorious liturgy. "With angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven" in our liturgy means that when we celebrate the Lord's Supper we go beyond ourselves and join a world outside ourselves. And the hiddenness of the kingdom in this world in no way vitiates against the present reality of that kingdom when we gather together as God's people in worship.

## The Structures of Worship

A LUTHERAN THEOLOGY of worship embraces the centrality of the two essential structures of Christian liturgy—the Word of Jesus and the Meal of Jesus. It is simply false to

claim that our liturgy is German. Even the liturgical music in our two hymnals is shared with other traditions, and much of it is composed by *living* 20th century Americans. As we observed, the basic structures of the liturgy have been in place from the New Testament and even the Old Testament, given to the church and institutionalized by Jesus himself in the Last Supper and the post-resurrection meals. If one approaches the liturgy from the perspective of the liturgical structures of Word and Sacrament, then one must approach it from the perspective of God. Christian worship is a continuation of the reconciled world's table fellowship with God in which he proclaims to us in *his transforming Word* salvation in Jesus Christ, and in *his sacramental Meal* he offers us the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ's body and blood in, with, and under bread and wine. In both his Word and his Meal, salvation is present because Jesus Christ is present with his gifts. We

"The blessings we expect at the end time are brought forward into the present because Jesus Christ, the eternal one, is present in the assembly."

readily speak of the Eucharist as the real presence of Christ, but we should also speak of Christ's presence in his Word. We tend to say, properly so, that the Holy Spirit works through the Word in order to create faith. But we need to add to this that faith is created because of the real presence of Jesus Christ *according to both his divine and human natures*. In his Word, Christ is present in his body and soul, flesh and blood. He is present in the Word not to feed our bodies but our souls. The problem comes from describing this presence, and Lutheran dogmatic categories about the presence of Christ in the Word might be more fully developed. This is, of course, a mystery, but one that we affirm as part of our understanding of Christ's real presence in the liturgy. The one present bodily in the Lord's Supper first invites us through the Gospel and preaching. Preaching cannot be divorced from the sacrament, and all Christian preaching must in fact be christological and sacramental.

## Liturgy

THESE TWO STRUCTURES of Christian worship and table fellowship are foundational to the classic definition of liturgy. The word *liturgy* has undergone many changes in



meaning over the last two-thousand years. The tendency today is to dismiss this word as an accurate description of Christian worship because, again, it describes worship from man's perspective. But this does not reflect the original, *eschatological* meaning of the word for the early Christian communities. Our understanding of *liturgy* has been influenced by the later medieval notion of "the work of the people," but this is a misrepresentation of its original intent. Most of us are familiar with *liturgy's* etymology as taxes owed or "an act of public service."<sup>6</sup> What is often overlooked in this etymological discussion is that the tax/obligation/responsibility that a Roman citizen owed was *for the sake of the empire*, and the Roman citizen did not pay this tax for himself, but for the good of the Roman community. Only secondarily was this tax a subjective act, that is, if he didn't pay it, the Roman IRS would be after him. But primarily it was an objective act that he did as a faithful Roman citizen.

On account of this notion of tax *for the sake of the empire*, early Christians adopted this word to describe their worship. Typical of all pagan borrowing, Christians *christianized* this word. They kept the objective character of the word, the *for the sake of the empire*, and translated it into the broader sense of *for the sake of the world*, or *for the sake of all creation*, which is what the world implied (cf. John 6). Integrating real presence, eschatology, and mission, *liturgy* became the activity (man's perspective) of the Christian assembly whose obligation it was *to stand in the presence of God and receive the gifts of God for the sake of the world as agents of God in the world* (God's perspective) *for no one else in the world could do this!*<sup>7</sup> Here we see a variation of, or might we say, the origin of *Gottesdienst*—God serving the world with his gifts of life, salvation, and forgiveness through the Word and the Sacrament. Originally, *liturgy* did not have synergistic notions, but was the environment established by God to provide grace for his people. *Liturgy* was the context in which God acted and God's people responded, first objectively, as God poured forth these objective gifts upon the world through the Christian *liturgy*, and then second, subjectively, as the world, represented by the Christian community, received the gifts and responded to the gifts in acts of worship.

### Gottesdienst

THIS DEFINITION OF LITURGY may well have been endorsed by Luther whose sole principle in renewing the *liturgy* was *justification by grace through faith*, as Bryan Spinks documents in his pamphlet, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass*.<sup>8</sup> Luther's reforms could also be described by the criteria of *faith and love*.<sup>9</sup> Here again are expressed the two different perspectives on worship. When described in terms of justification, one is

speaking from God's perspective, what God has done for the world in Jesus Christ, his objective acts that are present and proclaimed in the *liturgy*. The supreme expression of justification is in the *liturgy*. Lutheran liturgical reform, if it is to be Lutheran, must understand the *liturgy* within the context of justification and justification in the context of the *liturgy*. God's solution to the fallenness of the creation is now present in the assembly. The end is here and celebrated, because Christ the heavenly bridegroom is present offering the gifts of the wedding feast for his bride, the church, through his teaching at the table and his presence in the meal. Through Word and Sacrament, God proclaims to the world that the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ is present among us.

This Lutheran perspective on *liturgy* is sometimes called *Gottesdienst*—God's Service. Within God's service to his people in the Word and Sacrament, the Christian assembly receives the gifts that come to the assembly because Christ is present. Luther described these gifts as life, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins. This brief but accurate description acknowledges that the blessings we expect at the end time are brought forward into the present because Jesus Christ, the eternal one, is present in the assembly. This is why X. Léon-Dufour is able to say that Christian *liturgy*, as an act of remembrance of God's gracious saving activity in Jesus Christ is "the unfolding of eternity" in the midst of God's people.<sup>10</sup> Lutherans resonate to this kind of language as properly reflecting the tension between the *now* of salvation, with the presence *now* of Christ's endtime gifts, and the *not yet* expectancy that these endtime gifts are only anticipated here, coming in their completion in the parousia. These gifts are real, however, just as Christ's presence is real. And so Christian *liturgy from God's perspective* describes how God is acting continually to save his people by being present for them in Word and Sacrament.

The criteria of *faith and love* view the *liturgy* from man's response to the objective act of justification that is present and proclaimed in the *liturgy*. By *faith*, one speaks of the passive act of standing in the presence of God and receiving the gifts of God through the justifying act of Christ's presence. We bring nothing to this *liturgy*, for we simply respond in Spirit-engendered faith to God's gift of salvation. This is God's *liturgy*, his act, his expression of who he is and what he has done for the world in Christ, and we are incorporated by him into his *liturgy*. This is what we really mean by the word worship—worship is the supreme act of faith that responds to and incorporates us in God's justifying act and salvific gifts. And in this act God gives us the faith to worship him.

By *love*, one speaks of our active response that flows from the faith that passively receives the gifts of life and salva-

tion. We express this love in many ways. We confess before God our many sins. We sing those glorious liturgical hymns of praise the church has sung for over fifteen hundred years to show our thanksgiving for the salvation that God gives us in Word and Sacrament. Our great liturgical hymns of praise, the ordinaries, have located themselves around the two structures of Christian *liturgy*. The Kyrie/Gloria precedes the Word, and the Creed/hymn of the day follows the Word; the Sanctus precedes the Verba, and the Agnus Dei follows the Verba. We respond in prayer, first with the Lord's Prayer, the perfect petitionary prayer that Jesus gave us to pray, and then with all other prayers of thanksgiving and petition in which we either thank God for salvation in Jesus Christ or we petition God to keep on saving us by sustaining us in the burdens of this life so that we might not lose faith. All liturgical prayer is salvific in its content, that is, it either thanks God for salvation or petitions God to keep on saving, forming a continuous cycle. Liturgical prayer is the faithful response of God's people to God's love in Jesus Christ in which they petition God to help them accept *by faith* the life he has given them. So far this response of love has been love to God expressed in confession, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. For Luther, this fulfills the first table of the law, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Thus our first and primary response of love in the *liturgy* is toward God.

The second expression of love in the *liturgy* fulfills the second table of the law to love our neighbor as ourselves. Our confession of sins, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer also fit under this category, for in these things we *by faith* join ourselves with the community of saints in confessing the sins of thought, word, and deed we have committed against our neighbor, in thanking God for salvation and in praising him for his great acts of mercy toward us. In our prayers, we pray as community for our neighbor in all his needs, that he might continue in faith no matter what affliction or calamity may overcome him.

In the early Christian communities the prayers of dismissal were a high point of the *liturgy* when, after the service of the Word, those not worthy to partake of the eucharist were dismissed from the community with prayer, particularly the catechumens. Following the prayers of dismissal, the faithful who would partake of the sacrament exchanged the kiss of peace, a full-bodied kiss on the mouth, men to men and women to women. This was an outward sign of the love and reconciliation that now existed among the faithful before the *liturgy* of the sacrament, a kiss the faithful were able to give because of the freedom of the Gospel. This was not a cultural phenomenon, but an anti-cultural one that the Christians shared because of their reconciliation in Christ. This was the supreme expression of

love for the neighbor of faith as the worshiping community prepared to give thanks to the giver of eternal gifts.

