

TOWARDS AN EMERGENT LITURGY: CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY

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Summary:

Described as a time of "disorientation", this present moment in history provides an opportunity for emergent faith communities to evaluate how consumerism drives the process for worship planning and practice for many in the North American church. In this paper, discussion surrounding liturgical theology and the biblical concept of tabernacle seeks to root the church's worship into the narrative of Scripture, the historical worship of the Christian church, and the liturgical nature of its worship. Included: a liturgical order of service for an emergent community, a comparative chart of historical liturgies, a sermon focused on corporate worship, and a survey of New Testament liturgical language.

Length: 94 pages

THESIS: The themes and theology of the biblical concept of tabernacle provides a lens through which an emerging faith community may develop and implement a liturgy that is transformative for worshippers in today's emerging worship context.

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

- A. An Overview and Examination of the Present State of Worship Culture in North America.
- B. Objective
 - 1. Worship renewal based on principles found in the Tabernacle worship pattern of Scripture for an Emergent Church context.
- C. The assumption of this project is that there is continuity from Scripture and throughout history of fundamental worship theology and practice.
- D. Research Methodology
 - 1. Bible Study
 - 2. Historical Sources
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II. DIVINE PATTERN

- A. Tabernacle / Temple

III. TOWARDS AN EMERGENT LITURGY

- A. Liturgical Theology
- B. Early Church Worship Patterns – Historical Drift?
 - 1. Arriving at Meaning in Liturgy
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- C. Emergent Church – Concerns and Values for Worship Renewal

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Comparative Chart of Liturgies

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Sermon on Community Worship

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New Testament Liturgical Language

Handsome beyond description, some would even call him beautiful. He had the type of “movie star” looks that would surely place him on the covers of today’s magazines and bill boards. His list of suitors and the offers of love seemed endless, but he rejected them all. He had never seen his own image, but the praise and descriptions given to him by others secured his own sense of uniqueness. His name was Narcissus. He rejected the love of all others, concluding that no suitor was ever worthy of him. One day, passing through a forest, Narcissus bent down by a wading pool to drink from the clear water. There he saw an image so beautiful that for the first time, he found himself wrapped in love. He reached out to embrace the vision of beauty, to place his lips upon the lips of his newfound love. But in his effort, reaching out, the image shattered into ripples. He had fallen in love with his own reflection. Every time he reached out, the image would shatter and he would be in anguish. When the image returned, he would find himself once again wrapped in love. Narcissus eventually realized he was in love with his own reflection, and knowing he would never hold himself, he pined away, longing for nothing but his reflection. His self-love paralyzed him, leaving him at the pool, costing him the richness of being in the world. Oddly enough, his greatest admirer was named Echo. They were the perfect match. He only spoke about himself and she could only repeat his self-indulgent praise.¹

INTRODUCTION

Who is the object of our worship? In our contemporary worship culture where worship gatherings continue to become increasingly anthropocentric – humans as central – focusing on our own felt “needs” and catering to consumerist marketing in order to “engage” the culture and draw them (whoever they might be – churched or unchurched) in; the question of “who is the object” might not be that obvious a question to answer. Does the pool that Narcissus stares into illustrate for us a picture of a worship gathering that reflects our own selfish appetites and desires? Do we only incorporate into our gatherings, “echoes” that speak back to us the tastes and preferences of our liking?² Marva Dawn writes that “the worst result of turning worship into a matter of taste is that to do so is to lose sight of the fact that it is God we are worshipping – not

¹ This story is a paraphrase of the Greek myth of Narcissus and Echo.

² Dr. Monte Wilson writes that “modern American Christianity is filled with the spirit of narcissism. We are in love with ourselves and evaluate churches, ministers and truth-claims based upon how they make us feel about ourselves. If the church makes me feel wanted, it is a good church. If the minister makes me feel good about myself, he is a terrific guy. If the proffered truth supports my self-esteem, it is, thereby, verified. See “Narcissism Goes to Church: Encountering Evangelical Worship,” [document on-line]. Available from http://www.pressiechurch.org/Theol_2/narcissism_goes_to_church.htm. Internet. Accessed 04 Feb, 2008.

ourselves.”³ If you were to spend just a few minutes searching various church websites, you will find an impressive assortment of styles and labels that permeate today’s worship landscape. The following may be similar to what you’ll find: multi-sensory worship, indigenous worship, innovative worship, transformation worship, blended worship, praise services, spirited traditional, creative, classic, multimedia worship, authentic worship, liturgical worship, praise and worship, seeker services, believer-oriented, Gen-X, and Millennial worship.⁴ If you look long enough, you’ll find something you’ll like.

That is the point. Constance Cherry explores what is taking place in the current worship landscape. She believes that the church goes through periods of orientation (times of familiarity), disorientation (times of flex and change), and reorientation (the result of disorientation).⁵ Her view is that the church is now going through a period of disorientation. Churches of all types have experienced, and continue to experience, disorientation as traditions are modified and styles of worship reevaluated.⁶ Style is driving the processes of what is happening in our worship today. Tradition and perhaps the Bible may rarely be considered when asking questions about the planning of a worship gathering. In the opinion of Cherry, there is another question that is being asked.

³ Marva J. Dawn. *A Royal “Waste” of Time: The Splendor of Worshiping God and Being Church for the World*. (Grand Rapids, MI: WB. Eerdmans, 1999), 192.

⁴ Todd E. Johnson ed. *The Conviction of Things not Seen: Worship and Ministry in the 21st Century*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Brazos Press, 2002), 33.

⁵ Constance M. Cherry. "Merging Tradition and Innovation in the Life of the Church." In *The Conviction of Things not Seen*, by ed. Todd E. Johnson, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002), 19-32, n. 20. During this three-fold process, Cherry states that reorientation doesn’t happen automatically. There needs to be a willingness to change. Reorientation occurs not out of what we do, but what God does in us to change our hearts and vision.

⁶ Cherry, "Merging Tradition and Innovation in the Life of the Church." In *The Conviction of Things not Seen*, 27.

One question seemingly drives the issue of worship style: What do people prefer? If we listen to the reasons given for any worship change, we will likely hear answers along the lines of “because the young people like it,” “because we have to keep up with culture,” and “because so-and-so wants this type of music.”...Pragmatically driven ministry is inappropriate for theological and practical reasons. Theologically, chasing a worship style as one’s foremost endeavor is ill advised because it presumes the wrong questions. The style question is always “What do people like?”⁷

Is there any wonder that there are so many styles and tastes available? Ask “What do you like?” to any ten people and you’ll get ten different responses back. Marva Dawn considers style and taste to be destructive to the ideal of church community. Not only is the idea of taste as an entry point wrong biblically, but also it is extremely destructive of genuine community, fosters an independent view of the local congregation, and reduces worship simply to a matter of preferences instead of entering into God’s presence in the company of the church throughout space and time.⁸ So, what has happened? Rodney Clapp provides insight into the consumer culture that has infiltrated the church.

Consumerism is an all-consuming attitude, even itself at least a quasi-religious take on who we humans are and what we are for. This makes it obvious what it has to do with Christianity- consumerism is a competing faith. Christianity as a faith and a way of life affirms that humans are created ultimately for participation in the life of God; in a phrase, for the praise of God. Consumerism says we are born, live, and die to consume material goods, experiences, and an unending array of novel pleasures.⁹

Clapp believes that consumerism is a faith competing with the values of Christianity. Where Christianity believes and affirms that Christ is to be placed at the center of our lives, consumerism is an all of life orientation that places the “self” firmly in the center. The Christian gets meaning, identity, worth, and ultimately life from being in relationship to God through Christ. What consumerism does is turn “things” we consume into objects that falsely provide a

⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁸ Dawn, *A Royal “Waste” of Time*, 187.

⁹ Mark Van Steenwyk, “An Interview with Rodney Clapp,” 15 Dec. 2005 [document on-line]; available from <http://www.jesusmanifesto.com/2005/12/15/an-interview-with-rodney-clapp/>; Internet accessed 15 Jan. 2008.

sense of meaning, identity, worth and life. For the Christian, this is a difficult tension to wrestle with. Marva Dawn believes that it is extremely difficult to live in a Christian way in a consumer culture.

“...is it really possible to have genuinely Christian worship in such a culture – characterized by individualism (rather than biblical community), consumption (as opposed to generosity and sharing), manipulative advertising (instead of truth), and intentional fomenting of desires (in contrast to the Scriptural recognition that human desires often derive from our sinful nature and must, therefore, be frequently held in check).¹⁰

Consumerism seems to be the driving force behind the question, “What do people like?” Cherry conceives that people are drawn into style-driven worship, not because they choose to be, but because the next generations of worshipers have been inculturated to be consumers.¹¹ People have become accustomed to buying their worship. Could this be considered symptomatic of a North American idolatry that leads to wrong worship? Kevin Navarro reminds us that “when we do not worship the Creator, we will worship the creation,” and he further defines idolatry as “humankind’s intentional neglect of the God who has revealed himself.”¹² What is revealed in our current worship practices? Like Narcissus, do we consume our own self-image reflected in our worship experiences, or do we experience the living God who consumes our worship? Is it possible that we are currently worshipping our created experiences, neglecting the Creator himself?

Robert Webber observes that worship is being less informed by tradition and Scripture resulting in what he calls “pop worship”. Contrasting *lex orandi lex credendi* (prayer shapes belief), Webber writes that “pop worship creates pop faith that creates pop worship, in other

¹⁰ Dawn, *A Royal Waste of Time*, 88-89.

¹¹ Johnson, 30.

¹² Kevin Navarro. *The Complete Worship Leader*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 23-24.

words, “Show me how you worship, and I’ll tell you what you believe.”¹³ In this time of disorientation, it is vital that we look at how we worship and consider if it truly reflects what we believe.

OBJECTIVES

In light of the dangers of consumerism and its effects on Christian worship, it is the goal of this research to demonstrate the importance of God as the initiator, object and content of our worship gatherings. David Peterson reminds us that “acceptable worship does not start with human intuition or inventiveness, but with the action of God.”¹⁴ Therefore, the discussion in this paper will be rooted in two main points of concentration: 1) the *biblical tabernacle* illustrating for us that “the Holy one can only be approached in a way that he himself stipulates and makes possible”¹⁵ and 2) *liturgical theology and renewal* highlighting that “liturgical theology is normative for liturgical renewal because such efforts should arise out of the tradition of the Church [and Scripture] and not our individual preferences.”¹⁶ I believe the tabernacle provides theological insight into God’s desire and plan for the worshipping community and I also believe that developing a liturgical theology helps inform God’s worshipping community in appropriate worship practices.

The tabernacle has had influence on Christian worship through much of its history. The various liturgies developed throughout the centuries have similar patterns and themes associated with the tabernacle of Scripture (i.e. entrance by the means of sacrifice, proclamation of the

¹³ Robert Webber, “Formal-Liturgical Worship: A Blended Worship Response.” In Paul E. Engle ed. & Paul A. Basden ed. *Exploring the Worship Spectrum* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 21-49, n. 49.

¹⁴ David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*, 2d ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 26

¹⁵ Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 35.

¹⁶ David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology*, (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), ix

word, response of covenant community and partaking of a covenant meal).¹⁷ By analyzing these liturgies, it will be discovered that liturgical renewal has been ongoing through the centuries, and that it continues.

In our present day, there has been renewed interest in the ancient liturgies. Robert Webber observes that “many younger evangelicals, having reacted to worship as self-expression and to the me-ism of contemporary church are finding their way into liturgical churches.”¹⁸ Concepts such as silence, contemplation, liturgical arts, and the creeds are piquing an interest in emerging faith communities. But, while trying new and interesting things in worship gatherings is appealing, it often becomes novelty. Is it possible that “emerging” worship is just another label for our present day worship consumers? The themes and theology of the biblical concept of tabernacle provides a lens through which an emerging faith community may develop and implement a liturgy that is transformative for worshipers in today’s emerging worship context. It is my intention to show at the conclusion of this paper what a liturgy of this nature might look like.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Although the research will be dealing with the biblical tabernacle, it won’t be addressing the “fanciful and sometimes erroneous Christological allegorizing and spiritualizing” of the tabernacle, but will “emphasize the principles of biblical theology pertinent to Christian worship

¹⁷ Rev. Peter Wallace. “Worship: Heavens Pattern”. 2003 [document on-line]; available from <http://www.michianacovenant.org/sermons/church11.html>; Internet accessed 04 Feb. 2008.

