

# HEAVEN ON EARTH: TEMPLE TRADITION FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

By Jay Dyrland

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## Summary:

This paper explores the possibilities of including ancient Hebrew liturgies in contemporary worship contexts. A number of liturgical services are also included as appendices. These services date from the ancient Hebrew to 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelical. This paper will be very helpful for those trying to introduce worship practice that might connect with the postmodern.

Length: 20 pages

Imagine... In the middle of a desert stands a tent. It must have been a beacon.

Contrasting the brown sand and the animal skin of the tents, this structure of God's dwelling is seen, a tabernacle of his presence, glory and holiness. Imagine the Hebrew. "As he nears the tabernacle, he will likely be overwhelmed by the sight of so much pure white linen, with the towering tabernacle showing in the middle of it. The gate he comes through, a beautiful picture of Christ the way, is not only pure linen, but has embroidery work in variegated colors of blue purple, and scarlet... he cannot worship by mere observance; he must get involved."<sup>1</sup> "Imagine the mingled scent of wood smoke, burning flesh, and the sweet fragrance from the altar of incense. Tabernacle and Temple worship was rich in symbolism and sacred objects: the altar of burnt offerings, table of showbread, lights, altar of incense, laver, etc. It was full of the pageantry of sacred actions."<sup>2</sup> Imagine...

In our modern day of contemporary worship services taking place in spaces that we call "auditoriums", where we ask little of the participants beyond the offering, show little artistic creativity, have very little vocabulary concerning sacred sign and symbolic language, and bend to consumerist mentality to draw numbers— they do "this" over there, so we need some of "that" here – I wonder if the liturgy of the Tabernacle and Temple has something to teach us. The purpose of this essay is to discover what influences the Tabernacle and Temple liturgy have had on the shape of Christian liturgy through some of the history of Christian worship and examine how we might learn from history in order to continue the tradition of worship renewal as we head towards the future.

But, some may ask, isn't the Jewish synagogue the main influence on Christian liturgy?

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<sup>1</sup> Judson Cornwall. *Let Us Draw Near*. (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977) 51.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Drury. *The Wonder of Worship: Why We Worship The Way We Do*. (Marion, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2002) 212.

Scholars tend to attribute more influence upon the Christian movement to synagogue than to Temple.<sup>3</sup>

- The real home of Jewish worship in Palestine was the synagogue
- Most Jews of the Diaspora had never seen the Temple
- The Temple destroyed in A.D. 70, was never rebuilt, while synagogues continued to exist

On the contrary, Temple influence was very great-obviously so in the gospels, Acts, the letter to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse; less obviously, but basically so, in the sacrificial language of Pauline literature.<sup>4</sup> The whole service of the synagogue was, moreover, oriented toward the Temple: prayers were made facing Jerusalem; the hours of worship were those of the morning and evening sacrifices in Jerusalem; and the Scripture lections kept the tabernacle and temples before the people at all times.<sup>5</sup> The Jewish synagogue service was patterned in part after the daily and Sabbath temple liturgy.<sup>6</sup> Although, there is obvious connection between synagogue and Christian liturgy, this essay will not be addressing the synagogue as a main point of research and discussion.

In order to gain understanding and perspective, we will survey Tabernacle and Temple influences on the shape of Christian worship through the basic lenses of theology and liturgy. Theologically, we will look at and discuss God's presence, atonement and his plans to dwell amongst his people. A look at Christ's role as the fulfillment of the temple cult we be included in the theology discussion. We will also look more specifically at how the symbolism of the

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<sup>3</sup> Allen Cabaniss. *Pattern of Early Christian Worship*. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989) 28.

<sup>4</sup> Cabaniss. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise: Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church*. (Grand Rapids: MI., Baker Books, 1993) 231.

Tabernacle and Temple and its pattern of liturgy influenced the shape Christian liturgy, our approach to God in our worship practices.

Because the topic is large and the breadth of the material is wide, I will be limiting the discussion to the main points. Subjects such as typology, specific liturgical practices (priests, music, prayers, psalms, etc.), and historical New Testament accounts will not receive very much coverage.