But how does the Christian community demonstrate its love for the neighbor who knows not the gifts of God? Here is where evangelism and missions are properly placed, not as the essence of the church, but as what the church does. Our greatest act of love to our unbelieving neighbor is to bring him into the liturgical assembly to receive the gifts of salvation. The great commission is an act of love, inspired by faith that receives the gifts in the *liturgy*, to go out to the highways and byways and bring our lost neighbors into the *liturgy* so they may behold the presence of Jesus Christ and receive the gifts of the Gospel proclaimed in the *liturgy* of the Word. In the prayers of the church, we pray for the world and its needs, that all people may join us in faith and eventually in the reception of the supper. But the neighbor who knows not Christ cannot now join us in the reception of the sacrament until he first believes and is catechized to be prepared to receive Christ in the eucharist. Catechesis teaches table etiquette, and this involves a long, slow process of teaching these neighbors how to hear the Word and respond to the Word that prepares them to recline with the saints at the table spread before them. This table is not intended for the neighbor who knows not Christ. It is for the faithful who love the Host of the table with their heart, soul, and mind, and who by faith understand the full eschatological ramifications of sitting at table with the Host in his kingdom. Our neighbor who knows not Christ must first come to know him by sitting at Christ's feet and hearing his Word proclaimed and interpreted by the one who has been called to stand in his stead and by his command.

This means that our worship must immediately proclaim to our unbelieving neighbor that something is happening in the *liturgy* that happens nowhere else in all of creation. God who is everywhere can only be found in the *liturgy* where the revelation of God comes to full expression in the Gospel and sacraments. There is a presence here that is found nowhere else—here is God's divine normality—here is the center of the universe—here is the King reigning over his kingdom, the Creator recreating his creation, the Bridegroom residing at his wedding feast offering the food and drink of heaven. Our worship must demonstrate to our unbelieving neighbor that Christ is in his assembly, and that those anointed as Christians in baptism now celebrate that presence in response to the gifts given to the world in this *liturgy*. Our neighbor from the highways and byways must see that no more important business is being carried out in the world than the business transacted here in the *liturgy* proclaimed *for the life of the world*. If our *liturgy* does not express this, then we cannot expect our visiting neighbors to return to our *liturgy*. If they do not see a



world made new in Jesus Christ in the gifts of salvation, then they will not endure the long, slow process of catechesis prior to receiving the justifying gifts of Christ in baptism and celebrating a world made new in Christ in the eucharist.

### Lutheran Liturgy and the Theology of the Cross

LEST THIS LITURGY become just another expression of triumphalism, a Lutheran caveat is necessary. It is an assumption that the liturgy must reflect the language and the ethos of the culture. If this is true, then liturgies today will veer towards a feel-good, shallow, artificially uplifting sentimentality that reflects the pop culture in which we live. These liturgies are at times exciting and entertaining but at most will give only immediate satisfaction. The liturgy then ceases to be transcultural but becomes just another expression of the culture's malaise.

There is a deeper problem in these pop liturgies than the significant lack of Gospel and theological content that leads to spiritual lobotomies. The movement towards an emotional high vitiates against our Lutheran understanding of the hiddenness of the kingdom in the world in which we live. Liturgy's humble expression is, in and of itself, a demonstration of the nature of the kingdom. No matter how difficult our hymns, how untrained our organist, how pathetic our singing, God is still present in our liturgy offering his gifts. This does not give us the right to continue these turgid liturgies that drone on endlessly like long funeral dirges. But to think that the kingdom comes by our own efforts, or rather, that the kingdom comes to visitors because of our relevant liturgies, undermines our confession that the kingdom is hidden under the humble means of God's proclamation of the new era of salvation in Jesus Christ through simple words, simple water, simple bread and wine. If one can believe that God is present in our ancient but enduring liturgies, then one is able to understand God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ and his salvation of the world through suffering and sacrifice.

The liturgical structures of Word and Sacrament transcend all cultures and create our Lutheran theology of worship. Structure and theology cannot be separated but operate in tension as *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Culture does not form structure or theology but is formed by it. Structure and theology exist within culture to transform culture. They shape our Lutheran liturgy where we remember God's great justifying acts of salvation of the past and he remembers us. In Lutheran liturgy, we receive his present offer of salvation and view our future inheritance when we shall stand in God's presence forever and worship the Lamb in his kingdom which has no end. Lutheran worship is its own

culture, distinct from both the pop culture of secular society and the religious culture of Evangelicalism in our country today. *The church must develop and maintain its own cultural language that reflects the values and structures of the Scriptures and not of the current culture.* And this church language can be shaped only by a Biblical theology that affirms the real presence of Jesus Christ in worship and our belief that Jesus Christ is present in worship to bind the church together as a community. The context that shapes our distinct Lutheran ethos is Scripture, theology, and history. Local circumstance is secondary. Traditionally, this Lutheran culture is liturgical, theological, and counter-cultural. And one day, the problem of contextualization will no longer exist for the church, for we will worship the Lamb in his kingdom that has no end. Worship is the reason we were created; for this reason we are created again from on high in the waters of holy baptism. Throughout our history as the people of God, we have worshiped God as the one who is present among us as Savior and who continually invites us to the ongoing feast.

### References

- 1 Sections of this essay were taken from "Structure, Culture, and Theology in Lutheran Liturgy" *Concordia Monograph Series* (Concordia Seminary, 1992) 9-31, and "Liturgical Renewal in the Parish" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* edited by Fred L. Precht (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1993) 21-43.
- 2 I. H. Marshall, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* edited by J. G. Davies (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986) 389.
- 3 CTCR, *The End Times*, 17-19.
- 4 See P. V. Marshall, "The Little Easter and the Great Sunday," *Liturgy* Vol. 1 #2 (1980) 28 who quotes the *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:8b-9, Ignatius' *Ad Magnesios* 9:1, and Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* 27 in support of his view.
- 5 *Ibid*, p. 29.
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- 7 For this insight, I am indebted to the lectures of Aidan Kavanagh during my studies at Yale Divinity School, 1982-1984.
- 8 Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcote Notts: Grove Books, 1982).
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# Music: That's the Question

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MUSIC HAS BEEN A PART OF WOR-

SHIP for centuries. From Old Testament times to the present, there is ample evidence that believers and Christians worshiped God through music. While the use of music in the Lutheran church has been a hallmark of its worship since its inception, at this point in time The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is wrestling mightily with questions regarding worship practices and which music should be used in worship services.

GROWTH! That's a word we hear a lot these days. It seems as though a great emphasis is being placed on numerical growth and bigness. Insinuated is the idea that if you wish to be judged as being successful, you must make an impression through numbers and develop large congregations.<sup>1</sup> Workshops sponsored by groups such as the Fellowship Ministries of Tempe, Arizona, link growth and a stress on techniques and guidelines for worship which they feel will reach the unchurched. Style and substance are claimed to be independent of one another; keep the substance but use a style that touches the people. Hymnody, we are told, should be upbeat and quickly learnable. Music must move the people. It all sounds good, but what is the ultimate end?

Does the end justify the means?

Questions abound regarding the use of music, especially in what is termed "alternative worship." Is the theology of that which is sung compatible with the theology of that which is preached? What is the role of emotion in worship? How much should worship be personalized? These and additional questions will be addressed

in this article.



## Theology and Worship Music

IN THEIR QUEST TO REACH THE 76 MILLION United States citizens known as Boomers, some Lutheran churches are rejecting or negating the use of historic hymnody in favor of praise hymns. Very often these hymns are led by a praise choir, a small electronically amplified group of singers, and/or a praise band, usually consisting of at least a synthesizer, drums, guitars, and bass. Praise songs, drawn from a variety of publications, are then presented in an upbeat manner. This new, contemporary style, supposedly the music preferred by the Boomers, is thought to be a key element in attracting them to worship.<sup>2</sup>

The elements of music are neither sacred nor secular. Over time, music is judged as being sacred or secular through its associations with melodies, rhythms, and especially text. When examining the appropriateness of music used in worship, an emphasis certainly must be placed on evaluating the text. Does the text reflect the theology of the church in which the music texts are being used? While most, if not all, pastors would agree that consistency in that which is preached and that which is sung is necessary and vital, examination of alternative worship folders and attendance at some Lutheran congregations which use alternative worship and praise songs indicate that there is a lack of attention being paid to that which is sung by the people.