¹⁸ Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 195.

implicit in the text of Scripture.”¹⁹ A thoughtful biblical theology that informs Christian worship practices will be the aim.

Discussing the nature and relevance of the “emerging” church is also not of big concern here. While I write with these churches in mind, I share Ray S. Anderson’s point of view in relation to these communities. “When I refer to the emerging movement in our contemporary culture, I prefer to speak of emerging churches, as I do not believe that there is any one emerging church but rather a rich variety emerging in both Protestant and Catholic communities.”²⁰

The discussion of the historical liturgy that has been passed on through the centuries through many worship traditions will also have its own limiting factors. This is by no means meant to be an exhaustive exploration of the sources and development of liturgy. What is most applicable to the discussion in this paper will be that there is a pattern and theology behind the use of liturgy in the Christian church and that its continued use and development can be informed by the biblical tabernacle.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research will include a careful and thorough study of Scripture in relation to the tabernacle and what it means for the Christian. Themes such as: worship according to God’s design, God’s covenantal relationship with his people (God’s dwelling among them), sacrifice and atonement, sign and symbol, and sacred space, are themes to be discussed.

A look at the ancient wisdom of early church writers will also contribute to the research and content of this paper (Didache, Justin Martyr). As these early writers struggled to articulate

¹⁹ Andrew Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise: Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 163.

²⁰ Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 10.

a faith in the midst of an emerging faith community, often in the midst of persecution and heresy, their observations provide a glimpse into the continuity of Christian worship from the New Testament into the earliest days of the church. This will lead to contrasting the early church structure with present day worship patterns.

Lastly, a study of contemporary writers and theologians in the areas of liturgy, worship practice and theology will provide insight into the present circumstances (Robert Webber, Frank Senn, and David Fagerberg). As I try to bring something of value to the discussion of liturgical renewal, it will be vital to understand our present situation in light of the disorientation that is taking place.

*The LORD said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the **pattern** I will show you. (emphasis mine)*

Exodus 1:9

*They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the **pattern** shown you on the mountain." (emphasis mine)*

Hebrews 8:5

DIVINE PATTERN

The earliest books of the Bible emphasize God's initiative in revealing his character and will to his people, rescuing them from other lords in order to serve him exclusively, and establishing the pattern of response by which their relationship with him could be maintained.²¹

²¹Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 26.

The book of Exodus is especially important for our study because it establishes a clear connection between Israel's pattern of approach to God and his redemptive purposes for his people.²² 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 will be included in the theology discussion. We will also look more specifically at how the symbolism of the Tabernacle and Temple and its pattern of liturgy influenced the shape of Christian liturgy; our approach to God in our worship practices.

TABERNACLE / TEMPLE

In the Genesis narrative, we see God creating Adam and Eve and dwelling with them in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). The Garden of Eden functions as the meeting place between the LORD God and the first human couple. Adam and Eve could enjoy God's presence; they could walk with God; commune with God, and serve God with undiminished capacity in their garden sanctuary.²³ 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

²² Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 27

²³ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Books, 2006), 82.

place facing each other.”²⁴ Since Eden is a paradise where divinity and humanity enjoy each other’s presence, it is hardly surprising that it becomes a prototype for later sanctuaries.²⁵

Thus it is in any sanctuary where the people of God gather for what they call a worship service. In their worship they should be reminded, either by the service or the surroundings, that they are entering into the presence of the Creator in a very special and spiritual way and their place in his presence and their enjoyment of his provision for life are available only through redemption. Their experience in worship should recall not only creation as they worship God the Creator but also redemption as they worship God the Savior... If the narrative about creation displays the wonders of Paradise where people had immediate access to the LORD God, the account of the expulsion of the sinners from that garden sanctuary reminds people that only through mediation can they draw near to the divine presence again.²⁶

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 described in Exodus 25-40 was designed to “symbolize the active and continual presence of the Lord among the Hebrews.”²⁷ The focus was primarily on God meeting with his people and participating in their daily lives. The structure was “merely a vehicle to facilitate and appropriately order this encounter between the divine and the human.”²⁸ Although the Israelites 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.”²⁹

²⁴ Desmond T. Alexander. ed. *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*. (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Publishing, 2004), 199.

²⁵ Desmond T. Alexander. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*. (Grand Rapids, MN: Baker Books, 1995), 21.

²⁶ Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 108-109.

²⁷ Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 188.

²⁹ Robert N. Schaper. *In His Presence*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 23.

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.³⁰ 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.³¹

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.³² The sacrifices represented the worshipers approach to God.³³

The Sacrificial Liturgy (Lev. 8:14-9:22, 2 Chron. 29:30-36)

- 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

³⁰ Margaret Barker. *Temple Theology: An Introduction*. (London, Great Britain: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 83.

³¹ 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].

³² Evelyn Underhill. *Worship*. (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1936), 50.

³³ Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*. 50.

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.³⁴ Secondly, worship in the temple (and tabernacle) — and in fact all Christian worship — was and is to reflect worship in heaven.³⁵

The book of 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.³⁶ In Hebrews 8:1-6 we learn the reason:

The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Hebrews 8:1-6

Andrew Hill comments on this passage highlighting the distinction between the earthly tabernacle and the heavenly one, and the role of mediation in the role of Jesus as high priest.

³⁴ B. Williams, B. and Anstall, H., *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church*, Liturgica.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Schaper. *In His Presence*, 26.

...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.³⁷

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.³⁸ The Old Testament worshiper was overpowered with a sense of awe, reverence, mystery, and divine transcendence in his or her 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.³⁹

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 worshiper and God, who dwells in the Holy of Holies.⁴⁰ The design and structure of the tabernacle was also intended to teach the Hebrews lessons in proper worship. Here central principles included; preparation, form and order in liturgy, and the value of sign and symbol.⁴¹ 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.⁴²

Despite the restrictions inherently imposed by formal structures in worship, in them we are reminded of our created state.⁴³

³⁷ Shaper, *In His Presence*. 26.

³⁸ Hill. *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 189.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 189.

⁴⁰ Robert Webber. *Worship Old and New*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1984) 34.

⁴¹ Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 165.

⁴² *Ibid.* 173.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 50.

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.⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶ In the New Testament, Jesus is born and he is called, Immanuel – God with us.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸

Therefore, all the tabernacle and temple furniture speak of Christ (Hebrew 9:1-5).⁴⁹

- 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

⁴⁴ Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 50.

⁴⁵ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 78.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 35.

⁴⁷ The Gospel of Matthew, 1:23.

⁴⁸ Peterson, *Engaging With God*, 95.

⁴⁹ Schaper, *In His Presence*, 27.

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.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

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.⁵³

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.”⁵⁴ To be specific, “heavenly worship is the worship, the liturgy, and earthly worship partakes now of the eternal, heavenly worship.”⁵⁵

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.”⁵⁶ John is called to witness the heavenly worship.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Underhill. *Worship*, 213.

⁵¹ Williams, and Anstall, H.; *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church*

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Hill. *Enter His Courts*, 185.

⁵⁷ Rev. Peter Wallace. *Worship: Heavens Pattern*

- **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.
- **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.⁵⁸

- 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,⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ Could it be possible that the persecution that the early church experienced limited the expression of a developed corporate liturgy until the Edict of Milan was passed allowing the

⁵⁸ Rev. Peter Wallace. *Worship: Heavens Pattern*

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Keith Drury. *The Wonder of Worship: Why We Worship the Way We Do* (Marion, IN: Triangle Publishing, 2002), 212.

public gatherings of Christian's for worship? 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 behooves 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."⁶¹ "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."⁶²

And also Eusebius, an early historian writing about the architecture of Christian assembly places.

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.⁶³

St. Augustine of Hippo wrote of Christ's role of fulfilling those things that were represented in the tabernacle and how it prefigured the church.

For not only the prophecies which are contained in words, nor only the precepts for the right conduct of life, which teach morals and piety, and are contained in the sacred writings -- not only these, but also the rites, priesthood, tabernacle or temple, altars, sacrifices, ceremonies, and whatever else belongs to that service which is due to God, and which in Greek is properly called *latreia* -- all these signified and fore-announced those things which we who believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life believe to have been fulfilled, or behold in process of fulfillment, or confidently believe shall yet be fulfilled.⁶⁴

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

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² Ibid. 68.

⁶³ Barker, 71.

⁶⁴ Philip Schaff, *NPNF1-02. St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1890), n. chapter 32, 141. . [document on-line]; available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.html>.

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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷

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).⁶⁸

As we consider the theological themes of God dwelling with us, atonement, and worship that is on God's terms, and not ours, a theological pattern of worship may be instructive for us today. 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, or the order of worship in the book of Revelation.⁶⁹ These passages have been thought to suggest a certain order of worship: confession and the forgiveness of sin, consecration of the forgiven sinner through ministry of the word, fellowship with God in the Lord's Supper.⁷⁰ The temple

⁶⁵ Cabaniss, 30.

⁶⁶ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 35.

⁶⁷ Cabaniss. 28.

⁶⁸ Webber. 35.

⁶⁹ John M. Frame. *Worship In Spirit And Truth*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishers, 1996), 68.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 68.

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.⁷¹ 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.⁷²

We have seen how the concepts of preparation, cleansing, consecration and fellowship were all aspects of approaching God in worship. Just as the “drama of tabernacle worship involved the heart as well as the hands and feet of the worshiper,”⁷³ it is my conviction that worship in the future will thoughtfully get back to approaching God through a liturgy that represents the gospel story in a way that gives people opportunity to holistically worship God.

TOWARDS AN EMERGENT LITURGY

As discussed above, a pattern can be observed in the action of Christian worship. The form in which this pattern takes shape is often called “liturgy” – the visible and spoken words “we use to address God and one another in the liturgical assembly.”⁷⁴ The following will be a brief discussion highlighting what liturgy is, providing a definition and meaning for the word, and observing a theological framework for its use.

⁷¹ Webber. *Worship Old and New*, 78.

⁷² Frame. *Spirit and Truth*, 68.

⁷³ Barry Liesch. *People in the Presence of God: Models and Directions for Worship*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1988), 129.

⁷⁴ Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy; Catholic and Evangelical*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 40.

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

There are many words in Scripture that are used to help express the English word “worship”. One of the many words used in the New Testament which is translated into worship is *latreia*.⁷⁵ This word means “to serve”. In Romans 9:4, *latreia* is used when describing Temple worship. As Paul writes about the people of Israel he mentions, “Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs is the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple [worship] and the promises,” or said another way, “theirs is the [temple service].” But, as we consider God’s role in initiating worship, there is another word that describes this role. A word that comes closer to incorporating both the divine and the human participation in worship is *leitourgia*.⁷⁶

In classical Greek, liturgy (*leitourgia*) had a secular meaning; it denoted a work (*ergon*) undertaken on behalf of the people (*laos*). David Fagerberg describes its meaning as, “Public projects undertaken by an individual for the good of the community in such areas as education, entertainment or defense.” Liturgy was therefore a public work by the people in and for the community. It is a public work done by an individual or a group “on behalf of the larger community to which he or she belonged.”⁷⁷ Quoting Alexander Schmemmann, Fagerberg brings liturgy to meaning within the biblical community.

⁷⁵ Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 34. – There are other words that are used to in Scripture that are translated as worship. Barry Liesch mentions that *proskuneo* (to bow towards) is mentioned 81 times to *latreia*'s (to serve) 26 times (The New Worship, 155). Liturgy is not meant to supplant the word worship as they are not the same thing. These two words often translated as worship help to give meaning to our liturgical response with worship that is both "turning towards" and "serving". To clarify, our life response is liturgical - it is the life of Christ represented in us - Christ in you - which affects our worship responses. It's not that all of life is worship, but it can be lived liturgically.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 11.