In the Genesis narrative, we see God creating Adam and Eve, communing with them in the Garden of Eden. Prior to them sinning, there was this unrestricted fellowship that existed between them and a holy God. Once they sinned, they were cut off from the relationship they once enjoyed. The Garden of Eden in some Judaic thought has been associated with the Temple. Judaism in various ways understood the Garden to be the first sanctuary. Perhaps the earliest (106 B.C.) and clearest expression of this is Jubilees 8:19: “And he [Noah] knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion the centre of the naval of the earth: these three were created as a holy place facing each other.”<sup>7</sup>

The idea of sacred place in the Old Testament restored the possibility of intimate fellowship enjoyed by God and man and woman in the garden prior to the fall... The tabernacle structure described in Exodus 25-40 was designed to symbolize the active and continual presence of the Lord among the Hebrews.<sup>8</sup> The focus was primarily on God meeting with his people and participating in their daily lives. The physical structure was merely a vehicle to facilitate and appropriately order this encounter between the divine and the human.<sup>9</sup> Although the Israelites

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<sup>7</sup> Desmond T. Alexander. ed. *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Publishing, 2004) 199.

<sup>8</sup> Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 71.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 188.

often called it the dwelling place of God, this place was primarily regarded as a place of meeting with God, rather than as His actual dwelling....It was the place of encounter with God, but not because God was only there. The Hebrew concept of God was far too large, too transcendent to tolerate such a view. It was the dwelling place of God, which made God fully and graciously accessible.<sup>10</sup>

In order for the people to approach God, their sin needed be atoned for. Atonement, being the way that God deals with human sin, allowing for people to approach him. One of the ritual days that symbolized the cleansing of the sins of the nation was the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement the eternal covenant was renewed, and blood was sprinkled and smeared, to remove the effects of sin and to heal. The blood was brought out from the holy of holies; in temple symbolism, this was new life brought from heaven to renew the earth and to restore the community of all creation which had been broken by sin.<sup>11</sup> These elements constituted the revealed manner in which the worship and sacrifices of Israel were to be made to God. Again, the primary function here was that of sacrifice: the offering of an animal to propitiate and atone (make amends or reparation) for the sin of God's people.<sup>12</sup>

The act of sacrifice consists in the transfer of the gift we offer from the earthly to the heavenly realm; and the altar is the place where the transfer is effected.<sup>13</sup> The sacrifices represented the worshipers approach to God.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Robert N. Schaper. *In His Presence*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984) 23.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Barker. *Temple Theology: An Introduction*. (London, Great Britain: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004) 83.

<sup>12</sup> B. Williams, and Anstall, H.; *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church* <http://www.liturgica.com/html/litJLit.jsp?hostname=null> [accessed July 6, 2006].

<sup>13</sup> Evelyn Underhill. *Worship*. (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1936) 50.

<sup>14</sup> Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*. 50.

## The Sacrificial Liturgy

- Atonement for sin – symbolized in the sin and guilt sacrifices and implying penitence, confession, forgiveness, and cleansing
- Consecration and devotion to God – symbolized by the burnt and cereal offerings, including praise, reverence, worship proper, and personal vows
- Fellowship and communion with God – symbolized in the peace offerings and implying rejoicing, thanksgiving, and dialogue

They represent the ordained method of approach to God; and within this, the substance of spiritual worship too... thus they provided a rich symbolic language which all Jewish Christians understood; but of which we must never forget the origin.