**"When examining the appropriateness of music used in worship, an emphasis certainly must be placed on evaluating the text."**

"Give the people what they want" (in music), we are told. However, what if what they want is in error theologically? Self-fulfillment is identified as a characteristic of Boomers. Salvation by grace alone is a gift from God, not the result of a decision made by an individual. This belief is in opposition to self-fulfillment. No pastor in the LCMS would advocate synergism from the pulpit. Yet, a pastor stated that he could see no problem with his congregation singing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." (*The Other Songbook*, #87)

Abounding in some praise hymns is the theology of glory, often at the expense of the theology of the cross. Hymn texts based on the theology of glory use the worshiper's actions as the basis for praise to God. These hymns are human-centered rather than God-centered. Note this emphasis in "I Love You, Lord." (*The Other Songbook*, #225)

I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice  
To worship You, O my soul rejoice.  
Take joy, my King, in what You hear,  
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

Dr. Oliver Rupprecht, in his article, "The Modern Struggle for Standards in Religious Music," emphasizes the divine initiative in hymnody when he states:

... "Luther was convinced that the principal function of Christian hymnody is to proclaim the divine Word. Contrary to a popular notion, Christian hymnody is not, first of all, to serve as a vehicle for human response to divine goodness. It is to proclaim divine goodness. By that proclamation—by that spiritual food—we live, not by man's thankfulness for it."<sup>3</sup>

Care must be exercised in the choice of hymns which are sung by the people. Throughout history hymns have been used to teach the laity. For example, Luther's hymnody was very effective in teaching the Reformation faith to the people. And so today, the textual thrust of a hymn definitely will have a bearing on the development of a person's theology.

In order for congregations to make use of praise music in their worship services, it is necessary for them to purchase auxiliary songbooks. An example of one such book, which is found in the pews of many Lutheran churches, is *The Other Songbook*.<sup>4</sup> Richard Resch makes several observations about this songbook:

"Much of Anderson's book is experiential religion. Immediate revelation is taught in 'He walks with me and He talks with me' (#261). The centrality of feeling is taught in these examples: 'Let us feel His love begun' (#260); 'O let us feel His presence' (#188); 'Feel the oneness that He brings' (#223); 'Feel the faith swell up inside you' (#242). Synergism, blatant and subtle, appears throughout *The Other Songbook*: 'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus' (#87); 'Accept Him with your whole heart, Oooo' (#242); 'If you want joy, you must sing for it; if you want joy, you must shout for it; if you want joy, you must jump for it' (#205). Mantra-like texts of praise round out this book as the individual, the congregation, and even a synod are encouraged to feast on the theology of glory."<sup>5</sup>

Given the theological problems contained in this songbook, why is this resource found in many Lutheran church pews? After examining and participating in Lutheran worship services which include praise hymns with theological problems, one must wonder why some pastors are not more discriminatory about the theology that is being sung. The

historic truth, "*lex orandi, lex credendi*," reminds us that how we pray or worship shapes or misshapes what we believe.<sup>6</sup>

A dilemma facing musicians in the Lutheran church is the question of what to do when a pastor or congregation asks the musician to lead hymnody that contains false doctrine. That dilemma can be eliminated if pastors and worship committees will examine carefully the texts of congregational song.

## Emotion and Music

EMOTION HAS BEEN AND ALWAYS WILL BE an integral part of a Christian's faith. At a conference on "Liturgy and Mission in the Small Congregation," Pastor Harold Senkbeil spoke of the relationship between emotion and faith. He correctly observed that where God is present with His gifts, there will be emotions. However, some in the church today are reversing this and saying that where there is an intense religious feeling and when emotions are aroused, then God is present.<sup>7</sup> According to the latter standard, music is judged on how well it will alter the mood of the worshiper. Rather, music should serve God's actions, not people's actions.

Using a medley of songs at the beginning of a worship service to get people in the proper mood for worship is often advocated and practiced by those using alternative worship. Consider, though, the reasons for God's presence, listed in this song text, taken from an opening medley of songs used in a "contemporary" service in a Lutheran church.

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,  
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.  
I can hear the brush of angel's wings,  
I see glory on each face;  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

God's presence is assured because of what an individual feels, hears, and sees. That just isn't so! Humans don't authenticate God.

The importance of developing a proper mood for worship is underlined in a quote used in the preface to *The Other Songbook*.

"Music prepares the heart for worship and commitment. Music is the greatest mood alternator of all, and unlocks the ministry of God in the untrodden soil of a person's soul. People love singing. They love being moved even when there is not a song in their hearts."<sup>8</sup>

Using emotions as the basis for developing a worship service or even just an opening medley of songs is risky.

Using music to manipulate the emotions of the worshiper is a dangerous procedure. Boomers (and for that matter, anyone) are looking for integrity in worship. Once people are removed from the experience of high emotion and realize they have been manipulated, a strong negative reaction often develops.

## Pietism in Worship

BOOMERS, WE ARE INFORMED, are individualistic and want worship to be personal.<sup>9</sup> In an effort to meet this need, leaders and developers of alternative worship easily can encourage pietistic hymnody, that is, hymns which place a strong emphasis upon an individual's relationship with God, such as "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee." Subjective hymns do not need to be completely removed from corporate worship; however, examination of alternative worship service folders often reveals a high percentage of hymns with a pietistic emphasis. For example, in the aforementioned medley of hymns starting with "Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this Place," the remaining four songs contained these phrases:

"In moments like these I sing out a song, I sing out a love song to Jesus";

"We are standing on holy ground, And I know that there are angels all around";

"O let the Son of God enfold you with His Spirit and His love: Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul";

"I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised."

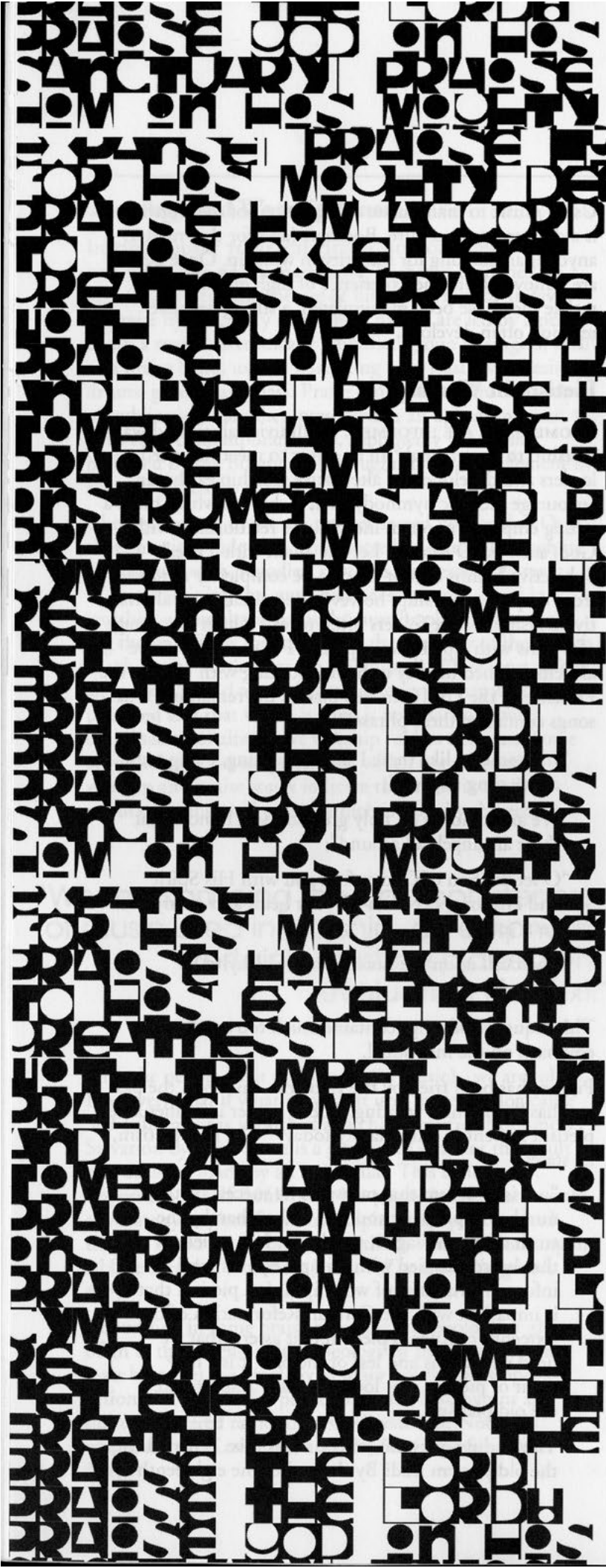
This sequence of songs contains much too strong an emphasis on the individual.