It meant an action by which the group of people became something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals – a whole greater than the sum of its parts. It meant also a function or “ministry” of a man or of a group on behalf of and in the interest of the whole community. Thus the leitourgia of ancient Israel was the corporate work of a chosen few to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah... Thus the Church itself is a leitourgia, a ministry, a calling to act in this world after the fashion of Christ, to bear testimony to him and his kingdom.⁷⁸

Liturgy for the biblical community is not about individual action, but community action which gives it meaning and reason for being. Liturgy is a pattern of behavior that expresses and forms a way of life consistent with the community’s beliefs and values.⁷⁹

What is this way of life? Schmemmann says that the liturgy is a calling to “act in this world after the fashion of Christ.” Robert Taft believes that Christian liturgy is an all of life orientation. According to Taft, “the purpose of all Christian liturgy is to express in a ritual moment that which should be the basic stance of every moment of our lives,” and this lived liturgy is always what the apostle Paul seems to have in mind.⁸⁰

To express this spiritual identity, Paul uses several compound verbs that begin with the preposition with: I suffer with Christ, am crucified with Christ, die with Christ, am buried with Christ, am raised and live with Christ, am carried off to heaven and sit at the of the Father with Christ... This seems to be what Christian liturgy is for St. Paul. Never once does he use cultic nomenclature (liturgy, sacrifice, priest, offering) for anything but a life of self-giving, lived after the pattern of Christ. When he does speak of what we call liturgy... he makes it clear that its purpose is to contribute to this “liturgy of life”, literally to edify, to build up the Body of Christ into that new temple and liturgy and priesthood in which sanctuary and offerer and offered are one.⁸¹

For Paul, liturgy is not ritual and ritual is not liturgy. Liturgy is participating in the life of Christ in this world. Liturgically speaking, it is Christ’s work that the Church does and participates in. Fagerberg writes, “Liturgy is not the religion of Christians; liturgy is the religion

⁷⁸ Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1976), 25. Quoted in David Fagerberg. *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology*, (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 11.

⁷⁹ Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 3.

⁸⁰ Robert Taft, *Sunday in the Byzantine Tradition*, in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1997), 52. Quoted in Fagerberg *Theologia Prima*, 17.

⁸¹ Robert Taft, *Toward a Theology of the Christian Feast* in *Beyond East and West*, 5. Quoted in Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*, 17

of Christ perpetuated in Christians.”⁸² Liturgy is not a thing but a meeting of person... our relation to God and to one another in Christ through the Spirit... an ongoing call and response. In short, the scripted words and choreographed actions of liturgy express a theological reality – God, triune and holy, working in history for the salvation of God’s creation.⁸³ Liturgy means to put on Christ; the Church is the Body of Christ visible now, the authentic witness of restored life which is ours in Christ. The unique function of the liturgy is to ‘make the Church what she is’ – witness and participant of the saving event of Christ, of the new life in the Holy Spirit, of the presence in ‘this world’ of the kingdom to come.⁸⁴

In light of the consumerism and individualism that permeates our worship gatherings; it will be helpful to consider worship in the context of liturgy. Fagerberg writes, “The experience of worship has long ago ceased to be that of a corporate liturgical act. It is an aggregation of individuals coming to church, attending worship in order to satisfy individually their individual religious needs, not in order to constitute and fulfill the Church.”⁸⁵ It seems as though worship changes to suit our ever-changing needs. Perhaps it will be good to remember that, “Liturgy should shape and change us to fit God’s vision of what a human being is; it should not be a series of snap-on formats that express the ideals of this generation or that, this culture or that.”⁸⁶ This again, turns worship around and it becomes but a poor reflection of ourselves.

In the end, liturgy is primarily about what God does among us and for us. All that we do in the liturgy is but a response to the over-arching, grace filled initiative of God. I sometimes wonder whether emphasizing what we do in the liturgy is a particularly American phenomenon and preoccupation. There is a delicate balance in liturgy: divine initiative and human response, the action of God and the sanctification of humanity.⁸⁷

⁸²Ibid., 14.

⁸³ Michael B. Aune. *"Liturgy and Theology: Rethinking the Relationship, Part 1, Setting the Stage."* *Worship* 81, no. 1 (January 2007): 63.

⁸⁴ Fagerberg, 83.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁸⁷ Aune. *"Liturgy and Theology"*, 47.

Andrew Hill reminds us that “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.”⁸⁸ This is the essence of what liturgy is intended to do. In this divine dialogue with God through Jesus Christ, God reveals himself to us, and our response is a “living adjustment – meaning a theological response – to the Holy One.”⁸⁹

St. Paul tells us in Romans 11:36 that, “For from him and through him and to him are all things,” God in Jesus Christ is the initiator. “Therefore”, St. Paul writes, “in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your reasonable [*latreia*] service (Romans 12:1). Robert Shaper provides some perspective on this passage as it pertains to liturgy.

A distinction worth noting is that in the Greek version of the Old Testament, *latreia* is used to translate the service of the cult, the worship of the people, but *leitourgia* is used for the work of the priests. In the New Testament that distinction is not maintained. In fact, the service of God, though cultic at times, is ultimately the entire life of the worshipping Christian.⁹⁰

Our service is an all of life orientation towards God in serving him and others in and through liturgy. Michael Aune uses the German word Gottesdienst, “the service of God” to describe the dialogical intent. “This word can be taken as both objective and subjective - our serving God and God serving us – it helps us to understand both liturgy’s dialogical character as a divine word and a human answer.”⁹¹ Paul goes on to exhort the Romans, “Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but by the transformation of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).⁹² It is in the language and the action of the liturgy that we learn the language of our faith through which we live in the world. We do not live according to the world’s pattern, but according to the pattern of

⁸⁸ Fagerberg. 189.

⁸⁹ Fagerberg, 67.

⁹⁰ Shaper, 49.

⁹¹ Aune, “*Liturgy and Theology*”. 65.

⁹² See Appendix C for a sermon drawing out some of the corporate body implication based on Romans 12.

the kingdom as revealed to us by God. This is echoed by Aune as he describes what the goal of liturgy is. “The goal of liturgy is the experiences of participation in the whole event [liturgy] that prompts and forms the life of faith, opening up richer meanings and leading worshipers back to the event with deeper participation of heart and mind aimed at a particular kind of life in the world.”⁹³ The liturgy instructs us to live the life of Christ in the world. Has this always been true of the church’s public worship?

EARLY CHURCH WORSHIP PATTERNS – HISTORICAL DRIFT?

As Robert Webber advises “Show me how you worship and I’ll show you what you believe,” the following section will be observing how the church has participated in liturgy through the centuries, moving from structure informed by Scripture and tradition towards structure aimed at personal experience. Webber views the following five characteristics within liturgical worship: 1) an affinity with the liturgies of the ancient church; 2) an order that follows the pattern of revelation and Christian experience; 3) a significant emphasis on reading and hearing the Word of God; 4) a high degree of congregational involvement; and 5) a view of the Lord's Supper which affirms its mystery and value for spiritual formation.⁹⁴ In relation to the evangelical church, in which we find the tremendous influence of the contemporary worship movement, Webber contrasts the experience of liturgical worship with his experience in many evangelical churches: 1) a radical departure not only from the liturgies of the ancient church but from those of the Reformation as well; 2) confusion about order; 3) minimal use of the Bible; 4)

⁹³ Aune, *Liturgy and Theology*. 56.

⁹⁴ Robert Webber, “A Historical Approach To Liturgics and Worship,” <http://www.liturgica.com/html/litPLitEvangelical.jsp?hostname=null> [accessed July 6, 2006].

passive congregations; and 5) a low view of the Lord's Supper.⁹⁵ As I add my voice to the conversation within worship renewal, I believe it's important to understand some of the movement of worship through history, and what it means for the corporate worship of the church today.

In seeking to answer how changes have occurred and how they inform our own practices, my aim is to discover how the Christian church has structured its worship, and seeing whether or not the divine dialogue of the liturgy has been maintained. This survey will consist of the following parts; 1) a brief discussion on how meaning is found in liturgy; 2) content and structure in biblical and Christian worship; and 3) observations from historical liturgies.⁹⁶ James White instructs us that “the primary liturgical document in any period is the worshipping community itself.”⁹⁷

Arriving at Meaning in Liturgy

Liturgy shapes and transforms the community of worshippers because it provides an event in context through which God and his people encounter one another. The context is the gathering of a people for the purposes of worshipping a Holy God according to his divine pattern. The event is provided in the liturgy itself, the content and structure through which the event is framed. David Fagerberg draws a distinction within the word liturgy. He refers to liturgy in a “thin” sense and “thick” sense. In the thin sense, the liturgy refers to the “how,” the

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Liturgy may be used broadly as the corporate “work of the people,” or the church’s public worship, including those traditions that would not choose to use the word liturgical. In his book, “Doxology”, Geoffrey Wainwright writes, “Liturgy leaves room within itself for those spontaneous or extemporaneous forms of worship which some Protestants favour as an alternative to what they may class as “liturgical,” n. 8. This reflects the position that all congregations structure their gatherings in some way to organize their worship. Our attention isn’t only for those within a “liturgical” tradition, but those who would even be considered “anti- liturgical”.

⁹⁷ James F. White. *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 14.

order and etiquette, the “ceremonial and protocol” for worship; in the thick sense, *leitourgia* refers to the “deep structures.”⁹⁸ The deep structure refers to the “what” of worship, the meaning and value that is communicated to the people as participants in the liturgy. It is in looking at this *leitourgia*, these deep structures, that this historical survey will take place.

Although the “how” elements are important, the search for meaning as it pertains to the gathered community in worship is also important. What does the public gathering mean for those congregated? The worship of God’s people is intended to be full of meaning, therefore, a meaningful experience for the worshipping community. But, how do we assess this meaning? Gordon Lathrop believes that the meaning resides in the liturgy itself. “If the gathering has a meaning for us, if it says an authentic thing about God and our world – indeed, if it brings us face to face with God – then that becomes known while we are participating in the gathering.”⁹⁹ It is in the structure of the liturgy that meaning becomes apparent. Fagerberg and Robert Taft write that,

...the meaning of liturgy resides in its structure... Structures reveal “how the object works,” and even though liturgical theology utilizes historical research significantly, “the purpose of this history is not to recover the past (which is impossible), much less to imitate it (which would be fatuous), but to understand liturgy which, because it has a history, can only be understood in motion, just as the only way to understand a top is to spin it.”¹⁰⁰

Therefore, it is important to look at the liturgies of the past. In order to properly understand the worship landscape of today, it is important to learn about the worship of yesterday through liturgies that communicated the assembly’s understanding of God, the church, the world and it’s responses within that understanding.

⁹⁸ Fagerberg, 110.

⁹⁹ Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 5. Or vice-versa, it may be discovered that the gathering may not say anything about God.

¹⁰⁰ Fagerberg, 41.

Lathrop uses the Latin word *ordo* (order) to describe the liturgical structure of Christian worship. “The biblical pattern in Christian worship is the pattern of the *ordo*, that ritual ordering and “shape of the liturgy” that has united Christians throughout the ages... it isn’t simply the written directions about the service schedule at what time or what specific rite, scripture readings, or prayers to use, but the presuppositions active behind such scheduling.”¹⁰¹

Fagerberg, Lathrop and Taft agree that meaning occurs through the structure of the liturgy.

Although it is impossible to relive all the historical liturgies in this paper, it is possible to observe how the *ordo* has provided meaning for the worshipping community at different times. It will be my task to discover some of these presuppositions as we look at the *ordo* in history.

Lathrop believes that “the scheduling of the *ordo*, the setting of one liturgical thing next to another in the shape of the liturgy, evokes and replicates the deep structure of biblical language.”¹⁰² The liturgy is intended to speak this language. It is in this biblical language that liturgy is shaped and informed. The *ordo* reflects the event-oriented structure that makes Christian worship biblical. The story of Scripture is an active moving story revealing our creating, saving, and redeeming God who desires relationship with the people of the world. Robert Webber writes, “This story of God initiating a relationship and the people responding in faith and obedience is not only a story of salvation and redemption, but is also the very essence of worship.”¹⁰³ The liturgy allows the story to be told and enables the worshiper to step into God’s story as the liturgy unfolds. Liturgy in the “thick” sense seeks to bring to life these themes for worshipers in the present. Just as the ancient Israelites found themselves in “the corporate work of a chosen few to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah...” we find ourselves called “to act in this world after the fashion of Christ, to bear testimony to him and his

¹⁰¹ Lathrop, 33.

¹⁰² Ibid., 33.

¹⁰³ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 19.

kingdom,”¹⁰⁴ the story of God calling a people to serve and represent him as embodied in the liturgy.