The primary type of activity in the Temple was sacrifice. And what determined the manner in which these sacrifices would take place? God had given the instructions in Exodus and Leviticus which describe in detail the manner in which worship is to be offered to God.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, worship in the temple — and in fact all Christian worship — was and is to reflect worship in Heaven.<sup>16</sup>

Hebrews also tells us that Jesus, as the ultimate high priest, ministers at a tabernacle that is far greater than the tabernacle or the temple of the Old Testament...God required Israel's tabernacle to be built precisely in accordance with a detailed plan revealed by God.<sup>17</sup> In Hebrews 8:1-6 we learn the reason:

...the earthly tabernacle was to be, as much as possible, a copy of the tabernacle in heaven. The heavenly tabernacle is the ultimate dwelling of God's presence. For us to enjoy eternal fellowship with God, our sins must be dealt with in that eternal tabernacle. Jesus, as the ultimate high priest, brought his own blood to the heavenly tabernacle as the one perfect and permanent sacrifice for sin.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> B. Williams, B. and Anstall, H., *Liturgica*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Robert Schaper. *In his Presence*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

Both tabernacle and temple worship emphasized the importance of preparation on the part of the worshiper or congregation before meeting a holy God. The Hebrews worshipped God on his terms, not theirs.<sup>19</sup> The Old Testament worshiper was overpowered with a sense of awe, reverence, mystery, and divine transcendence in his or meeting with God. Step by step the Old Testament worshiper was taken from the ordinary and mundane world of daily living into the realm of the holy, and then the most holy – the very presence of God.<sup>20</sup>

The tabernacle employed much symbolism in its use of space. The arrangement of the outer court, the inner court, and the Holy of Holies communicates the distance between the worshipper and God, who dwells in the Holy of Holies.<sup>21</sup> The design and structure of the tabernacle was also intended to teach the Hebrews lessons in proper worship. Here central principles included; preparation, from and order in liturgy, and the value of sign and symbol.<sup>22</sup> Through sign, symbol, color and liturgy the tabernacle served to instruct the Hebrews in God's holiness, transcendence, immanence, wrath and mercy, justice and grace, and covenant love and faithfulness.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the restrictions inherently imposed by formal structures in worship, in them we are reminded of our created state.<sup>24</sup>

As creatures we are unable to approach and address God apart from some type of framework that instills meaning and order. As fallen creatures our sin necessitates a formal structure by which we approach and address God. As sinners and rebels we are unfit and unworthy to enter God's presence. Ultimately, atonement and redemption...are really at the heart of Old Testament worship.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 189.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 189.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Webber. *Worship Old and New*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1984) 34.

<sup>22</sup> Hill, 165.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 173.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

The temple rituals were re-presentations through drama that symbolized the relationship between God and the worshipper... They also looked forward to the definitive sacrifice of Christ, when the ultimate and eternal drama of salvation would reach its climax.<sup>26</sup>

The New Testament describes how Jesus Christ supersedes the temple cult, and how the church (his body) becomes the new dwelling place (temple) of God.<sup>27</sup> In the New Testament, Jesus is born and he is called, Immanuel – God with us.

The claim that he is ‘God with us’ suggests that in him is to be found the reality towards which the temple pointed. Jesus asserts that he represents God’s royal presence and authority more fully than the temple. Ezekiel’s vision of the glory of God filling the restored temple has been witnessed in Christ.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, all the tabernacle and temple furniture speak of Christ (Hebrew 9:1-5).<sup>29</sup>

- Altar of burnt offering – his sacrifice of himself
- The basin – like the sacrament of baptism, speak of Christ as the priest who is perfectly clean...who cleanses his people
- The lampstand – Christ the light of the world
- Bread of Presence – like the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, present Christ as the one who feeds his people
- Altar of incense and Aaron’s rod – represent Christ as the priest whose prayers for his people always ascend to the Father’s throne.
- Most Holy Place – opened to us at the death of Christ, when the veil of the temple was torn, through Christ we enter boldly
- The Ark – represents Jesus – Immanuel, God with us
- Tablets of the Law – speak of Christ as God’s eternal Word

Christian worship is indebted to the Temple ritual for those symbols and references which abound in the New Testament and still continue to play an essential part in its liturgies and songs. From them, we take the sacrificial imagery under which we think of the Passion and Atonement; the Lamb, the sin-offering, the saving virtue of the Precious Blood.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 78.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>28</sup> Engaging with God, p Peterson, David. *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.) 95.