Pietism has been tried by the Lutheran church in the past and has been found wanting. Robin Leaver identifies a new pietism present in Christianity today.<sup>10</sup> The new pietism, he states:

"... is a pietism that measures its success by the number of people it touches, rather than by the truth of the message it proclaims. It is a pietism that is preoccupied with "simple hymns" and informal structures of worship. It is a pietism that is impatient with the German Reformation of the sixteenth century, a pietism that asserts that we need new forms and less of the old. It is a new spirit of pietism that looks in many respects like the old pietism..."

The leading question, of course, is this: Where did the old pietism lead? By the end of the eighteenth





century German Lutheranism had almost disappeared. Liturgical forms had been eliminated, the highly developed church music of Bach and his contemporaries was no longer heard in the churches, and the content of the Christian faith had been watered down to little more than Unitarianism, with an invertebrate spirituality lacking the backbone of confessional theology. Instead of leading to a period of growth of the church, Pietism precipitated an era of decline of the church, a situation which was not reversed until, around the middle of the nineteenth century, there was a recovery of Lutheran confessional theology, Lutheran liturgical practice, and Lutheran church music . . .<sup>11</sup>

In light of past experience with pietism, why, then, do some in the present day Lutheran church refuse to learn the lessons of history? Why encourage a pietistic emphasis knowing that it is not of lasting value and that it can lead to other distortions of the Christian faith, such as rationalism?

### Participation in Worship

A CHARACTERISTIC OF BOOMERS is that they want to participate in ministry.<sup>12</sup> For years leaders in liturgical worship have been advocating the involvement of lay persons in worship.<sup>13</sup> However, the author's observation of singing in churches using alternative worship and praise songs has revealed that while there is often a lot of sound filling the sanctuary, it is not coming from the people. Rather it is the result of the praise choir and/or band being highly amplified electronically and thereby giving the illusion of a strong participatory sound. Donald Hustad, a musician who has spent many years in the evangelical tradition, makes this observation about a congregation's singing of praise and worship music:

"It is entirely possible that Praise and Worship singing with the worship team is little more than performance music, sung very well by a small group of professionals. As such it is bound to be successful as a performance that will please both the undiscerning minister and worshiper. Gone is the problem of poor acoustics—solved by electronics. Gone is the need to teach hymns, and to encourage the congregation to participate with full voice and heart. It doesn't really matter whether folks sing or not . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Probably the type of worship farthest removed from participation by the worshipers is that which is developed around the concept of entertainment evangelism. Pastor Walther Kallestad boldly states, "The key to reaching our

world with the 'good news' of Jesus is *entertainment evangelism*."<sup>15</sup> Entertainment-oriented churches, he claims, are growing. However, since music in worship is not simply entertainment, why should music styles and practices which do not invite participation by the people be encouraged?

### Quality in Worship

"BOOMERS ARE A PEOPLE seeking quality, quality, quality. They despise mediocrity."<sup>16</sup> This is true not only of Boomers but also of most individuals in the church. Therein lies much of the reason why Lutheran churches are abandoning liturgical worship.

In reality, many Lutheran congregations have never experienced true quality liturgical worship. My work takes me to quite a number of Lutheran congregations in Nebraska and across the country. While there have been some pleasant experiences, in many cases the worship I have experienced in quite a number of congregations has been dismal. Except for singing and following along silently during the prayers, lay people were mostly spectators. Unfortunately, the singing of the congregation was often led in a manner which made singing difficult. Well-meaning organists would play the hymns inaccurately in terms of pitch and rhythm. In some cases, the organists were using organs that were inadequate to the task and thus could not lead the people. At other places the acoustics of the building did not support the sound of a corporate body. Sound absorbing materials such as carpets, acousticed ceilings (and sometimes even walls), and padded pews (sometimes not only the seat of the pew but also the back) sopped up the sound of the people. Since worshipers could hear only themselves and a few people around them, non-energetic singing resulted. Some pastors showed evidence of not having paid attention to the details of the service; in some cases their non-verbal communication indicated a boredom with the service. The joy of worship was not present in these congregations. When leaving such a congregation, I often wondered, "Why do the people come back here to worship?" In far too many cases, they did not return. Today critics of liturgical worship often equate this dismal type of service and singing with traditional or liturgical worship. Liturgical worship can be vibrant and uplifting if planned and presented well.

Planning for worship takes much work. It was interesting recently to hear two pastors who are now using alternative worship remark that they now are spending considerable time in planning for worship. In the past, they said, when using services from either *The Lutheran Hymnal* or *Lutheran Worship*, all they did was choose four hymns and prepare the sermon. If that was their approach to a liturgical worship service, is it no wonder that the result was boring

and dull? Liturgical worship was never meant to be done in such an unplanned manner.

Furthermore, if the congregation was being led by an incompetent organist using an inadequate organ in a poor acoustical setting, is it surprising that the music of the people was non-energetic and of poor quality? If a parish choir functioned as a concert choir instead of as a service choir, is it a surprise the choir was endured rather than appreciated? If little attention was given to developing, encouraging, and hiring trained musical leadership in the congregation, is anyone surprised that the music of the organ, choir, and instruments was less than successful? The result, of course, in many cases was a service of poor quality.

### Questions and Suggestions

IS THE SOLUTION to the problems listed in the previous three paragraphs to downplay and discard the liturgical service and traditional hymnody? Will using an alternative service solve the problems of lack of trained musicians, inadequate instruments, and poor acoustics? When there is a conflict between the culture of the unchurched and the theology of the church, does the church dare to alter its theology to accommodate the conflicting culture? Can the Lutheran church proclaim one teaching in its preaching and another in its singing?

The crisis facing Lutheran congregations in music is not

"Why do the people come back here to worship?"

musical but theological. It must be solved first by an understanding of the strong connection between theology and worship, between theology and music. Pastors and musicians must understand this so they are not influenced unduly by the tides of consumerism and marketing. The end does not justify the means, especially if the means uses questionable theology, such as synergism and the theology of glory, and/or is based on a poor historic track record, such as pietism and emotionalism.

When worship, especially music in worship, is not working well in a parish, pastors, musicians, and congregations need to examine carefully the reason why problems are occurring. Merely changing the style of worship may not be the proper solution, especially when doing so alters the substance of the message of the church. Examination of what is happening in quite a number of Lutheran churches which have moved to an alternative style of worship raises a concern regarding a distinct difference in doctrinal empha-



sis between that which is being sung and that which is being preached.

Great things are possible in liturgical worship and traditional hymnody. Contrary to the accusations of some liturgical worship critics, the music and worship leadership of LCMS seminaries, colleges, and universities and their music and worship leadership do not advocate using a worship practice that is solely Germanic and centuries old. German chorales are a minority in both *Lutheran Worship* and *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Contained in both books are hymns from a variety of traditions, such as English hymnody, hymns from Psalters, Welsh hymns, American folk hymns, and twentieth-century hymns, to mention only a few. An examination of the choral and organ catalogs of Concordia Publishing House and Augsburg Fortress reveals an abundance of twentieth century contributions to church music. Contemporary Lutheran composers have been very active in the latter half of this century producing musical materials which can be used in both large and small parishes.

Lutherans historically have understood public worship as *Gottesdienst*, God's Service or Divine Service, not as *Menschen dienst*, the people's service. Thus public worship is essentially God's activity, not people's activity. Pastor Harold Senkbeil summarizes this perspective well:

"Lutherans understand their worship life not as the coming together of like-minded people who wish to create a 'worship experience' for one another, but rather as people who are called together by God's own action in Word and Sacrament to stand in His presence and receive the good gifts he dispenses in that same Word and Sacrament."<sup>17</sup>

May pastors, musicians, and congregations work to achieve that end.

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# Outreach: That's the Question

## Vernon Gundermann

The Reverend Vernon Gundermann is the Senior Pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, Missouri



## CHURCH SPEEDS UP SERVICES

Greenwich, N.J. (AP)—"There's no chance of falling asleep during the sermon at the First Lutheran Church. There is no sermon. The church's minister is trying a new way to draw people into the fold: an express 22-minute service that he says provides all the spirituality of the regular service in half the time."<sup>1</sup>

An express, 22-minute service may be one way to "draw people into the fold." It is apparent that one of the paradigm questions of worship is OUTREACH! There are a lot of fairly desperate approaches being considered and sometimes taken in order to "draw people into the fold" and answer the worship paradigm question of outreach. The rationale behind those actions is sometimes as faulty as the actions.

The question for most is not whether worship could "draw people into the fold." Worship that does not draw, or that may actually prohibit or drive people from the fold, is not Biblical, not part of our confessional heritage, not part of our history, nor consistent with our spirit. We are a Biblical people, sent by our Lord (John 20:19) to "tell what we have seen and heard of the risen Christ," drawing all people unto Jesus.

At the same time, we understand that "drawing people into the fold" is an act of God, "not of might nor by power but by my Spirit, says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). We confess with Luther that the Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth."