While the first and fundamental theme of salvation history and of worship is that God initiates a relationship, the second is that the people of God must respond to God’s initiative. These responses are done in public worship through the institutions of worship such as the tabernacle, the temple, the synagogue, and the church. Worship in and through these institutions proclaims, recalls, and enacts the great saving deeds of God. And, the people respond by remembering, anticipating, celebrating, and serving.¹⁰⁵

Through looking at the deep structures of the how liturgy is ordered throughout the history of the church, it is my hope to uncover what meaning the liturgy has provided in the life of the gathered church responding to God’s call in worship. In the liturgy we are invited to step into a rich story that provides meaning for the gathered people. But what is the content of the story and how is that story structured so that it is clearly communicated and invites participation? A brief look at the biblical concepts of worship being event-oriented and worship being structured so that God’s story is clearly communicated will provide the critical basis for the following historical survey.

Content and Structure

The content of liturgy communicates that worship isn’t primarily about people, it’s about God. Although worship involves the participation of people, it is not anthropocentric, people-centered. It is God-centered. So, what is this content? Two key biblical events help to illustrate that the content of biblical worship is oriented around an event. For the Israelites, it was the Exodus-event. For the New Testament church, this is the Christ-event. The content of worship is taken from the biblical stories of God calling and making a people – the nation of Israel, and the “New Israel”, his Church.

¹⁰⁴ Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1976), 25. Quoted in David Fagerberg. *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology*, 11.

¹⁰⁵ Webber, 27.

In worship we remember the stories of Abraham, our “Father in the faith”, the patriarchs, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the covenant of Mount Sinai, the establishment of Israel under the monarchy, and the call of the prophets to return to the covenant. Christian worship supplements these stories with the accounts of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the founding of the church, and the return of Jesus Christ to destroy evil and establish the new heavens and the new earth. This story line together with the interpretation given to it in Scripture is the very essence of worship.¹⁰⁶

This “story line” of God redeeming and saving a people must be the content worship. The Hebrew people had moments in history where God chose to reveal himself as their redeemer, “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself” (Exodus 19:4). Then, they became his people, the community of people who worship the LORD “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.” (Exod. 24:1-8). “Thus the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple, the feasts and festivals, the sacred year, the hymnic literature and psalms of thanksgiving revolve around the God who brought them up out of Egypt and made them his people.”¹⁰⁷

The same is true in the New Testament. In the Christ-event God is shown to be the loving and compassionate one who came to free humankind from the kingdom of evil. In the birth, life, death, and rising again of Christ, we see the story of Jesus, Immanuel – God with us, overcoming the power of sin, death and ushering in the kingdom. Consequently the worship of the earliest Christian community was a response to this event; “hymns, doxologies, benedictions, sermons, and symbols of bread and wine all flow from this event and return to it in the form of proclamation, reenactment, remembrance, thanksgiving, and prayer.”¹⁰⁸ The church itself, the gathered community of God’s people in Christ, the Body of Christ, is a response to the Christ-event, and in turn continuously acts it out.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 149.

¹⁰⁷ Webber, *A Historical Approach to Liturgics and Worship*, www.liturgica.com

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. – See Appendix C for a selection of New Testament examples.

If meaning is received through structure, how should this God-centered story be ordered (*ordo*) so that it is clearly heard and experienced by the gathered congregation? Allen Ross details the account of God calling the Moses and the Israelites together for the ratification of the covenant (Exodus 24:1-8).

The inauguration of the covenant by sacrifice began with the LORD's calling Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders to come up to the mountain to worship (Exodus 24:1). The people were to remain at a distance, their leaders were to go up to the mountain, but only Moses the mediator could draw near (v. 2). By bowing to the ground at the proper distance, the people showed their reverence for God. The point is that worship is an obedient response to the call of God, whether that call should be as spectacular as this or come through fixed biblical commands... Next was the consecration of the people for this service (v. 3-8). These steps set the pattern for all subsequent worship.¹⁰⁹

According to Andrew Hill, the covenant ceremony of Exodus 24 contains five basic structural elements that may constitute “the very substance of corporate worship in both the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church”:¹¹⁰

1. God called his people to meet with him.
2. The entire congregation had responsibility in the worship of God.
3. God proclaimed his divine Word, revealing his person, will and purpose to the Hebrews through his covenant law.
4. The Israelites accepted the covenant with Yahweh and submitted to his authority. The worshipping community would be continually involved in the experience of covenant renewal with Yahweh (essentially the purpose of the Eucharist or Lord's Table in the New Testament – covenant renewal in the proclamation of the Lord's death, 1 Cor. 11:17-32).
5. God sealed his covenant with Israel by blood sacrifice, a foreshadowing of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ as he Lamb of God (John 1:29, Heb. 9:23-10:10).

As we *enter* into worship, we are reminded that it is God who calls us to worship, and we cannot enter into his presence except through the blood of Jesus Christ. In our worship we truly

¹⁰⁹ Ross, 177.

¹¹⁰ Hill, xxxi.

enter into God's presence because of Christ's atoning sacrifice. In worship, God's *word* is read and preached. We are reminded of how God has been faithful to his promises through redemptive history, and we are called to live in faith and obedience until Christ's return. We *respond*, committing our lives in obedience to his word. We pray, asking God to continue to be faithful to his promises and we bring our praises and intercessions before him. We partake in a *meal* together, the Lord's Supper, renewing our covenant relationship, remembering his death upon the cross and we anticipate the Wedding Supper of the Lamb – partaking in his death and of his resurrection life. We receive God's blessing. The benediction is spoken and we remember that God has promised to be with us in Christ. Then we go into the world, living out this liturgy of life – Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In the “deep structure” of the liturgy, the Body of Christ is gathered up into the story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ as it remembers, proclaims and enacts the story through the structural elements of gathering, Word, table (fellowship), and dismissal. The early church provides for us a window into the structure of the liturgy for the earliest Christians. This structure is foundational for our understanding of liturgy and the church's worship. As we further look at various traditions, we will look into their structure of the liturgy and the assembly's participation in it.

The Early Church

Setting: Early Jewish Influence (50 – 250 A.D.)

Inspired by the patterns and principles of worship recorded in Scripture (the Torah), and influenced by synagogue worship, the early church very quickly developed a full and rich form

of worship centered in the person and works of Jesus Christ.¹¹¹ Early Christian worship had a Jewish origin and came into existence as a liturgical church reflecting the influence its Jewish liturgical history. This can be seen in the ritual of daily prayers that the Jews offered relating to Temple worship and in the synagogue gatherings. Acts 2:46; 3:1 (NLT) records that, “They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity... Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o’clock prayer service.” In these verses, there is both participating in the Temple service, plus the added element of coming together for the Lord’s Supper. This reflects how their lives were lived out liturgically.

Early Christians, or at least their leaders, thought and worshipped in an ambience which grew out of Jewish worship, foremost as known in the Temple, but also as in the synagogue which reflected Temple practice. It was borne in upon them not only from actual participation but also familiarity with the Torah. It was illuminated by prophetic descriptions of an ideal Temple and its worship. It was brightened and intensified by what they conceived as the eternal worship in heaven in God’s very presence.¹¹²

The continuity of temple and synagogue worship practices characterized the church in its earliest days, and the synagogue form can be seen to inform the liturgy of the Christian church, such as prayers and Scripture readings. As they continued their Jewish worship practices, they added some distinctive Christian components (i.e. the Lord’s Supper).

The early church also contained another growing community. Gentile Christians had not been involved in Hebrew customs, so their approach in worship was different. The Jews had a strong identity associated with their religious heritage; the Gentiles did not have the same religious memory. The emphasis among these people was on a reinterpretation, if not renunciation, of Jewish practices.¹¹³ For example:

¹¹¹ Ross, 418.

¹¹² Cabaniss, 41.

¹¹³ Ross, 412.

Christ was seen as the Passover Lamb who had been sacrificed, the temple was replaced by the body of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16-17), the people who make up the church, the new temple, were designated a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9), the worshipping community in the midst of which God now lived was the “new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:2-3).¹¹⁴

The Gentile Christians needed to be instructed in the Old Testament in order to understand the reason and forms of worship, now fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, in order to learn the language and substance of their faith. Even if they didn’t need to become Jewish converts, the Gentile Christians needed to understand the language of faith as can be demonstrated in Paul’s letter to the Galatians (law vs. faith). In the midst of these reinterpretations, James White writes that at the core, “in the form and content of their worship it was still recognizably a Jewish world.”¹¹⁵

Liturgy: A “Rooted” Liturgy

Early on, there was a twofold structure of worship developing in the early church – a synagogue type “word” liturgy and a “meal” liturgy. The synagogue provides for us the roots to the liturgy of the word, and Justin Martyr provides a broader liturgy that includes a similar shape to the synagogue liturgy, but with the added Eucharist liturgy.

With the emphasis the synagogue had on Scripture and its interpretation, it is no wonder that it was the practice of Paul to go to the synagogue to preach the good news of Christ (Acts 14:1; 17:2). James White notes that, “Those who became Christians remained in the synagogue at first and gradually formed worshipping communities of their own.”¹¹⁶ Although there is evidence for synagogue influence within early Christian worship, there is no service order that can be assembled from Scripture. Frank Senn observes, “Information about synagogue worship

¹¹⁴ Webber, *Old and New*, 45.

¹¹⁵ White, 16.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

contemporary with the New Testament and early Christianity is sketchy at best, nevertheless; the shape and content of the synagogue liturgy can be pieced together from information in the Mishnah.”¹¹⁷ Senn offers this basic form of the synagogue liturgy as it emerged in the first century.¹¹⁸

- *Invocation* – “Bless the Lord who is to be blessed.”
- *The Shema* – “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Duet. 6:4). This functioned as a kind of creed.
- *The Eighteen Benedictions* – Prayers came to acquire the meaning of spiritual sacrifices. First three blessings are called praises. The last three are called thanksgivings. The petitions in between were originally variable and remained fluid for a long time.
- *The Priestly Blessing* (Numbers 6:24-26) – This prayer may have become regarded as a substitute for the material sacrifices – a sacrifice of prayer and praise offered by the people.
- *Readings from the Torah and the Prophets*
- *Homily*
- *Psalms* (originally part of temple liturgy) – These were sung at the beginning of synagogue service and between readings.
- *Closing Prayer*

The core elements of the synagogue service seem to be apparent within early Christian worship practice. In the first part of the twofold structure, the liturgy of the word, elements of the synagogue service are seen. The elements of similarity include: the centrality of Scripture (i.e. reading and exposition) and prayer (i.e. daily hours of prayer; the third hour, Acts 2:15; the sixth hour, Acts 10:9; and the ninth hour, Acts 3:1; the Eighteen Benedictions and the Lord’s Prayer).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 68. Senn writes that “the Mishnah from the second century codified Jewish law as it had been discussed among the rabbis of Palestine during the period of relative peace and tranquility (70-130 C.E.) reflects practices that are antecedent to the time when the oral tradition was written down. Therefore, it is *instructive* for the purposes of understanding Christian liturgical form.” p. 68.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 68-69.

¹¹⁹ Webber, 56-57.

The second part of the twofold structure includes the Lord's Supper. In order to understand the biblical circumstances of gathering around Word and Meal, it's important to understand the development. Robert Webber illustrates the development of the Lord's Supper.¹²⁰

- Origin stems from the night before the crucifixion with Jesus in the Upper Room with his disciples.
- Earliest mention is in Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).
- Two questions raised: interpretation of "breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42, 45; 20:7); does the term refer to the Lord's Supper?
- Worship in the early church occurs in the context of a meal. Was the "breaking of bread" a common meal itself or does it designate an act apart from the meal, though in the context of the meal?
- Because the act "breaking of bread" was an act apart from the meal, structurally separated from fellowship, the term could suggest that Christians used the term to refer to the Holy Bread of Christian Communion.
- The breaking of bread in the early Christian community may have been a means of recalling the presence of Jesus, who was made known in the breaking of bread (i.e. the Emmaus road account).
- The breaking of bread happens in the context of a meal. Not only does breaking the bread evoke the memory of Christ, but the meal also serves the same purpose – serves as a reminder of the last meal, but also the promise of future meals (Matt. 26:29).
- Paul's instructions to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11) highlights the abuses they had towards the meal, followed by the Lord's Supper.
- The Corinthians had perverted the purpose of the meal (fellowship) by being drunk and not taking the Lord's Supper seriously. Paul urged them to eat at home, "If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment" (1 Cor. 11:34). Thus, highlighting the distinction between meal and Lord's Supper.