<sup>29</sup> Schaper, *In His Presence*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Underhill. *Worship*, 213.

Equally important to understand is that the worship form revealed by God to the Children of Israel was not "just" ceremonial and centered around sacrifice.<sup>31</sup> According to the very same revelation, it was to reflect worship in heaven. The Torah has many instances (Isaiah chapter 6 and Daniel chapter 7) which describe worship in heaven.<sup>32</sup>

The history of the Hebrew was full of interaction with God who called them to be his people, and who had revealed to them specific instructions as to the offerings and sacrifices which were part of the way in which he was to be worshiped. The Bible is clear that God revealed to Israel how to worship, and it was patterned after things in heaven. These specific forms or liturgies of worship were first seen in the Tabernacle of the early Israelites.<sup>33</sup>

So why continue any of the temple practices? Because they included communion as well as sacrifice, and because they constituted revealed worship — they were part of God's intent from the beginning.<sup>34</sup> To be specific, heavenly worship is the worship, the liturgy, and earthly worship partakes now of the eternal, heavenly worship.<sup>35</sup>

In the book of Revelation, a grand picture of heavenly worship is seen... a vision of God's heavenly temple after which the earthly tabernacle-temple was patterned.<sup>36</sup> John is called to witness the heavenly worship.<sup>37</sup>

- **Assembling for Worship (Rev. 4:1-11)**--John is called to witness the worship of the heavenly hosts as they assemble to praise their God.
- **The Sin Offering (Rev. 5:1-7)**--John weeps because no one is worthy to open the scroll. The scroll contains the purposes of God for history. Sin seems to have caused history to come to a screeching halt. Redemptive history itself can only continue through the sacrifice. Only the Lamb of God who was slain is worthy to proclaim the purposes of God for his people.

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<sup>31</sup> Liturgica

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Hill. *Enter His Courts*, 185.

<sup>37</sup> Wallace, Rev. Peter. *Worship: Heavens Pattern*

<http://www.michianacovenant.org/sermons/church11.html> [accessed July 11, 2006].

- **Enter God's Presence (Rev. 5:8)**--Because Jesus has taken the scroll, his people may now come before God with hope.
- **Psalm of Praise (Rev. 5:9-14)**--The people of God declare the praises of the Lamb for the great redemption which he has wrought.
- **The Peace Offering**--Rev. 19:6-10 and 17-21 One is a supper of blessing; the other is a supper of cursing. (Recall the two patterns of worship in the Garden of Eden--true worship and idolatry--here we see the conclusion of the matter.)
- **Benediction**--Rev. 20 offers the curse upon the devil and those who follow him, while Rev. 21-22 offers the blessing upon Christ's people.

In Revelation, a pattern is given as the vision unfolds.<sup>38</sup>

- John enters worship only because of what Jesus has done (Ch 1-3),
- The sacrifice is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross (Ch 4-5),
- The sermon is what God accomplishes in redemptive history in between Jesus' first coming and his second coming. (Ch 6-19),
- The prayers are the prayers of the saints throughout history (Ch 6-19),
- The covenant meal occurs when Christ returns (Ch 19),
- The benediction is the blessedness of eternal life in Christ (Ch 21-22).

In other words, the book of Revelation portrays us as living in the midst of the heavenly worship,<sup>39</sup> from which the earthly Tabernacle and Temple were only shadows.

The temple stream of worship was not prevalent for the first few centuries of the Christian church, but elaborate pageantry and celebration worship reemerged after a few hundred years.<sup>40</sup> In early Christian writings, you could find glimpses of Temple language and themes.

Clement of Rome wrote, "These things therefore being manifest to us, and since we look into the depths of the divine knowledge, it behoves us to do all things in [their proper] order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. He has enjoined offerings [to be presented] and service to be performed [to Him], and that not thoughtlessly or irregularly, but at the appointed times and hours."<sup>41</sup> "Not in every place, brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered, or the peace-offerings, or the sin-offerings and the trespass-offerings, but in Jerusalem only. And even there they are not offered in any place, but only at the altar before the temple, that which is offered being first carefully examined by the high priest and the ministers already mentioned."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Drury. 212.