## The Relationship Between Worship and Outreach

THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE and work in and through us means a number of things for us who care about "drawing people into the fold." The good news is that "drawing people into the fold" does not ultimately depend upon us. It is the work of the Spirit of God. The challenge is that we, in our well-meaning concern and passion for "drawing people into the fold," do not get in the way of the Spirit. The urgency is that we use this gift of worship, that we do the liturgy, so that many may be "added to the fold."

There are many who share our concern and are offering suggestions of what to do. Some are saying that we must use the tradition that has been handed on to us with great faithfulness, repeating it week after week, with little or no change. Others are saying that there is little if anything from the past that will be useful if we wish to be involved in "adding to the fold." They propose changing everything. Each position has its defenders.

Some are suggesting that the liturgy form chosen for worship does not matter much at all regarding "adding to the fold." What matters, they suggest, is how people are greeted as they enter and share in the worship experience (hospitality), the format of the worship materials (printed out), humor (or lack of it), a service that is child friendly, availability of a "visitor center," location and equipment in the nursery, nature of the invitation to join in the fellowship hour, the immediacy and nature of the follow-up to the worship experience, and a host of other items.

"It is becoming very apparent that every congregation in its unique situation must develop a use of the rite which relates best in its 'encounter with God.'"

These are indeed important concerns that deserve attention as never before. But the critical concern about the relationship between worship and outreach has much more to do with what happens in worship itself. For many who define worship as the "people's encounter with their God,"<sup>2</sup> the continuing use of the ancient Western rite is very useful and most important.

But that rite dare not be used uncritically or repeated routinely. Thankfully, there are a great many who are giving the use of this rite very careful reflection, investing

great energy in its meaningful and relevant use, and offering insights that make it useful in a wide variety of situations. It is becoming very apparent that every congregation in its unique situation must develop a use of the rite which relates best in its "encounter with God."

Among those in our Lutheran family who are providing such insights and energy is David Christian. In an editorial, he writes:

"It is not the task of the worship leaders to lead the people of God to abandon such a gift (the historic liturgy). Rather, it is our task to help people unwrap the treasure and appropriate it for their use. Such unwrapping, however, is not done through dull repetition. The language of the liturgy, beautiful as it is, can be very inaccessible to modern Americans, and to say and do the same thing week after week without regard to the people's understanding is simply to reinforce that inaccessibility. We may have to reshape that structure and language from time to time, substitute less lofty words and use music outside our normal tradition (or personal preference) to engage the person in the pew in the holy conversation. We may have to explain and teach as we worship, interrupting from time to time that elegant flow, so that the conversation does not simply 'flow past' the worshiper. We may have to be concerned about time in the pew and movement for children and the length of the sermon, so that people are engaged ultimately by hearing and speaking the word of God, and not disengaged by the process."<sup>3</sup>

Doing worship this way is very hard work. But it is a place to begin, and it holds great promise for where we will end.

The use of the ancient Western rite was also eloquently endorsed by Dr. Walter R. Bouman in a six part series of *Forum Letter* articles entitled "The Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) after Fifteen Years." The LBW was a product of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship in which many from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod participated. *Lutheran Worship (LW)* owes its genesis to LBW, and much of what can be said of the LBW liturgically can also be said of LW.

Bouman's premise is a statement by Stanley Hauerwas: "The church has missionary power in direct proportion to its liturgical integrity." Bouman's enthusiasm is not for a mindless following of the rite, but for careful instruction for those who lead as well as those who participate, an informed use of the many options available, a holding central the Gospel word of God for the people, a dynamic emphasis on Baptism and Communion (he suggests that the most dynamic evangelism tool is the administration of

the Sacrament of Baptism) and the focused response and communication of the people to our God.

## Liturgical Evangelism

BUT IT IS NOT ONLY LUTHERANS who are feeling this drive to connect the zeal of "adding to the fold" through significant liturgical life. One such resource is Robert E. Webber, professor of historical theology at Wheaton College. In the preface of his *Celebrating Our Faith: Evangelism Through Worship*, Webber writes:

"Over the past decade, the evangelism of unbelievers and the restoration of baptized but lapsed people has become a primary concern of almost every major denomination. Some denominations are returning to mass evangelism, while others are turning toward one-on-one evangelism. Behind all the attempts to revive evangelism lies the universally expressed longing to restore an evangelism that belongs to the local church. Christian leaders want an evangelism that not only converts people, but also brings them into the full life of the church and keeps them there.

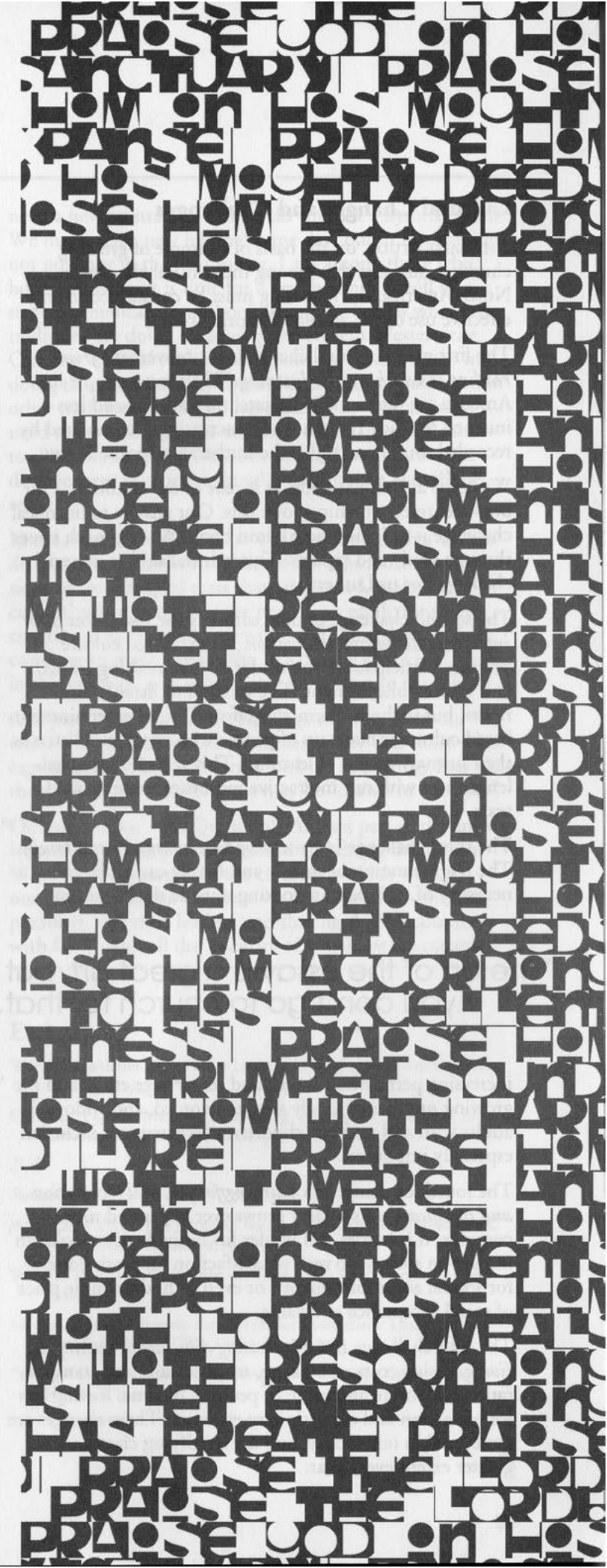
"This book focuses on local church evangelism. It does not propose a new gimmick or the creation of one of America's fastest growing churches. This book advocates restoring third-century evangelism, an evangelism that was used effectively in the context of a secular and pagan society . . . which I have called 'liturgical evangelism'.<sup>6</sup>

He defines liturgical evangelism as a process that calls a person into Christ and the church through a conversion regulated and ordered by worship. These services order the inner experience of repentance from sin, faith in Christ, conversion of life, and entrance into the Christian community.

Those familiar with Webber recognize him as a well-respected Evangelical who is wanting to restore for some and introduce to others evangelism through liturgical worship. What he says about evangelism through liturgy having Biblical roots and a rich history will be received as refreshing and affirming by all who have longed for this connection.

The Episcopal Church has also been doing much study and research investigating the relationship between worship and evangelism.

One study raises such questions as: Does our liturgy in fact work? Does it draw people to faith in Jesus Christ? Does it really matter that our worship is "authentic" to tradition if ordinary people do not easily participate in it?<sup>7</sup> Those are our questions.





## Cultural Changes and Challenges

THE SAME STUDY, on the basis of a sample of growing churches, suggests that among the cultural changes in North America, the following must be considered in an effective use of the ancient, historic liturgy.

The first major cultural change is the movement *from reading to watching and listening*. While most people in America are functionally literate, they are less and less inclined to read. Yet in a world increasingly dominated by recorded sound and sight, the Lutheran response is *text*.