By the time of the mid-second century, "the meal had been dropped from the worship gathering, replaced by the ritual of bread and wine, which remained the essential feature of the second half of the liturgy."¹²¹ In this way, the concept of the meal [fellowship] and the Lord's Supper [covenant renewal] were "fused in the single ritual action that we find by 150 A.D. in the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 58-59.

¹²¹ Webber, 60.

description provided by Justin Martyr.”¹²² The results are that when we gather for worship, we partake in the Eucharist, a combined meal that is thanksgiving, remembrance, and anticipation.

Two documents help to illuminate the content of early Christian worship outside of New Testament material. The *Didache* (ca. A.D. 100) is a document that contains instructional material for the early church. Concerning the Eucharist (“Thanksgiving” consisting of both meal and Lord’s Supper) a prayer in the *Didache* says,

“We give Thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou has made known to us through Jesus, Thy servant... As this broken bread was scattered over the hills and then, when gathered, became one mass, so may Thy Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom... Let no one eat and drink of your Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord...”¹²³

Concerning the Lord’s Supper:

“To Thee be the glory forevermore. Thou, Lord Almighty, has created all things for the sake of Thy name and has given food and drink for men to enjoy, that they may give thanks to thee; but to us Thou hast vouchsafed spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Jesus Thy Servant... Remember, O Lord, Thy Church: deliver her from all evil, perfect her in Thy love, and from the four winds assemble her, the sanctified, in Thy kingdom which Thou has prepared for her.”¹²⁴

From these details, it can be seen that the community gathered for a meal, through which thanksgiving was offered to the Father as revealed through Jesus. The prayer for the Lord’s Supper illuminates the nature of the food which they partake. The food is spiritual nourishment for the church. Both prayers also contain a strong corporate feeling with an eschatological kingdom perspective.

The other document is Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*. The document comes from around 150 A.D. This work provides a considerable amount of information about the structure and meaning of Christian worship.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ The *Didache*, chapter 9. (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles) obtained from Sign, Symbol and Sacred Act CM746 – Materials for the course (2006), Briarcrest Seminary.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country *gather together to one place*, and the *memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read*, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, *the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things*. Then we *all rise together and pray*, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, *bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings*, according to his ability, and *the people assent, saying Amen*; and there is a *distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given*, and *to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons*. And they who are well to do, and willing, *give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president*, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.¹²⁵ (*emphasis mine*)

The outline of Justin's description may look like this:¹²⁶

WORD

Gathering in one place
Reading of scriptures by a reader
Homily by the presider
Standing prayers

MEAL

Setting out of the food of the Eucharist
Great thanksgiving by the presider and the amen
Distribution of the food of the thanksgiving and sending to the absent by the deacons
Collection for the poor deposited with the presider sometime in the course of the meeting

This is not to be seen as two separate services, but the single liturgical action of the community.

Justin provides for us a view of the community who are gathered together in the liturgy of Christ.

Gordon Lathrop describes the meaning of this pattern.

The meanings of Sunday, of the assembly, of "these good things" in the Scriptures, of the prayers, of the great thanksgiving, and of the food are all one... the pattern of being in Christ before God. The preaching makes that pattern evident, inviting the community into it. In the meal one eats and drinks the presence of Christ and so is gathered into God. The thanksgiving brings this meaning to expression, and the subsequent actions of the people assert that this meaning is the truth of the world.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Schaff, Philip, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*.

¹²⁶ Lathrop, 48-49.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

The basic structure of worship in the early church appears to be a twofold emphasis on the Word (synagogue influence) and the Lord's Supper within an atmosphere of prayer (Acts 2:42). Webber believes that this twofold sequence is theologically rooted in the structure of the biblical covenant of Exodus 24:1-8.

In granting the covenant at Mount Sinai, God proclaimed his commandments, which were to govern this relationship. He described the behavior that pleases him, through which his people were to demonstrate their faithfulness and obedience. As a response, the people and their leaders pledged themselves in a series of acts of commitment. First they made a verbal confession: "Everything the Lord said we will do." Then they offered a sacrifice, with the blood of the slain animal being sprinkled on the people. Finally, they ate a sacred meal in the Lord's presence. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he specifically called it "the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). We can fully understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and understand its position in the twofold sequence of Christian worship, only when we see it as a response of commitment to the relationship of the covenant that God offers through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ in his Word.¹²⁸

Although baptism isn't seen to be part of a New Testament worship "structure," understanding it liturgically in the context of preparation and entrance is essential for understanding worship. In the early church, baptism was the worship ritual that brought a person into the fellowship, the worship, and the Eucharist of the church.¹²⁹ The significance of baptism is that it's the worshiper's identification with the death and resurrection of Christ, which is rehearsed each Sunday in the corporate liturgy. "How can people remember and celebrate an experience with which they have not identified?"¹³⁰ Baptism in the early church was a "sign-act that lay at the heart of the worshipping community."¹³¹

¹²⁸ Webber, *Old and New*, 56.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

Story: Christ the Center

The New Testament and early church liturgical material of the early and mid second century provides a glimpse to the extent to which liturgical material focused on the Christ-event; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.¹³² As this group of Christ-followers emerged, they were learning a new faith which gave them a new orientation in the world, starting with their initiation to the faith in baptism. The twofold structure of the worship gatherings may be informed by Jewish worship practices, but there is a Christ-centered reinterpretation of those practices. As the early church assembled, they heard the story of Jesus as witnessed and handed down from the apostles, and they participated in a meal that allowed the participant to respond and identify with the story.

Gordon Lathrop paints a picture of how the Christ-event impacts the meaning of the twofold structure of early Christian worship. For Lathrop, it is the setting of Scripture against the meal that the meaning is discovered.

The religious meanings of ancient Scriptures are found to have surprising new referents when set beside a meal of thanksgiving in which Christ's death is experienced as life-giving. The body and blood of the crucified, made available as life creating food, call the community to read all texts according to the hermeneutic of Sunday, according to the spirit of the one who was dead but whose life enlivens the meeting. Every deliverance story is made to speak this central Christian word. Israel is delivered from slavery, Jonah from the sea, the three children from the furnace, Sara from the demon, Susanna from the hands of the old men - in each of these the community hears of the God who raised Jesus and raises us. Then the Scriptures too are the way to encounter Jesus Christ. They are the audible bread and cup... the texts call the community to eat the meal of thanksgiving with the wider meaning that it had thought possible. In the meal, we stand before that God to whom the texts witness. Here is the manna, the lamb, the temple meals, the feast for all nations upon the mountain. And, beside these meal stories, all the other stories of the Scriptures resonate here, in the meal of Christ, as well. Here is the survival from the flood, the assembly of the people of God, the dwelling place of God, the beginning of the wiping away of tears. Then the meal is tangible and visible word, an eating of the meaning of the Scriptures, as if we were eating the scroll given Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:8-3:3).¹³³

¹³² See Appendix C – A list of liturgical elements (prayer, creeds, etc.) reflect the nature of the liturgical elements in terms of content – centering on the Christ-event.

¹³³ Lathrop, 50-51.

It isn't complicated to observe that the early church community learned the grammar of their faith through the experience of their action in the structure of the liturgy. In these settings, they learned about the object and subject of their worship in the person of Jesus Christ, the meaning of being a kingdom people, and their faith in the midst of life in this world and in anticipation of the life to come.

From Persecution to Reformation

From the times of the early church to around 1700 A.D., the basic structure of Christian worship reflected the twofold structure of "Word and Meal". Although there may have been major theological disputes concerning the Christ-event during this time, the event remained central to the structure of worship. It is with this in mind that we will briefly look at a few worship traditions.

As the church continued to expand its territory, Christians continued to gather in homes and practice the Word and Table pattern of worship. Although worship was corporate, it wasn't necessarily public. For the first three hundred years of its existence, the Christian church was considered illegal and was under extreme persecution. Therefore, "very ancient liturgical documents before the fourth century are quite limited because the early Church was not "producing" liturgies but focusing on celebrating the Eucharist and surviving persecution."¹³⁴

However, in 312, at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine converted to Christianity and soon promoted it. Christianity became legal with the Edict of Milan in 313, and in 380 it had become the official religion of the empire. White notes, "Suddenly their furtive assemblies had become public convocations. It was necessary to re-envision worship with a new

¹³⁴ Benjamin D. Williams. "*The Jewish Foundation*", <http://www.liturgica.com/html/litEOLitEarly.jsp?hostname=null>[accessed July 6, 2006]

sense of scale. Simple ceremonial was replaced with elaborate performances. Space always dictates what is possible and the house-church simplicity yielded to imperial magnificence in the new churches.”¹³⁵

White summarizes this period of social and religious change.

From small cells of devout folk meeting in secrecy to vast crowds of the populace worshipping in imperial basilicas, Christianity went within a century from being the object of persecution to the official religion of the empire. From a religion largely confined to the eastern fringe of the Mediterranean to one stretching from Ireland to Persia, the geographical scope multiplied many times. From a single gospel message to a highly sophisticated theology, Christianity went from being virtually unknown to dominating the intellectual world of late antiquity.¹³⁶

This worldview shift put the church into a friendly environment where, with gifts of buildings in which to worship, the worship of the church shifted from intimacy to theatre.¹³⁷

These changes were to have a profound effect on how Christians engaged in worship and the church began to modify its liturgical structure to meet the conditions of ministering in this new found public forum. In this context, we will look at Eastern (Orthodox) Worship, Medieval (Roman) Worship and Reformation (Protestant) Worship highlighting a few of their characteristics.

The Eastern Liturgy (approx. 400 A.D.)

The Eastern worldview was informed by the “Hellenistic love for the aesthetic influenced by its poetry, literature, art, and philosophy.”¹³⁸ This affected the imagery and artistic expression of worship. Although highly aesthetic, the liturgy of the Eastern/Orthodox church is rooted in

¹³⁵ White. *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 42.

¹³⁶ White, 41.

¹³⁷ Webber, 95.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

the liturgy of the early church. The one service most frequently used is called the *Liturgy of John Chrysostom* (c. 400 A.D.).¹³⁹

The liturgy reflects the basic structure of Word (Little Entrance) and Table (Great Entrance), although with many additions that help to articulate the meaning and beautify the structure. These ceremonies are carried out in settings of mystery, majesty and awe as icons, processions, and censing are part of the liturgical event. The Eastern church has also been strongly influenced by the images of heavenly worship as described in Revelation 4-5.¹⁴⁰

Eastern worship aims to bring heaven down to earth and lift earth to heaven. Robert Shaper believes that this is the reason why there has been so little change in the liturgy of the Eastern church.

That is because for them worship reflects the constant activity of heaven and the Church Triumphant. Therefore, the worship of the Church Militant is a participation in that higher worship. That means that today's congregation, physically gathered, will always be outnumbered by the myriads of saints and angels who will be there carry on there perpetual adoration of God.¹⁴¹

Since earthly worship joins heavenly worship, Christ is uniquely present. This is the strong central theme for Eastern worship: the presence of Christ. This presence, however, has many forms and many manifestations. "It is at one and the same time the presence of Christ in the liturgical action and the presence of the liturgical assembly with Christ to the heavenly liturgy which is eternally enacted."¹⁴² For this reason care is taken to communicate the "mystical presence of God in the ceremony and beauty of the liturgy as illustrated in the iconic design of the liturgical space in which the liturgy unfolds."¹⁴³ The liturgy is filled with symbolic actions,

¹³⁹ Shaper, 93.

¹⁴⁰ Webber, 99.

¹⁴¹ Shaper, 93.

¹⁴² Robert Webber ed. *Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Pub. Group, 1994), 53.

¹⁴³ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 100.

and the whole drama of redemption is enacted. The Christ-event remains the content of worship, but there is a newfound sense of the transcendent nature of God as mediated by Christ in the worship experience, thus reflecting the heavenly worship that is meant to be emphasized.

Medieval Liturgy in the West (600-1500 A.D.)

Medieval liturgy can be illustrated in the mass. “The mass was a continuation of the synagogue service of the Word and the Christian observance of the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁴⁴ Although the basic structure remained, emphasis on the Eucharist was significant. The medieval period witnessed a shift in the celebration of the Eucharist liturgy. The church increasingly emphasized worship as mystery in which God was made present. Sign and symbol were vehicles through which the truth of God’s presence was communicated and received.

Mystery was also communicated through “an allegorical view of the Mass and doctrine of the bodily presence of Jesus in the bread and wine.”¹⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas had tremendous impact on the understanding and practice of the Eucharist during this time.