<sup>41</sup> Schaff, Philip, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company reprint 2001) 67.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 68.

And also Eusebius, an early historian:

When Eusebius described the re-establishment of the churches in the time of Constantine, he included an account of the oration delivered to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre (History 10.4). The new building was compared to the tabernacle and the temple, its builder to Bezalel and Solomon. This could indicate that the church was deliberately adopting the temple as its model and that all temple elements in the later liturgies were conscious imitation of the older rites.<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting to consider what modern Jewish liturgist, Eric Werner, has written about the relationship of Christian worship to Temple and synagogue.

It cannot be denied...that the Temple influenced the development of Christian liturgy...the basic prayers of Christianity, the clerical hierarchy, and ecclesiastical calendar were derived from the Temple. Canticles, the Hallelujah, doxologies, and Psalmody were all of Temple origin.<sup>44</sup>

The sense that there is a physical side to spiritual life and activity, a sense that came from the temple, continued in New Testament worship... the sense of sacred space (church buildings), sacred rituals (Eucharist), and sacred ministers (ordained persons) all stand in the temple worship.<sup>45</sup>

Both vocal and instrumental music figured in the services and immense choirs were involved...it can be seen the Temple worship was a very elaborate, moving, and dramatic liturgical service, which must have exercised an incalculable on primitive Christianity.<sup>46</sup>

Worship in the tabernacle of David may be seen as a type of the worship of the church. Here was a model of the people of God entering into God's gates with thanksgiving and offering their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving night and day (Hebrews 13:15).<sup>47</sup>

The Christian tradition of architecture was developed from the Old Testament model of the tabernacle and the temple, and if we believe the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, is it

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<sup>43</sup> Barker, 71.

<sup>44</sup> Cabaniss, 30.

<sup>45</sup> Webber, Robert. *Worship Old and New*, 35.

<sup>46</sup> Cabaniss. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Webber. 35.

too far-fetched to imagine that the Old Testament actually provides a basic model for Christian architecture?<sup>48</sup>

The basic plan of the tabernacle and the temple was that of an outer courtyard for the gathering of the people, an inner courtyard for the initiates and the holy of holies for the priests, containing the Ark of the Covenant and separated from the inner court by a great curtain from top to bottom. This pattern gathers together the different functions of a house of worship. The outer court gathers all the people for the sacrifice to God. The inner courtyard sets apart a place for prayer and worship. The holy of holies sets apart a place of mystery and transcendence. The structure gives the sense that the temple is a “Bethel,” the house of God—that it is not only a meeting place of people, but also the meeting place of earth and heaven.<sup>49</sup>

Church architecture until the 20<sup>th</sup> century had largely remained theologically true to the linear function of the temple. Up to the 1960s...the three-fold pattern and the direction were retained... In the Catholic tradition, the church could be broken down into nave (outer courtyard), chancel (inner courtyard), and sanctuary (holy of holies).<sup>50</sup>

The Orthodox Church has probably been most influenced by the example of heavenly worship, which the Tabernacle and Temple were shadows. Orthodox worship is, in a certain sense, a continuation of Old Testament temple worship, but more significantly, it is an expression of its fulfillment in Christ.<sup>51</sup> As we have seen, the book of Revelation makes dramatic use symbolism of the sacrificial ritual of the Hebrew temple. A comparison of the language and imagery of the book of Revelation with the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox churches suggests that in the Revelation we see an early stage in the development of Christian liturgy...<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Longenecker, Dwight. *Sacred Teepees* <http://www.liturgica.com/html/litJLit.jsp?hostname=null> [accessed July 11, 2006].

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Webber, Robert. *Music and the arts in Christian worship* (Nashville, TN: Star Song Pub. Group: 1994) 42.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 21.