We come at that naturally. It is part of our tradition. Our book-centered worship shows this. Our answer to liturgical challenge is to issue a new hymn book. We approach issues through study and reports. This cultural shift is a special challenge for us Lutherans.

The second challenge of our culture is the *movement from interaction to passive observation*. A text-based culture assumes participation: the reader does something (reads) and reacts while doing it. The watcher or listener also reacts, but without interactive effort. But an entertainment-based culture is made up of people who watch and listen as their primary means of learning. This will also be a challenge to us with our interactive responses and extended texts.

The third challenge is a *yearning for community and family*. The fragmentation of society and family caused by the necessity of each parent working outside the home, an

"The art of the essay is a great art, but you don't go to church for that."

increasing permissive divorce and remarriage ethic, and the growing number of lonely single, divorced, and widowed adults with and without children, make issues of inclusion especially important.

The fourth challenge is a *yearning for personal recognition and significance*. As society grows ever larger and more complex, it is harder and harder for individuals to make an impact on society, to receive satisfaction for work done or for special accomplishments, or even to find a simple place of social acceptance and value.

The fifth challenge is *the increasing difficulty of making a living*. Rising costs of housing, medical care, and transportation take more and more of people's income, leaving less for education and discretionary expenses. These changes are structured in our society, and are stratifying classes to a greater extent every year.

The sixth challenge is the *growth of geographical choices*. Because of the growth of metropolitan areas and the auto, people are accustomed to driving some distance to reach work, shopping, friends, and entertainment. The Church is part of this movement. Churches are not as solidly rooted in their geographical location as before. Congregations form around non-geographical values, and are mobile and volatile. On the positive side, this can free the congregation to pursue its own vision of liturgy and faith.

The author suggests that there are other factors facing the Church's worship life and its "drawing people into the fold." Our world is changing, and as we use the ancient rite we must always ask, "Who is worshipping?" and "Whom can we include?"

I do not believe that this means a "quickie" service without a sermon and a desperate effort to get everything done in 22 minutes. However, there are important implications for our worship life. The first involves PLANNING.

### Worship Demands Our Best Effort

SUNDAY WORSHIP is the single most important event in a congregation. Worship should be done as well, as professionally, as the congregation is capable of doing. Most importantly for outreach, Sunday worship shows others publicly the joy and life of faith in Jesus Christ, and invites new people to join the community of faith. As the most important thing a congregation does, worship demands the best use of time, care, and resources.

Because public worship is so important, churches that grow plan their worship as carefully as possible. They are intentional about what they do.

This results in the most effective "advertising" that a church does. It is people telling people about their meaningful encounter with their God. It is probably as true of worshippers as it is in sales: one satisfied customer tells eight others; one unsatisfied customer tells 14 others; good planning, a good understanding of who is coming, and a good use of the ancient rite have a very good chance of resulting in "drawing people to the fold."

To "draw people to the fold" also involves doing the music well, very well. Growing churches pay a lot of attention to doing vibrant, alive and interesting music. We Americans are pretty sophisticated about our music, and we have an astonishing range of taste. We are accustomed to the highest standards in performance and presentation.

The ancient rite allows for many, many different forms of music. The form is not nearly as important as is the opportunity for people to get to know the form used. To get to know the form calls for the leadership of musicians

who understand the relationship of music and worship. Music is part of the meaningful "encounter with God."

Because worship and music are so important, it is not surprising that those who observe growing churches often comment that once the pastor is in place, the next staff person should be the musician (cantor) who will help the congregation in its musical "encounter with God," enabling the people to do their song. Good music done well will "draw people into the fold."

What kind of competency is required to lead this "encounter with God?" It will require one who is comfortable with the role of being the "presiding minister" among "ministers." That we have chosen to use this term in our hymnal is a happy choice. Some have suggested that the one who does the ancient rite well is one who sees the role of presiding minister as that of a "master of ceremonies." He is to make sure that everyone is comfortable, that everyone is involved, and that things move along according to the plan. The movement is not contrived or so rehearsed that people are uncomfortable; rather, the service flows smoothly.

Most growing churches have found a middle ground in service presentation: intimate and caring, not too formal, but also not too familiar or folksy.

Perhaps Garrison Keillor made a helpful observation when he was asked what he hoped would happen when he walked into church for Sunday worship.

"You hope that the leaders who have worked up the exercise don't get too much in the way of the congregation, and don't try to put on too much of a performance. That's my bias because, you know, I'm intolerant of other performers.

The sort of minister who sets my teeth on edge is one who is trying a little bit too hard, has just a little too much heartiness coming from up front. That the sermon is too stylized by about half.

You don't go to church for an essay. The art of the essay is a great art, but you don't go to church for that. And I think that's what a lot of ministers, in my limited experience, try to provide. They offer this work of the sermon art. And it is usually not what's needed.

The best sermons I've heard, the ones that left me shaken afterward, always were based on simple storytelling. The preacher has told us a story from the Bible in such a way that we really can feel its reality . . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Among the worship paradigm questions regarding outreach is the question of the hymnal. Does all this mean that we

need a new hymnal, or can we do without a hymnal at all? We may need a new hymnal some day, but in my opinion not now nor in the near future. I am among those who hope that when it is time for a new hymnal, it will be a truly ecumenical service book, using the best of what other traditions are doing to develop the ancient Western rite. Our new hymnal took a courageous and decisive step in doing that, and those hymnals that have been published in other traditions since *LW* have picked up the baton. We need to be deploying the very best of our liturgical minds to this task, so when sometime in the distant future the development of a new hymnal is appropriate, we will be ready.

In the meantime, we need to continue doing what we can do to understand the rite that we have, propose the revisions of the liturgical texts that are needed, make the cultural adjustments that are necessary, add hymns that contribute to the "dialogue with God" (and delete), and continue to make vibrant the "encounter with God" so that in this old way, new people may be "drawn to the fold."

And pray. Pray that God's blessings will rest upon our efforts to encounter Him in worship. Pray that those who experience this encounter may be bold in sharing. Pray that those who receive the witness may be "drawn to the fold."

"Outreach: That's the Question!" At least part of the answer is found in coming to understand and doing the ancient Western rite, sensitive to the culture in which we find ourselves, doing the very best we are capable of doing in planning, and then leading and sharing this "encounter with God" with all the integrity of which we are capable.

### End notes

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## book reviews



**A COMMUNITY OF JOY: HOW TO CREATE CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP** by Tim Wright. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

AT FIRST GLANCE this book seems to be one that should find a place in every pastor's or worship director's library. Indeed, as the forward states: "His (Wright's) practical ideas fit every type of church, including mainline liturgical types." This book is very readable and offers a wealth of music, drama, and preaching resources. It is very easy to say, "Finally, a book that will revitalize our worship" when handed a book like this. A thorough reading of the book, however, suggests some inherent problems.

Wright gives some common-sense suggestions to "tighten up" liturgical worship, such as "make the campus visitor-friendly, use name tags, and provide a quality nursery." But after giving some seventeen suggestions, he quickly dismisses liturgical worship by saying: "However, no matter what improvements we make, liturgical worship will not be the worship of choice for some, since many are turned off by its drawbacks. Reaching new generations will require innovative forms of worship services designed specifically to target contemporary, irreligious people."

The bulk of the book addresses the issue of attracting people to church through the avenue of contemporary worship. We are told to "know the audience" and to strive for "visitor-oriented" worship done in a "presentational style." Many resources are given including institutes at many "successful" community churches nationwide.

The troubling thing is that although the Community Church of Joy and Timothy Wright are Lutheran (although you are never told this directly), most of the resources given are not. Do we as Lutherans need to forsake our name and liturgical heritage to attract people to our congregations? Do we need to become a source of religious entertainment to survive? It is clear from this book that Wright believes so. I am not as certain.

When worship is relegated to the role of evangelism, those already in our church are neglected. When Holy Communion is celebrated in a side room after Sunday worship, and the service "for believers" is moved to mid-week for fear of offending "seekers" (two of Wright's suggestions), it is time to question the mission of that church. It is possible to use contemporary music and worship within a Lutheran theological and liturgical context with integrity. Wright does not address such ways in his book.

This is a book that will, it is hoped, be used as a basis for discussion rather than another quick fix.

**William Kuhn**  
Assistant Professor of Music  
Concordia-Seward

**THE PSALTER—PSALMS & CANTICLES FOR SINGING.** Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

AS I TRAVEL about the country visiting churches of the LCMS, I become more and more convinced that public worship as I have practiced it for many decades is moving away from the fundamental principles which have guided us in the past.

But just as the feelings of despair and surrender begin to take over, along comes a compendium of stature and beauty from no less than the Reformed tradition, an eclectic collection of the complete Psalter in responsorial styles.