When they [Aquinas and other Catholic theologians] turned their attention to Eucharistic sacrifice, they did not base their theology on the text of the Eucharistic canon, which speaks variously of the people’s gifts, of the offering of the bread and cup, and our offering of ourselves. They based it instead on the notion of sacrifice itself and how the sacrifice of Christ represented the celebration.¹⁴⁶

His definition of the Eucharist eventually “led to the withholding of the cup from the laity. This was theologically justified by the assumption that Christ was indeed fully present in his body, which the bread became, so that the receiving worship truly partook of Christ.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Shaper, 100.

¹⁴⁵ Frank Senn explains allegory as turning “every word and object into an instruction, often with precise meaning or designation... A crude form of allegory can be found in the exposition of the mass during the Middle Ages in which everything was made to represent whatever the commentator chose... The practical result was that the laity were left as spectators of a clerical performance as the priest offered the sacrifice of the mass.” (Senn, 6).

¹⁴⁶ Senn, 253.

¹⁴⁷ Shaper, 104.

Another significant change that occurred during this time was in the use of language. Up until the fall of the Roman Empire the prominent language especially in “intellectual and cultural circles had largely been Greek,”¹⁴⁸ but now there began the shift to Latin. This shift in language had enormous consequence on the participation of the people as they did not speak Latin. The mass assumed the “character of sacred drama that was played out by the clergy while the people watched.”¹⁴⁹

For the lay person attending mass faithfully every Sunday, the trajectory of this whole period was that of mass becoming more and more remote. A good example of this was the altar-table itself receding further and further from view until it finally became lodged firmly against the east wall of the church. The bishop or priest who formerly had faced the people across the altar-table now turned his back on them. From the twelfth century on, the chief action they could glimpse through the rood-screen that separated nave from chancel was the elevation when the priest raised the consecrated host above his head. Seeing this moment became the high point of the mass.¹⁵⁰

During the medieval period, a significant story line may be seen in tendencies regarding the Eucharist: “the movement away from eating and toward looking and the devotion to the host centering on Christ’s passion and death.”¹⁵¹

The emphasis in the liturgical tradition of the Easter tradition is in the Heavenly worship in which Christ is present. People participated with all of their senses – smell (incense), sight (icons), taste (Eucharist), physical (postures), and hearing (prayers). The emphasis in the Western tradition just prior to the Reformation was Christ crucified, thus Christ’s sacrifice. Although participation may have been remote, it was still possible. White highlights a theory of participation during this time.

For medieval people, there were actions such as standing up for the gospel, kneeling at the consecration, and looking at the elevation, all of which gave some connection to what

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Webber, 103.

¹⁵⁰ White, 88.

¹⁵¹ Michael S. Driscoll, “The Conversion of the Nations,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. by Geoffrey Wainwright & Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 209.

the priest was doing. But there was plenty see in the nave itself from the painting of the last judgment over the chancel arch, to saints painted on the walls and glazed in the windows, to sculptured images in wood and stone everywhere, to the images of the deceased on the floor beneath their feet. The whole building was a text book of saints of the past and warnings of the future.¹⁵²

Another theory of participation is given by Nathan Mitchell. For Mitchell, there may be a distinction between clergy participation and laity participation.

“It might be said, therefore that medieval lay persons participated in the Eucharist not so much by understanding the words and rites by observing the proper demeanor toward its Lord and his acts... The mass meant what it did to lay participants at least in part because it was conducted in a ritual language of gestures and symbols they knew from their sacred life. In effect, medieval lay participants understood the liturgy with their bodies and to their connection to the ritual flowed from a rich layering of associations, of social relationships and rituals expressing those relationships.”¹⁵³

One of the most significant results of all this change in Eucharistic theology was the loss of the eschatological conception of the Eucharistic rite for the Western church.

Instead of a focus on the Resurrection and Ascension (transcendent, timeless and eternal aspects of the faith), the emphasis shifted to the Passion of Calvary (an event within history). While the clergy still said the Eucharistic prayers that contained the timeless and eternal, the laity did not hear or understand them, and their focus was on a suffering body nailed to a cross, and in meditations on the suffering of Jesus.¹⁵⁴

Participating in the structures of the eastern and western liturgies resulted in two different forms of piety for the worshiper. An introspective and subjective piety, dwelling on the sins of the individual became characteristic of western Eucharistic piety and distinguished it from the eastern emphasis on adoration and awe before God.¹⁵⁵

The theology of sacrifice in the mass created a host of other problems for the reformers. As the mass took on more “superstitious” role due to lack of theological understand and clergy abuse , the people expected all sorts of benefits and advantages from hearing the mass,

¹⁵² White, 90.

¹⁵³ Driscoll, “The Conversion of the Nations,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 310.

¹⁵⁴ J. Michael Thompson. *Protestant Liturgics: The Reformation reshapes Christian worship*
<http://www.liturgica.com/html/litPLit2.jsp?hostname=null> [accessed July 6, 2006]

¹⁵⁵ White, 90-91.

“including healings, the release of souls from purgatory, and other magical results.”¹⁵⁶ For the reformers, this wasn’t Scriptural and needed to be removed from the church’s worship.

Reformation Liturgy (1500-1700 A.D.)

In the years between 1500 and 1700, the Reformation was a movement that resulted in the birth of the Protestant church. Protestantism can be characterized as a movement of the word which led from emphasis on symbolic communication to the verbal communication of the modern era. Robert Webber writes, “Because words were regarded as higher and more significant vehicles of truth than symbols, images, poetry, gesture, and the like, all forms of communication other than the verbal became suspect.”¹⁵⁷ This communication shift resulted in liturgies that were not only word centered but attached great importance to the verbal content of worship.

In reaction to the medieval Eucharistic practice in which most of the lay congregation did not participate with understanding, the reformers rejected many medieval concepts of the Eucharist and aimed towards more lay participation. One such reformer was Ulrich Zwingli. “Zwingli repudiated all ceremonies as pagan and commenced to rid the church of traditions and many worship rubrics regardless of their possible value to the church.”¹⁵⁸ He was convinced that faith came through the Holy Spirit alone rather than any physical or external means.

Changes to the structure of the protestant liturgy in contrast to the mass were not uniform within the reformation leaders. What was uniform was a desire for understanding in the worship of the assembly.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Webber, *A Historical Approach To Liturgics and Worship*, www.liturgica.com

¹⁵⁸ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 112.

The way in which laypersons participated in (and so experienced) the mass was to be transformed, and this transformation was to take shape as ritual intelligibility, as cognitive access to meaning(s) of the Church's services. The goal, in short, was "well informed lay participation," a clear understanding by every communicant of "every word and gesture of the minister."¹⁵⁹

Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Cranmer all approached the changes differently. Luther and Cranmer were "conservative" in the changes while Zwingli was more radical and Calvin moderate in his changes.¹⁶⁰ For the purposes of observation, I will focus on the Calvinist model.

For the structure of the liturgy, Calvin's liturgical influence can be seen from the prayer, word, and meal flow described in Acts 2:42. It was Calvin's intent, in keeping with his appreciation of worship in the early church, to maintain the ancient structure of worship proclaiming Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, and return in both word and sacrament.¹⁶¹ The liturgy of the word is followed by "the administration of the Lord's Supper according to biblical instructions; the reformer always pleaded for a frequent celebration of the supper. (Zwingli emphasized the Word only and was influential among Calvinism – quarterly communion, rather than weekly communion became standard in the churches most influenced by Calvinism.)"¹⁶²

The preaching of the word is at the heart of the Reformed service. God himself addresses the church in the Scriptures read and expounded, in order by the Holy Spirit to arouse the faith of all the elect. In Calvin's mind, the Word of God was the greatest gift to the church. The Word of God is the revelation of God to us in Christ. "Preaching was a kind of sacrament of the Word

¹⁵⁹ Nathan D. Mitchell, "Reforms, Protestant and Catholic," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 326.

¹⁶⁰ Webber, 112.

¹⁶¹ Bruno Burki, "The Reformed Tradition in Continental Europe," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 443.

¹⁶² Webber, 12.

of God and Eucharist was a sacrament of the Word of God. Eucharist derived its meaning and significance from the Word.”¹⁶³ The liturgy of the Eucharist was also dependent on understanding the Word of God. “The primary means of means of attaining the objective of all worship, the adoration of God, is to understand his Word.”¹⁶⁴ It is in believing the promises of Christ that he will indeed make us “partakers of his body and blood, which is accomplished spiritually in our souls.”¹⁶⁵

Christ communicates to humanity his body and blood, which were offered in sacrifice on the cross. His spiritual and heavenly food causes humankind to live a holy life in him... At the supper itself the reading of the institution according to 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 is followed by a long exhortation that culminates in the summons to “lift our hearts on high,” where Christ lives and reigns with the Father and waits to feed us with his very own substance. Then the bread and the cup are distributed as the “visible signs” of his bounty.¹⁶⁶

For Calvin, worship sets the person apart to “live a holy life in him;” and, it is the Spirit of God that alone “consecrates men and women and all creation to make of them a liturgy that renders thanks to God and glorifies God for the divine work of salvation.”¹⁶⁷

To summarize, the Reformers insisted on the restoration of the word to its ancient and proper place in worship. The Reformers agreed that worship should be in the vernacular and that the twofold structure of word and sacrament be maintained.¹⁶⁸

Observing these liturgies side by side, we see that even in the midst of theological and doctrinal differences, the twofold structure of worship remained.

¹⁶³ Shaper, 131.

¹⁶⁴ Shaper, *In His Presence*, 131.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Burko, “The Reformed Tradition,” 445.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 111.

Eastern Liturgy¹⁶⁹

Rite of Preparation

Liturgy of the Word

The Little Entrance

Antiphons

Readings

Sermon

Liturgy of the Faithful

Prayers of the faithful

Great Entrance

Kiss of Peace and Creed

Anaphora

Lord's Prayer

Communion

Final Prayers

Dismissal

Western Medieval¹⁷⁰*Liturgy of the Word*

Introit

Kyrie

Gloria

Greeting

Collect

Psalm

Epistle

*Gospel**Liturgy of Eucharist*

Preparation of Table

Prayers

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Peace

Communion

Dismissal

Blessing

Calvinist Reformed¹⁷¹

Opening Sentence

Confession

Psalm

Collect for Illumination

Lessons

Sermon

Prayer and Creed

(The Lord's Supper-optional)

Words of Institution

Fencing the Table

Sursum Corda

Communion

Psalm

Thanksgiving

Canticle

Benediction

(alms received after service)

Observations:

- The twofold structure remains, although more ceremony and ritual is introduced
- The Christ-event remains central
- Eastern liturgy focuses on Heavenly worship – highly participative
- Western liturgy focuses on Christ sacrificed – low participation
- The mass gives more emphasis to the Eucharist resulting in superstitious leanings
- The Reformers emphasize the Word, Lord's Supper becomes celebrated less frequently
- Truth received through symbols gives way to truth received through words
- The objective aspect of worship is emphasized
- God acts through the physical – means of grace - God gives himself to the church.

¹⁶⁹ Webber, *Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship*, 154. Byzantine Liturgy (Ninth Century).

¹⁷⁰ Wainwright and Tucker, ed. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 97. The Medieval Roman Rite ca. 1300.

¹⁷¹ Shaper, 129. According to Shaper, this liturgy from Calvin's "The Form of Church Prayers and Hymns of Administering the Sacraments and Consecrating Marriage Accordingly to the Custom of the Ancient Church" too took this form.

From Enlightenment to Entertainment

From the 1700's until the present, distinct features in the structure of the liturgy have developed that have impacted the shape of the liturgy and influenced the worship culture of the contemporary church. In this section we will look at how the Enlightenment, Revivalism, and the Seeker-Service movements have impacted the structure of liturgy.

Enlightenment Liturgy (1700-1800 A.D.)

The theological soil of much of Christian practices over the last centuries through the modern era stem from what is known as the Enlightenment period. “As a movement both intellectual and political in scope, the Enlightenment sought the reform of society by proclaiming the dignity and rights of the individual and to that end denounced the traditional bastions of feudal and religious authority that had been the mainstays of the old order.”¹⁷² Enlightenment thinkers rejected external authorities as a source of knowledge and instead promoted human reasoning as a way to bring about understanding. Due to this development, suspicion was placed on the Scripture and church as claims of authority. It was the individual through human reasoning that could bring about positive, progressive change. Webber highlights some of the major ideas of the modern era: “The modern notion that meaning and morality can be ascertained through reason apart from God... the concept of progress and the notion of that history is moving civilization to higher levels of consciousness... the idea that growth in knowledge will save civilization, that science always has an answer, and that we can depend on it to solve our problems”¹⁷³ - were all born out of this time.