From the temple worship of Judaism came additional forms of worship such as icons, vestments, incense, singing, and altar. The Eucharist was added to these Jewish forms, and the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox church still follows this pattern until today. Building upon this core, elements of beauty, antiphonal singing, and ceremonial action were added to show forth the glory of the kingdom as the liturgy flowered during the first few centuries.<sup>53</sup>

As we consider the theological themes of God dwelling with us, atonement, and worship that is on God's terms, and not ours, a pattern of worship may be a reasonable idea. People have tried to develop a scriptural case for a specific order of worship. They have noted various kinds of order in Scripture: the architecture of the tabernacle [outer court, inner court, holy of holies]; the order of offerings (sin, consecration, fellowship) in Leviticus 9, the order of worship in the book of Revelation.<sup>54</sup> These passages have been thought to suggest a certain order of worship: the forgiveness of sin, consecration of the forgiven sinner through ministry of the word, fellowship with God in the Lord's Supper.<sup>55</sup>

The temple rituals were re-presentations through drama that symbolized the relationship between God and the worshipper... They also looked forward to the definitive sacrifice of Christ, when the ultimate and eternal drama of salvation would reach its climax.<sup>56</sup> This reenactment reinforces the basic message of the gospel: Christ is our Savior from sin, the Lord whom we obey, the reconciled friend who calls us to fellowship. Therefore, it has been the dominant pattern of liturgy throughout the history of the church.<sup>57</sup>

Pastor Peter Wallace has developed a chart that helps to show what this pattern looks like through the history of Christian worship (see Appendix). Starting from the Tabernacle and through to 19<sup>th</sup> century Evangelical worship, he shows a simple pattern of how a pattern of how

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<sup>53</sup>Webber, R. 1993. *The renewal of Sunday worship* (1st ed.). (Nashville, TN: Star Song Pub. Group, 1994) 43.

<sup>54</sup> Frame, John M. *Worship In Spirit And Truth*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishers, 1996) 68.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 68.

<sup>56</sup> Webber. *Worship Old and New*, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Frame. *Spirit and Truth*, 68.

liturgy flows, but with the added elements of readings, song, and the Eucharist. Each of these components being added color to the basic pattern.

Judson Cornwall has developed another pattern that is quite different than the historically practiced pattern. He uses the concept of the tabernacle as the basis for worship flow in the context of song content and usage. The order of service, the swing from praise to worship, is patterned after the movement in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple from the outer court to the inner court and then into the Holy of Holies. All of these steps are accomplished through song.<sup>58</sup>

- Outside the Courtyard
  - Worship songs depict the preparation of the people, are usually joyful, and may be accompanied by dance.
- In the Outer Court
  - The content of the songs shifts to the experience of worship... how the congregations should respond: “Come Let Us Worship and Bow Down”
- In the Inner Court
  - Songs now emphasize worship about God.
- In the Holy of Holies
  - Here the worship reaches an intense and intimate time of relationship.

So, what is the typical contemporary shape of worship today? In most evangelical churches, the shape would be gathering, songs, announcements, sermon, possible response or dismissal. Communion would be celebrated occasionally. This is a very general pattern, but also quite accurate in those churches with a history stemming from the frontier tradition.<sup>59</sup> When

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<sup>58</sup> Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 159.

<sup>59</sup> The frontier tradition reflects a service style in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (popularized by preachers like Charles G. Finney) that emphasizes the sermon. In his book, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, James White writes, “The first part is a service of prayer and praise which includes considerable musical elements. Congregational singing developed and choirs were introduced. Extempore prayer was offered. And a lesson was read, usually a single lesson, as the basis for the sermon. The second part was fervent preaching which was the major event of the service (and for which all else sometimes seemed preparatory). The sermon called the unconverted to conversion, sinners to repentance, and the godly to rejoice in their salvation. The third part was a harvest of those recommitting their lives to Jesus Christ” (White, 161).

you look at this pattern, you see that there isn't much movement in comparison to the Tabernacle pattern. The songs lead you to the sermon which is the focal point of the service.