The Lutheran tradition, as well as the Reformed so long as it models its worship after that of John Calvin, has always focused on what is formally objective in its public worship. We have insisted on the gathering of our thoughts and actions in worship through singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. While a whole genre of chorales (mostly texts of human composure)—hymns of faith and life, piety and private devotion—grew to maturity, the overt perpetuation of those elements of continuity (from Old Testament days on through the early Christian eras, through the apostasy of the Church of the Middle Ages to the time of Reformation) were always evident in the public worship forms and practice of the Lutheran churches: Psalms and Canticles.

The task force responsible for this volume sought "liturgical translations of psalms and canticles that were lyrical and suitable for singing." The volume is intended to be used along with the hymnal so that not only metrical psalms may be sung by the congregation but that responsorial psalmody may become the *dominant* factor in the congregation's participation in psalm-singing by using simple psalm tones with metrical refrains.

The spiral bound volume has 410 pages. The introductory pages are concise yet filled with necessary information for background and practice. Then follows the complete Psalter, some with multiple settings (e.g., Psalm 100 which even has a setting with Orff instrument accompaniment!). The second musical section is devoted to "Canticles and Ancient Hymns." The third portion is entitled "Presbyterian Psalm Refrains and Tones" to which all the Psalter may be sung according to its own rubrics.

Finally, the last portion is "Music for the Congregational Participation," all of which may be reproduced in the Sunday bulletin with blanket permission of the publisher.

The music ranges from ancient plainsong to Gelineau to (mostly) contemporary settings, many of which are from the prolific pen of Hal Hopson, a composer with the unique ability to write in lyrical yet conservative styles which appeal to the average church-goer.

May our Lutheran churches utilize this book?

Most assuredly. The committee from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) set out to enrich the public worship experience through use of the Psalms. Their task was formidable; they succeeded in the result. May our own musicians (and publishers) take note.

**Edmund R. Martens**  
Professor of Music, *emeritus*  
Concordia-Seward

**THY STRONG WORD: THE ENDURING LEGACY OF MARTIN FRANZMAN** by Richard N. Brinkley. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.

THE LIFE AND WORK of Martin Franzman, pursued with a dedication and devotion second to none, is outlined concisely in the opening chapter of this book. His teaching load at the St. Louis seminary coupled with his frequent presentation of scholarly papers and overseas representation for the Synod and the seminary created an extremely busy schedule. But as the author states, "at heart he was a poet." His finely crafted work, begun already in his youth (some of which is included in the final chapter) clearly illustrates the potential that the years would see fulfilled.

Drawing from the various writings and sermons of Franzman, Brinkley shows most clearly and forcefully the mind of this poet in his attitude concerning doctrine, theology, and doxology as they ought to be expressed in the hymn text.

With regard to these texts, Carl Schalk, in his Foreword observes:

"They are characterized by a 'rough cast ruggedness,' by lines that soar, but most of all by finely honed texts deeply rooted in a theology of Law and Gospel, sin and salvation, Word and Sacrament. While Franzman's hymns may not always reveal their depth and richness upon the first reading or singing, upon closer acquaintance, however, their profound magnificence reveals itself in a new, surprising, and often unexpected way.

His use of little known or less-commonly-used words, his skillful turn of phrase to bring out a new or unsuspected meaning, his use of what today is viewed as antiquated language, all seem to be so out of touch with current politically correct ideas of what the language of twentieth century hymnody should be. Yet we ignore these magnificent texts to our own impoverishment and alter them at the cost of an enfeebled language."

Perhaps, therefore, the most interesting and significant contribution Richard Brinkley offers us in *Thy Strong Word* is provided by way of

Martin Franzman's own reflections regarding Christian hymns and poetry. Franzman was quite unsympathetic to the sentimental poetry so common in our churches today. He had no time for the "give them what they want to hear" folks, or for the criticism of the text being "too hard to sing." He was not in tune with the snobbery of the "I don't know much about it, but I know what I like" crowd, and he was quite against the concept of attempting to "train" a congregation with the inferior hymn as a stepping stone to the more solid examples of hymnody.

The author, after including the full texts of the Franzman original hymns plus the translations of those from the German, provides an appraisal of the texts, basing his analysis on a number of factors outlined by Bruce R. Backer of Dr. Martin Luther College of New Ulm, Minnesota. Brinkley's analysis demonstrates how these texts are strong in doctrine, orthodox in theology, and exuberant in doxology, and that "anyone who spends time with these hymns—reads them, sings them, ponders them—will sit at Martin Franzman's feet and learn from him."

**Theodore Beck**  
Professor of Music  
Concordia-Seward

**THE STUDY OF LITURGY**, Revised Edition. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold and Paul Bradshaw, editors. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

IMAGINE THAT YOUR COPY of *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* were to become a bit lonely on the shelf and decide to run this ad in the personals:

"600 page study of history and theology of worship from Lutheran perspective seeks like-sized companion volume from complementary tradition. Must be scholarly, authoritative, and contemporary."

That ad may best be answered by a book from the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions, the Revised Edition of *The Study of Liturgy* from Oxford Press. In fact, Dr. James Brauer states in his preface to *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, "For readers who are acquainted with the explosion of literature about liturgy in the last fifty years, there may be a desire to relate the contents of *Lutheran Worship* more strongly to the early church or to recent ecumenical trading of ideas and materials. These topics must await other volumes." (pp. 13, 14) For the present, this book can serve as one of those "other volumes," for it addresses most fully precisely those topics treated most lightly in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*.

Three sections comprise *The Study*: Theology and Rite (56 pages), The Development of the



Liturgy (501 pages), and Pastoral Orientation (25 pages). The first section is twice what it was in the 1978 edition, as it includes new articles on ritual, the Word of God, and preaching. Lutherans who remember that *beneficium*, not *sacrificum*, is the core of worship could make good use of these essays. The book's last chapter is unnecessarily opinionated, but full of insights which come from a pastoral heart. The reason to buy this book, however, is the 500 page discussion in the middle, accurately and sensitively presented by scholars from Oxford, Duke, and Notre Dame.

**Gregory Mech**

Chaplain and Assistant Professor of Theology  
Concordia-Seward

THE STORY OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC by Andrew Wilson-Dickson. Oxford, England: Lion Publishing, 1992.

ANDREW WILSON-DICKSON starts and ends his story with the basic premise that individuals within the Christian Church need to develop a greater understanding of the diversity of music used in worship, and that through this understanding all may become more respectful and tolerant of the others. In order to underscore this point, Wilson-Dickson states in the preface that "Best of all, we may rejoice in the endless variety of ways that Christians have chosen to worship, down the ages and across the world."

I find this attractive book very fascinating and sometimes almost compelling. However, I personally feel that the title should have read "A Story. . ." or better yet, "My Story of Christian Music." It is naive to assume that anyone could or did contain "The Story of Christian Music" in 246 pages adorned with wide margins, beautiful pictures and bizarre priorities related to content. An example of this bizarre priority might be found in Chapter 39, titled "The United States and the European Classical Tradition" where the author presents two pages of material (from a total of five pages) related to the religious music of Charles Ives (The Third Symphony!), showing Ives' picture with an unidentified woman holding a cat! More of this bizarre priority is found in Chapter 44, titled "Lutheran Musical Revival," where Wilson-Dickson includes the names Johann David, Ernst Pepping, Hugo Distler, and Siegfried Reda and then states that their work is excellent but simply too abundant to be discussed here(!).

What does this British author say about the bulk of music used in parish churches in America? "... far greater quantities were produced for parish choirs and choirmasters who look for music which is easy on the ear, the brain and the voice. A favourite structure for such pieces is the hymn-anthem, a choral fantasy woven around a well-known hymn. Some are well-written if predictable, but many others are thrown together (and

still printed) by composers lacking techniques and ideas. This was the kind of music which provoked the musicologist Paul Henry Lang to write in 1940: 'Only the artistically unfit continue to compose ritual music, and a more miserable, tawdry, tinsel-strewn collection than recent church music is hard to imagine.'"

All of this judgment is from an author who is trying to build understanding so that we may have more respect and tolerance for one another. In spite of the fact that this publication is not "The" story of Christian music, I learned a great deal about the music of Taize, Tommy Dorsey (the black gospel singer and writer), Charles Tindley, The Fisk Jubilee singers, Kimbanguist music (African), The Ethiopian Church, Worship in the Orthodox Church, Popular Music in the Church, Ira Sankey, Dwight Moody, and William Booth ("Why should the devil have all the best tunes?")

Perhaps Andrew Wilson-Dickson is at his best when he concludes that "... truth in art is still a reality and has all the more importance for musicians on whom depends the quality of communal worship. The Christian liturgies of the present day create so many different working conditions that it is impossible to suggest in every situation what a musician's search for truth might involve. But it will probably require a fight against artistic and intellectual laziness, against carelessness, against partial offerings of intellect or voice or body, against an unthinking contentment with gestures that have become meaningless through repetition, even against the easy and fatal hypocrisy which can make church music offensive. . ."