¹⁷² Thiel, John E. *Nonfoundationalism*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 43

¹⁷³ Webber, *The Younger Evangelical*, 80

Frank Senn connects the religious trend of pietism and the cultural shift of the Enlightenment with its “religion of rationalism”.¹⁷⁴ Senn observes, “Orthodox Christianity was challenged towards the end of the seventeenth century by a new current of personalized ‘religion of the heart’ known as Pietism.”¹⁷⁵

Its major concern was to effect a personal reform of faith over and against a mere formal doctrinal or external adherence to the Christian faith. Externalism, it was believed, prevents personal involvement motivated by an openness to the Spirit... The key to Pietist worship is found in the stress on conversion. In conversion, worship centered no longer on the objective and corporate action of the church, but on the personal experience of the worshiper in worship and was followed by a rigorous ethical walk. In effect, those who were truly converted needed less structure and were less dependent on others in worship. In this way the corporate worship of the congregation and systematic order of congregational action were gradually replaced by the stress on individual experience in worship and a personal walk with the Lord.¹⁷⁶

The essential feature of worship was the sermon and its edifying role for the congregation. The church leaders of the Enlightenment valued public worship only to the extent that it was “morally edifying to the people.”¹⁷⁷ Easter Monday’s Emmaus-story could “inspire a lesson on going for walks.”¹⁷⁸ White writes in the context of the Eucharist: “In essence, the Eucharist was moralized: ‘If Jesus could die for you, why cannot you live righteously?’ The essence of thousands of communion services continues to be: ‘Jesus died; be good.’ This is certainly the predominant view in much of American Protestantism.”¹⁷⁹ A key influence on Enlightenment Christianity was Immanuel Kant. White writes about Kant’s view of God’s activity in relation to *means of grace* from Kant’s “*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.”

He [Kant] discusses the sacraments of baptism and holy communion in which he finds some merit so long as they are not seen as a “means of grace-this is a religious illusion which can do naught but work counter to the spirit of religion”. The traditional view that

¹⁷⁴ Senn, 538.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Webber, 117.

¹⁷⁷ Senn, 541.

¹⁷⁸ Wainwright, *Doxology*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), 333.

¹⁷⁹ White, 155.

God uses the sacraments as means of grace is anathema for Kant. The essence of religion seems to be the pursuit of virtue.¹⁸⁰

Kant's view is that God does not act in worship. "God's past work in Jesus Christ was to be remembered, not experienced afresh."¹⁸¹ Sacraments become a way to remember what God did in the past. We do not experience them as a present encounter with the Holy One. Worship becomes more about what a person does for God, rather than what God does for the person.

Revivalist Liturgy (1800-1900)

In the 1800's, Charles Finney (1792-1872) had tremendous impact on the structure of worship. Finney argued that there are no normative forms of worship in the New Testament and that historic traditions aren't informative for effective worship services. White describes worship under Finney's influence, "The Sunday service becomes oriented to producing converts. Finney leads the way in promoting a pragmatic approach to worship and argues that, since worship forms have changed over time, nothing biblical or historical is normative except that which works at the present."¹⁸² For Finney, worship has always been changing according to the needs of the present. Therefore he says, "Our present forms of public worship, and everything, so far as measures are concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and by a succession of *New Measures...*"¹⁸³

With conversion rather than corporate worship as the goal, the sermon became the most direct means of persuading the unconverted in the congregation to give their lives to Christ.

"Altar calls, previously unheard of in a worship service, became frequent elements of the

¹⁸⁰ White, 144.

¹⁸¹ Ibid..

¹⁸² White, Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretive Sources, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knoxville Press, 1992), 114.

¹⁸³ Charles Finney quoted in White, *Documents of Christian Worship*, 114.

liturgy.”¹⁸⁴ The climax of the service became “the altar call to conversion, rededication, consecration to ministry, or work on the mission field.”¹⁸⁵ The Enlightenment and Revivalism shared a concern to get results in the moral life. Senn summarizes this concern:

It used direct techniques to get direct results: to lure roughhewn people on the frontier away from drinking, gambling, womanizing, and other antisocial habits and into a respectable, responsible, settled life. It was not really interested in building up the life of the church; the community of faith served only as a prop to support the individual in the moral life, and people felt no hesitation to leave one church to seek out another when they no longer felt its sustaining power.¹⁸⁶

Seeker-Service (1980's -)

The seeker-service emerged in the mid 1980's and borrowed from the methodologies of business and turned towards “marketing the message” appropriating the tactics of the “new measures” promoted by Finney. The church growth movement encouraged the development of worship practices “based on the perceived needs of those who had consciously rejected the church and its worship or who were spiritually ‘seekers’”.¹⁸⁷ This movement, “in the name of evangelism (or the recruitment of church members from an increasingly unchurched population), not only challenged the style and content of the liturgy, but advocated the abolition of traditional liturgy altogether as the primary vehicle of the church’s public celebrations.”¹⁸⁸ “A generation of seekers absent from church since their youth or not raised in it at all, purportedly finds the traditional forms of ceremony, music, and even texts opaque, unattractive, and a barrier to re-assimilation into church life.”¹⁸⁹ The style of worship that surfaced drew heavily upon the current culture with its focus on relevance and music-driven worship [worship concerts].

¹⁸⁴ Webber, *Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship*

¹⁸⁵ Webber, *A Historical Approach to Liturgics and Worship*

¹⁸⁶ Senn, 564.

¹⁸⁷ Wainwright, 629.

¹⁸⁸ Senn, 687.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 687.

Practitioners of this kind of celebrational encounter with the unchurched do not hesitate to refer to their efforts as entertainment evangelism.¹⁹⁰ Sunday morning worship in “growth-oriented” churches became designed towards the needs of the individual (conversion of the unchurched or edification of the believer). In spite of the use of high-tech media, the typical “seeker-service” “is really a form of the old frontier or revival pattern of worship with a gathering including songs, testimonies, concerns and prayers, followed by a reading of Scripture and preaching, and a response to the word.”¹⁹¹

The following are the ingredients of a service for seekers:¹⁹²

- A belief in the biblical mandate to evangelize the world, beginning with our own community.
- The desire to never bore anyone out of the kingdom of God; therefore a commitment to being contemporary and creative.
- A deep respect for the anonymity of the seeker.
- An understanding of the seeker’s need for time in making a decision; therefore, an emphasis on the process, not the event.
- The recognition of the need for excellence in everything we do, especially with those things that communicate the very character and nature of God.
- An understanding that people will desire to support the cause with their time, talents, and treasures since the cause is handled with excellence, integrity, and honesty, and leads to results [pragmatism].
- Commitment to providing a relevant connection between Christianity and the seeker’s daily life.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 688.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Webber, Robert: *The Renewal of Sunday Worship*. 1st ed. Nashville, Tenn. : Star Song Pub. Group, 1993, S. 125

Enlightenment Model¹⁹³

Short Prayer
Reading of Scripture
Long Prayer
Singing
Preaching
Third Prayer
Singing
Lord's Supper
Collection
Benediction

Revival "Frontier" Model¹⁹⁴

Gathering – praise and prayer
Prayer (concerns)
Lesson
Sermon
Altar Call

Seeker-Service¹⁹⁵

Prelude
Welcome
Vocal Duet
Drama
Scripture
Song
Announcements
Offering
Message
Fellowship

Observations:

- Ceremony and rituals in decline
- Twofold structure becomes no longer apparent
- The story no longer centers on the Christ-event
- Anthropocentric – worship serves the individual
- Focuses on felt needs, conversion
- Worship becomes pragmatic – “Whatever works”
- Both the objective content of worship and also the subjective needs of the individual are important
- Development of the thought that God doesn't act in the physical – there is no means of grace, only acts of virtue
- The modern attitude stripped the Eucharist of its divine presence and action. In modernity the Lord's Supper is individually oriented. It's something I do to show God that I remember him.

¹⁹³ Wainwright, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. 600. This service from the Baptist pastor Morgan Edwards highlights some features of the Enlightenment time. There is little ceremony and ritual in comparison to the more elaborate forms of earlier liturgies.

¹⁹⁴ The frontier tradition reflects a service style in the 19th 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).

¹⁹⁵ Webber, Robert: *The Renewal of Sunday Worship*. – A typical “seeker” order taken from Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL.

SUMMARY – HISTORICAL DRIFT?

This history is like a rock skipping across a giant lake. The history of Christian worship is wide and deep and too large a scope for the purposes of this paper and not adequate for a critical analyses. But, what we can do is observe the ripples where these worshipping communities have contacted with history and catch a glimpse of how people have worshipped at different points in time. The trajectory has purposefully been planned to arrive at an “evangelical” North American perspective, taking into account the popular worship of today and providing a glimpse into the changing structure of the liturgy.

The structure of liturgy has been remarkably consistent and similar between the various traditions for most of Christian history. Frank Senn describes the twofold structure of Justin Martyr in terms of a fourfold movement and its shared use among different traditions:

This basic shape comprises what has come to be seen as a four movement structure of gathering, word, the meal and the dismissal. As we have seen, devotional and ceremonial elements have added to the core elements in the liturgy without obscuring its basic shape. The Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian liturgies indicate the remarkable similarities among the revised liturgies as a result of the consensus on the shape of the liturgy...¹⁹⁶

Although liturgy has been consistent amongst these traditions, they do face challenges. What has also been observed is that worship trends that are characterized by revivalism, frontier tradition and seeker-services are impacting the shape of Christian worship among other traditions. “The entertainment mentality which thinks in terms of performance, stages, and audiences has been making its appearance in local churches. Consequently, evangelical Christianity has produced its Christian media stars. Unfortunately many churches are following the trend by ‘juicing’ the service with a lot of hype, skits, musical performances, and the like,

¹⁹⁶ Senn, 645.

which will attract the ‘big audience.’”¹⁹⁷ This is a challenge to the liturgical traditions that are seeing numbers decline. Senn observes that “mainline denominations turn to such traditions as models for their own growth and, in the name of evangelism [recruitment], offer ‘alternative services’ or ‘creative liturgies’. Yet, these celebrations, too, like those in the mega-churches, follow the patterns of frontier worship.”¹⁹⁸

Webber is concerned that this style of worship doesn’t contribute to the deepening of the life-orienting faith that worship and more specifically liturgy enables. “My concern is that this kind of evangelical worship represents not only a radical departure from historic Protestant worship but also an accommodation to the trends of secularization. Thus, worship, which stands at the very center of our Christian experience, having been secularized, is unable to feed, nourish, enhance, challenge, inspire, and shape the collective and individual life of our congregations in the way in which it should.” Senn also sees further problems with this approach. “The theology or piety reflected in alternative worship services [liturgical traditions offering frontier style liturgy] is that it appeals to the response of the individual rather than to the corporate mission of the church.”¹⁹⁹

Fagerberg reminded us that in the deep structure of the *leitourgia*, there is a “what,” bringing us back the work (*ergeia*) that God’s people (*laos*) are called to perform on behalf of the many.²⁰⁰ This “what” is the corporate action of the church. “Christians do not assemble on Sunday for worship because God is confined to a sacred place on a sacred place, they assemble in order to be the icon of a redeemed world, and then conform the rest of life, family and social

¹⁹⁷ Webber, *A Historical Approach to Liturgics and Worship*

¹⁹⁸ Senn, 689.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 690.

²⁰⁰ Fagerberg, 110.

obligation to that very image.”²⁰¹ Webber encourages the North American evangelical church (which many traditions are following) to look at its structure.