We have seen how the concepts of preparation, cleansing, consecration and fellowship were all aspects of approaching God in worship. It is my conviction that worship in the future will thoughtfully get back to approaching God through a liturgy that re-presents the gospel story in a way that gives people opportunity to holistically worship to God. The drama of tabernacle worship involved both the heart as well as the hands and feet of the worshiper.<sup>60</sup>

Those planning worship will also learn to incorporate the use of sacred sign and symbol in meaningful and intentional ways. The purpose isn't to borrow directly from an ancient practice, or someone else's other tradition, but to carefully be informed and considerate of potential creative uses of those things (icon, litany, postures, etc.).

One other way of finding renewal in our worship is to recover the eschatological. As we have seen, our earthly worship happens simultaneously with the worship of heaven. Our language needs to reflect that. This is the type of language that takes us out of our present circumstances, often focused on the self, and takes us to a better place. Why is it that our churches deliver human remedies, instead of proclaiming God's hope and salvation... Why do we fall into the most popular of eschatological replacements and the worst substitute for heaven of all – materialistic consumerism?<sup>61</sup>

Our Father, who art in heaven, thy kingdom come... Let us worship on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

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<sup>60</sup> Barry Liesch. *People in the Presence of God: Models and Directions for Worship*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1988) 129.

<sup>61</sup> Marva J. Dawn. *A Royal "Waste" Of Time: The Splendor of Worshiping God and Being Church for the World*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. 1999) 360.

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## APPENDIX

The following table is taken from Rev. Peter Wallace. He sees a consistent pattern in the shape of the Christian liturgy as seen through the centuries.<sup>62</sup>

Entrance by means of <b>Sacrifice</b>
Proclamation of <b>Word</b>
<b>Response</b> of Covenant Community
Partaking of <b>Covenant Meal</b>

<b>The Pattern of Worship from Moses to the New Creation</b>			
<b>Moses (Ex 24)</b>	<b>Solomon (2 Chr 5-7)</b>	<b>Synagogue (no biblical examples)*</b>	<b>The Heavenly Worship (Rev)</b>
Call to Worship	Assembling for Worship	Shema/Call to Worship	Call to Worship Assembling for Worship
Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings	Burnt Offerings		Sin Offering of the Lamb
	Entering God's Presence		Entering God's Presence
	Psalm of Praise	Psalms	Songs of Praise
Word of God proclaimed	Word of God proclaimed	Prayer of the Covenant Community	Word of God proclaimed
	Prayer of Intercession	Benediction (if a priest was present)	Prayer of Intercession
	Fire consumes the sacrifices, glory fills the temple	Word of God read and proclaimed	Fire from heaven, glory fills the temple
Response: profession of faith and obedience	Psalm of Praise	Psalms of Praise	Songs of Praise
Covenant Meal	Peace Offerings		Wedding Supper of the Lamb
	(Benediction)	Closing Prayer	Benediction

<sup>62</sup> Wallace, Rev. Peter. Worship: Heavens Pattern. from <http://www.michianacovenant.org/sermons/church11.html>

Early Church Liturgies*			
Justin Martyr (2d Century)	Rome (5th Century)	Augustine (5th Century)	Constantinople (5th Century)
Gathering	Psalm (sung by choir during the entrance of the clergy)	Salutation (pax vobiscum)	Little Entrance  Litany "Holy, Holy, Holy"
	Prayer/collect		
OT Reading	OT Reading	OT Reading	Antiphon
	Epistle Reading	Epistle Reading	Epistle Reading
	Psalms (interspersed)	Psalm	Alleluia and two prayers
NT Reading	Gospel Reading	Gospel Reading	Gospel Reading
Sermon		Sermon	
Dismissal of Catechumens	Dismissal of Catechumens	Dismissal of Catechumens	Dismissal of Catechumens
Intercessory Prayers		Prayers of the Faithful	Prayers of the Faithful
Kiss of Peace			
Presentation of bread and wine	Offerings of bread and wine (choir sings another psalm)	Offering of bread and wine (with psalm)	Great Entrance with elements
			Five Prayers
			Nicene Creed
	Collect for mysteries	Prayer over the gifts	Kiss of Peace
	Preface		Two offertory prayers and two prayers of the veil
	Choral song of praise		
Great Thanksgiving	Canon	Eucharistic Prayer	The Anaphora of James
	Lord's Prayer	Lord's Prayer	Prayer and the Lord's Prayer
		Kiss of Peace	Prayer of Inclination
		Blessing	Prayer of Elevation
Distribution of bread and wine--by the deacons	Communion (psalm sung by choir)	Communion with psalmody	Communion
Extended distribution to the absent			Two prayers behind the (reading desk)
Giving of tithes and offerings	Prayer of thanksgiving	Prayer of thanksgiving	Prayer of Thanksgiving
	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