**Charles Ore**

Professor of Music  
Concordia-Seward

HOLY THINGS: A LITURGICAL THEOLOGY by Gordon W. Lathrop. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

LUTHERAN WORSHIP SERVICES may truly reflect our time, with "The Chant" being the choice for some music lovers—many of whom never knew it was "religious"—and Sandi Patti the music of choice for others. In an era of experimentation in worship forms, with a varied menu for worshippers on a Sunday morning, such as a Contemporary Service in juxtaposition to the "archaic," or a Traditional in juxtaposition to a "variety show" event, it is time to review and formulate a theology of liturgy.

Readers familiar with names like Reed, Strodach, Underhill, Brunner, W. Hahn, Loche, and Vajda will find Lathrop's work to be a new genre of theological reflection, along with the Russian Orthodox Alexander Schmemmann's *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (1975). Lathrop's work is no defense of the past, but a call to renewed religious intensity and renewed religious critique. The work

reviews classic patterns in worship, discusses the experience of such worship forms, and explores questions related to reforming worship. One who is interested in investigating general patterns of actual liturgical experience and in engaging in critical reflection on what is actually happening in worship events today needs a set of principles from which to develop a critique. This book can help in formulating such principles.

Working with fresh translations of early liturgical texts of the Pre-Nicene and Nicene eras relating to baptism, Lord's Supper, and the service of the Word, Lathrop formulates an impressive set of overall guiding principles in "re-forming" the worship experience by exposing the skeletal form of early worship. Careful gleaning can give worship leaders a vision of the form and structure of worship, enabling them to vary worship events without losing structure and without converting worship into the talk-show format.

Having linked Biblical theology, sacramental theology, and Lutheran theology to a liturgical theology, the author calls for worship renewal which is contemporary without being merely temporary and ancient without being nostalgic re-creation. Anyone who desires to contribute to worship-ordering can gain insight into worship's chemistry and design intelligent worship forms without falling into worship alchemy by learning to link ordinary elements of Word, sacraments, petitions, and praise to the Only One who is holy.

**David Meyer**

Professor of Theology  
Concordia-Seward

ON LITURGICAL THEOLOGY by Aidan Kavanagh. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992.

WITHOUT THE DEPTH of historical perspective, or the extent of liturgical understanding, or the breadth of vocabulary with which this Benedictine monk of the Archabbey of St. Meinrad writes, one is not always sure of the author's meaning. This is especially true of a reviewer with a Lutheran mind-set. Professor Kavanagh writes beautifully. His words flow so smoothly on the page that one enjoys reading even when the meaning is opaque.

However, one soon senses that his thoughts on liturgical theology are not about doctrine which the liturgy *should* proclaim, and that he does not restrict God's revelation to Holy Scripture and Sacraments. He sees a revelatory process in the liturgy itself as the Church comes into God's presence and worships Him in joyful adoration and praise. That God keeps on revealing new truths through the liturgy of the worship of God's people sounds mystical to Lutheran ears. For Kavanagh, this serves as a rationale for prayers to the saints, veneration of the Virgin Mary, purgatory, the rosary, and other such beliefs. The aware-

ness of this throws "a sacred canopy of functional rather than absolute certainty" over the liturgical endeavor. The author suggests that "the same holds true for a Christian people's risking prayer to any saint or celebration of the bodily assumption into heaven of her whom they have persisted, daringly, in calling the Mother of God." (p. 126)

Despite such differences from our own basic understanding of the process by which God reveals Himself to sinners, we recommend that *On Liturgical Theology* receive careful attention of any sincere student of liturgy and worship. Father Kavanagh has much to say to us that is good, true, acceptable, and helpful. Liturgy is not just "about" God. When it degenerates to that, it is merely an educational event, or, worse yet, an hour of entertainment.

To keep the liturgy from becoming individualistic, whimsical, or separatistic, the author devotes much space to rote (a continuing, Sunday-after-Sunday use of liturgy), and to canonicity. It must be governed by the canon of Holy Scripture, the baptismal creed, eucharistic prayer, the laws of Christian living, and by an eschatological dimension. And the arts should be taken very seriously in Christian worship.

In this day of liturgical experimentation and dissatisfaction with the conduct of our worship services, we need solid guidance on the subject. Kavanagh's taxonomy of liturgy and description of what happens (or should happen!) when the people of God gather in the presence of God to worship can be a useful contribution. It may even, hopefully, move some gifted theologian among us to make an equally profound analysis of liturgy and worship that leads to a deeper understanding and a higher appreciation for our liturgical heritage.

**Herman A. Etzold**

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WELCOMING THE STRANGER: A PUBLIC THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP AND EVANGELISM by Patrick R. Keifert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

THE GREAT COMMISSION—a theme which motivates the church today as in the last 2,000 years. "Go, make disciples"—let others know about Christ so they also can proclaim Him as Lord, Savior.

In an attempt to be "seeker-sensitive," churches have struggled to adapt worship, hoping that the visitors in their midst will feel at home, and so, return. Individual Christian churches may struggle to determine how to retain their Biblical and historical identity while allowing "non-believers" to have a possible conversion experience in worship.

Keifert provides a valuable aid for churches that desire to wed worship and evangelism. He pro-

vides history, theory and practical advice to assist the reader in "welcoming the stranger" to liturgical worship. He wishes to "change directly the understanding and behavior of churches as they worship and evangelize."

After reading Keifert, one must reaffirm that worship is hard work. Worship planning must be intentional, taking into consideration the long-term member and the first-timer, one who does not ask for intimacy, but prefers to participate as one of the congregation.

Most unchurched visitors in the 1980s made their first formal contact with churches as unannounced visitors on Sunday morning. Churches have an invaluable opportunity to ensure that the visitor leave the service having encountered the Savior. That does *not* mean that liturgical worship must be replaced. Rather, "liturgical evangelism" ensures that conversion is a public event by which the individual gains a public Christian identity.

Keifert's definition of hospitality is directly opposed to that of today's "intimate society." We may see worship as cold and formal because an intimate connection is not formed among participants. Yet the stranger actually feels intimidated in worship where pressure is exerted to have one become "friend" with other worshippers. Ritual builds the social barriers necessary for effective interaction. It provides the sense of cover that allows most people to feel safe enough to participate in expressions of religious value.

Of course, liturgy requires education and sensitivity to the particular culture in which the church resides. A seven step approach to liturgical evangelism is described which enables all to participate in helping to welcome the stranger to worship. Keifert doesn't provide theory only, but also the necessary information to implement "liturgical evangelism" in the local congregation.

Keifert describes his book as a complement to Carl George's *Prepare Your Church for the Future*, a work on small group ministry and leadership development. Together these books can provide a well-formulated model for churches that desire to reach out to the unchurched and dechurched, while retaining their Biblical and historical roots. *Welcoming the Stranger* will be a helpful tool for liturgical churches.

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LUTHERAN WORSHIP: HISTORY AND PRACTICE edited by Fred L. Precht. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.

THE BAVARIAN LUTHERAN PASTOR, Wilhelm Lohe, wrote: "The true faith is expressed not only in the sermon but is also prayed in the prayers and sung in the hymns." (*Three Books About the Church*, p.

179) *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. The substance of the Gospel determines the style of the church's way of worship. There is no room for driving wedges between the two. Orthodox teaching and orthodox worship go together. Lose one and you lose them both.

Consequently, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* is a must for every pastor and every parish library. It unpacks the orthodox theology and practice of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church as it is expressed in the hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*.

The various authors remind us over and over again that worship is first and foremost *Gottesdienst*. Sunday morning in the sanctuary and chancel is Divine Service. God is at work. He speaks. We listen. He gives. We receive. Hidden under words, water, bread, and wine God is busy divorcing us from our sins in order to marry us to Himself. Consequently, the "real presence" is not only a doctrine about the Lord's Supper. It is a reality. Jesus remains among us as one who serves (St. Luke 22:27). He delivers the fruit of Calvary's Cross and the benefits of the empty tomb in Holy Scripture, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion as dispensed through the called and ordained servant of the Word (cf. Augsburg Confession, Articles IV, V, XIV, XXVIII). Where Jesus is for us and for our salvation in the Word and the Sacraments, heaven is present, too. In the Divine Service the right hand of God is manifest with power. It is heaven on earth. Jesus and heaven go together. *Gottesdienst* is the theological presupposition of the hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*. *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* fleshes this out.

Arthur Just writes, "Thus, the watchwords for our church must be *reverence*, not *relevance*, *fidelity*, not *innovation*." (p. 25) He is correct. What is at stake is faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel. The church of the Augsburg Confession believes that "the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God. . . . The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV, "Justification," Tappert, p. 155, 310) *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* extols the Gospel as it is delivered in the Word and the Sacraments. There is nothing more practical. There is nothing more certain and sure.

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