Reformation Liturgies			
Ulrich Zwingli (1524)*	Martin Luther (1526)	Martin Bucer (1537)	John Calvin (1542)
Lord's Prayer	Hymn or Psalm		Psalm 124:8
Ave Maria	Kyrie ("Lord Have Mercy")	Confession of Sins	Confession of Sin
Sermon		Words of Pardon	Word of Pardon
Remembrance of those who died the past week		Absolution	Absolution
Lord's Prayer		Psalm or Hymn	Ten Commandments (sung)
Ave Maria	Prayer (collect)	Prayer for Illumination	Prayer for Illumination
Creed	Epistle (sung)	Gospel	Scripture Reading
Ten Commandments	Hymn		
Confession and Pardon	Gospel (sung)		
Lord's Supper (quarterly)	Creed		
Prayer of preparation (collect)	Sermon	Sermon	Sermon
Epistle		Collection of alms	Collection of Alms
Gloria Patri (read)		Creed	
Gospel		Prayer of Intercession and Consecration	Prayer of Intercession
Creed			Lord's Prayer
Exhortation		Lord's Prayer	Creed (sung)
Lord's Prayer	Lord's Supper (weekly)	Lord's Supper (weekly)	Lord's Supper (quarterly)
Communion Prayer	Admonition	Exhortation	Words of Institution
Words of Institution	Words of Institution (sung)	Words of Institution	Exhortation
Bread and Cup (John 13 read)			Prayer of Consecration
Psalm 113 (read)		Fraction	Fraction
Prayer of Thanksgiving	Bread	Bread	Bread
Dismissal	Sanctus ("Holy Holy Holy")		
	Cup	Cup	Cup
	Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God")	Psalm or Hymn	Psalm
	Hus's Hymn		
	Prayer of Thanksgiving	Prayer of Thanksgiving	Prayer of Thanksgiving

Post-Reformation Liturgies*		
Westminster Divines (1648)	19th Century Presbyterian	19th Century Evangelical
Call to Worship		
Prayer for God's presence and pardon	Invocation	
	Psalm or Hymn	Singing several songs and hymns
Scripture Reading and Exposition	Scripture Reading	(Testimonies)
Psalm (sung)	Congregational Prayer	
Prayer of Confession and Illumination (Scots)	Congregational Prayer (English)	Congregational Prayer
	Announcements	Announcements
Scripture Reading		Scripture Reading
Sermon	Sermon	Sermon
Prayer of Thanksgiving and Application (Intercessions--Scots) with Lord's Prayer	Prayer of Thanksgiving and Application	(Prayer of Application)
	Psalm or Hymn with Doxology	Songs
Lord's Supper (monthly or quarterly)	Lord's Supper (monthly or quarterly)	Lord's Supper (monthly or quarterly)
Exhortation	Exhortation	Exhortation
Words of Institution	Words of Institution	
Prayer for the Sanctification and Blessing of the Elements	Prayer	
Communion	Communion	Communion
Exhortation		
Prayer of Thanksgiving	Prayer of Thanksgiving	Prayer
Psalm (sung)		
Benediction	Benediction	(Benediction)