Evangelicals will be challenged in the area of structure. Evangelical services lack a coherent movement. There seems to be little, if any, interior rhythm. Historical worship, on the other hand, is characterized by a theological and psychological integrity. Theologically, worship is structured around God's revelation in word and incarnation. This accounts for the basic structure of word and table. Psychologically, the structure of worship brings the worshiper through the experience of his or her relationship with God. It follows the pattern of coming before God in awe and reverence, confessing our sins, hearing and responding to the Word, receiving Christ in bread and wine, and being sent forth into the world.²⁰²

It is my observation that there has been historical drift in the liturgy of the Christian church. The church is no longer sensitive to the deep structure of the liturgy (the liturgy Christ), but sensitive to the needs of the individual. Liturgy has become worship and worship has come to be “looked upon as one means among many to edify, instruct, stimulate, or exhort the congregation about God, rather than be an encounter that sends shock waves into believer’s lives and sight.”²⁰³

EMERGENT CHURCH – CONCERNS AND VALUES FOR WORSHIP RENEWAL

In the book, “*The Younger Evangelical*,” Robert Webber describes a group of people who are asking questions about the nature of church in today’s current culture-shifting context. Those within the emergent movement are asking the right questions concerning worship renewal. They are concerned with the not only the content of worship, but also the structure of worship. Those within the emerging church understand that worship is informed by both Scripture and tradition.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 115.

²⁰² Webber, *A Historical Approach to Liturgics and Worship*, www.litrugica.com

²⁰³ Fagerberg., 112.

For Webber, the “younger evangelical” is committed to construct a “biblically rooted, historically informed, and culturally aware new evangelical witness in the twenty-first century.”²⁰⁴ These are the people who are the leaders and members of the church that is emerging in this new century. They want to “release the historic substance of faith from its twentieth-century enculturation to the Enlightenment and recontextualize it with the new cultural condition of the twenty-first century.”²⁰⁵ The younger evangelical helps us to understand the emergent church’s concern and desire for worship renewal. Three trends help to illustrate points of concern: 1) a reaction to entertainment worship, 2) a longing for an experience of God’s presence, and 3) a restoration of liturgical elements of worship.²⁰⁶

For emergent thinkers, there seems to be a general reaction against the contemporary worship style. Emerging worship leaders see much of contemporary worship as a presentational program, focused on perceived needs, feelings and desires. In the minds of emerging ministry leaders, there is a huge difference between religious consumers (those seeking get their felt needs met) and growing worshipers (those seeking to actively participate in the story and ongoing activity of God.). The story-formed view of growing worshippers interprets worship to be an “unfolding of the narrative of God’s story.”²⁰⁷ Frank Senn echoes the self-referenced aspect of contemporary worship. Instead, he believes we should moving form Entertainment to Enchantment.

²⁰⁴ Webber, *The Younger Evangelical*, 16.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰⁶ Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 188.

²⁰⁷ Webber, 200.

Entertainment is a major facet of our culture. But entertainment as a cultural model is inadequate to the mission of the gospel because it works best when it leaves one satisfied with oneself and one's world. Enchantment, on the other hand, casts a spell that leads one from a drab world to another, brighter, more interesting world. This may be accomplished more through processions, lights, incense, chants, and a visually rich environment than through texts.²⁰⁸

Those within the emergent movement are tired of entertainment, self-focused, music-driven worship. They know that there is something missing. There is more to worshipping a Holy God who accepts worship that is with “reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28). The “enchancing” story is told through the holistic artistic expression of the community.

They want mystery, awe, wonder, transcendence. Modernity rejected mystery. We live, it was argued, in a rational world. For this reason, worship followed the curvature of culture and became secularized. The sermon became the essence of worship, it became the true art form. Worship as an art form signifies the reality of otherness, the purpose and meaning of human history, and God's saving involvement within history. It evokes mystery and brings us into wonder and awe.²⁰⁹

The enchanting story that evokes mystery, awe and wonder is told through a variety of symbols (words and physical) and gestures. This leads to worship not based in a self-referenced story, but into the story of Scripture. It's not about trying to fit God into our story, we see ourselves in light of God's invitation into his story.

A desire for the presence of God is another emergent concern. Webber quotes a person who typifies a typical contemporary attitude concerning God's presence. “For the first fifteen hundred years of Christianity the presence of God was experienced in the Eucharist. The Reformers moved the presence of God from the Eucharist to the Word. Today, the new revolution in worship is locating the presence of God in music.”²¹⁰ For the emergent worshiper, God's presence is accomplished through sign and symbol. “The primary symbol of God's presence is the assembled people. Within the assembled people the chief symbols are – the

²⁰⁸ Senn, 704.

²⁰⁹ Webber, 198.

²¹⁰ Webber, 191.

baptismal font (serves as a reminder of that we have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus), the pulpit (God's presence in his Word) and the Eucharist table (through the bread and wine we recall his victory over the power of evil, and we are empowered by this presence to go forth and to live in his victory for us over the powers of evil.)”²¹¹

A third aspect of concern reaches into a return to the liturgy. Webber quotes Stephan Skaff concerning the use of liturgy.

The liturgy is a rich resource, teacher, and a vehicle of worship because it was carefully devised and has been carefully reworked, enriched, and added to throughout Christian history. Every little bit of the liturgy has been carefully considered and refined and very bit of it has been filled with symbolism on various levels. There is symbolism in the structure of the liturgy, the architecture of the church building, the vestments worn by the clergy, the ceremonial actions – all the sights, tastes, touches, and smells of liturgy.²¹²

The holistic aspect (sights, tastes, touches, and smells) of liturgy may be characterized as incarnational which is another value of emergent thinking. Worship becomes a deep affirmation of the reality of Christ present and a desire to translate that into our understanding of the church's ministry, worship, and discipleship. Churches that are emerging are very interested in recovering ancient practices of worship and a deeper experience and understanding of the sacraments – incarnational symbols.

Dan Kimball has helped to articulate the values and ethos of what emerging churches value in worship gatherings.²¹³

1. Emerging worship moves away from a spectator type of gathering
2. There is an organic design to the worship gathering
3. A sacred space is created for the worship gathering
4. A multisensory approach to the worship gathering
5. Freedom of movement in worship

²¹¹ Ibid., 192.

²¹² Ibid., 197.

²¹³ Dan Kimball, *Emergent Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 73-94.

6. A different focal point (not just preacher or band)
7. A revival of liturgy, ancient disciplines, Christian seasons, and Jewish roots
8. An emphasis on prayer
9. Communion as central part of worship
10. Jesus as the centerpiece

TELLING THE STORY

Up to this point, two main objectives have been articulated: 1) the *biblical tabernacle* illustrates for us that “the Holy one can only be approached in a way that he himself stipulates and makes possible”²¹⁴ and 2) *liturgical theology and renewal* is based on the understanding that “liturgical theology is normative for liturgical renewal because such efforts should arise out of the tradition of the Church [and Scripture] and not our individual preferences.”²¹⁵

The study of the tabernacle teaches us that the concepts of preparation, confession, cleansing, consecration and fellowship were all aspects of approaching God in worship. The 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.²¹⁶ 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. God acts and we respond. Therefore, it has been the dominant pattern of liturgy throughout the history of the church.²¹⁷

The story of the Christ-event is the essence of Christian worship and the structure of the liturgy (word and meal) invites us to remember, participate and reenact the story of Christ in our worship. The object and content of worship is found in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus

²¹⁴ Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 35.

²¹⁵ Fagerberg, ix.

²¹⁶ Webber. *Worship Old and New*, 78.

²¹⁷ Frame. *Spirit and Truth*, 68.

Christ. The church throughout much of its history has continued to celebrate this event in its liturgy. In the liturgy, the people of God participate in the life of Christ, thus, exercising their body function, *leitourgia*.

The rise of the modern era with the influence of the Enlightenment caused significant changes in the worship of the Christian church. The rich language and form of the liturgy was replaced with pragmatic measures aimed attracting, entertaining and meeting the needs of those gathered. The object and content of worship turned from the story of Christ, to the story of self. In the twenty-first century, emerging churches are questioning the pragmatic, symbol deprived entertainment approach to worship and are seeking to create worship gatherings that reflect Scriptural, historical, and cultural consideration – repenting and returning Christ as the centerpiece.

At their core, emerging worship services are encounters with God constructed out of a passion for theological rootedness and a deeply transforming connection with a shifting culture. At worst, emerging worship services are experiences for experience sake, full of improvisation and creativity, but lacking the liturgical center, the grand story of God in Jesus Christ, on which faithful improvisation depends. Many of those leading in the emergent community come from traditions that have a history of evangelistic style celebrations. Even with the concern for renewal, they are still a product of the pragmatic history they come from. They have a pragmatic memory. It is my concern that if there is no deep structure, what Fagerberg considers liturgy in its “thick sense”; then, the borrowing of liturgy in its “thin sense” (the elements of liturgy – silence, candles, litanies, etc.) will not be transformative for the assembly, but will vehicles of a novel experience of worship through the offering of an experience different from what they are

accustomed to. At its worst, the emergent worship gathering becomes another worship commodity for the religious consumer.

AN EMERGENT LITURGY

Why an emergent liturgy?

At the beginning of this paper, it was suggested that the church is now going through a period of disorientation. Churches of all types have experienced, and continue to experience, disorientation as traditions are modified and styles of worship reevaluated.²¹⁸ In this midst of this disorientation, the object of our worship has become opaque.

So, I put out the question, who is the object of our worship? In our contemporary worship culture where worship gatherings continue to become increasingly anthropocentric – humans as central – focusing on our own felt “needs” and catering to consumerist marketing in order to “engage” the culture and draw them (whoever they might be – churched or unchurched) in; the question of “who is the object” might not be that obvious a question to answer. I believe that those within emergent congregation are looking in the right places in their quest to renew the face of Christian worship and I believe that liturgy provides the deep structure that articulates meaning for the worshipping community. It is my hope that an emergent liturgy will help to bring biblical and theological focus to the object of our worship.

Ray Anderson reminds us that within our contemporary culture, there isn't any “one emerging church but rather a rich variety emerging”²¹⁹ within various traditions (mainline, evangelical and Catholic). Brian McLaren offers the analogy of tree as a description of what emergent thinking in his book, “*A Generous Orthodoxy*”.

²¹⁸ Cherry, “Merging Tradition and Innovation in the Life of the Church.” In *The Conviction of Things not Seen*, 27.

²¹⁹ Anderson, 10.

Think of a cross section of a tree. Each ring represents not a replacement of the previous rings, no a rejection of them, but an embracing of them, a comprising of them and inclusion of them in something bigger. The tree's previous growth is integrated into, and in fact is essential to, the tree's continuing growth and strength.²²⁰

To stretch McLaren's illustration a little further, the growth of the tree helps to highlight three features that can help to combat the anti-traditional, individualistic, consumerist notions that are apparent in the contemporary worship culture. Emergent churches seek to be **rooted** in the full Story of God, including the rich history of the his church; a tree is made up of many parts – roots, trunk, branches, leaves – all working for the benefit of the whole, **community** is vital in order to have a healthy Body of Christ; and lastly, they reach out like the branches of the tree, bringing the life-giving and life-orienting message of the **kingdom** into the world.

During this time of disorientation, Brian McLaren believes that “we are well placed to rediscover the stabilizing value and the awesome richness of ‘the Christian tradition.’” In the quest to be relevant, to attract, and keep the numbers “up”, Todd Spitzer shares McLaren's view that looking to the past is valuable for the questions of today, rather than seeking endless and changing ministry fads. “The answer we seek to be relevant isn't found on the horizon, nor is it found in the latest doctrinal fad or ministry model. It's found in the past.”²²¹ To illustrate the point, he uses the story in Genesis 26 as an example.

During a time of drought and famine, Isaac went to the valley of Gehor. He went to the old wells that his father Abraham had dug and found them filled in with dirt by the Philistines. Isaac dug the wells out, and he and his family were refreshed, not by digging a new well, but by returning to the old well that had been clogged up with the dirt of the Philistines. What we need is not some new truth or understanding, but a return to the old truths that have been there since the beginning. A return to that which we once believed. Re-digging the sources of refreshment that has been filled in over the ages either by the enemies of the faith or by those in the faith who have opted for a cultural Christianity over a biblical one.²²²

²²⁰ Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties, 2004), 276-277.

²²¹Todd Spitzer. “The Death of Cool”. In, *The Relevant Church*. (Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004),

²²² Ibid.

Emergent congregations are searching for a faith and practice that has stability and isn't going to be changed by the next trend or fad that makes the conference circuit, instead they want to "immerse themselves in the past and form a culture that is connected to the past, a culture that remembers its tradition as it moves into the future."²²³

Webber observes that "the evangelical church by the end of the twentieth century was a 'saving station.' It's primary purpose and mission in the world was to proclaim the saving message of Jesus to individuals, to get individuals saved, to rescue their broken lives and to repair their relationship with God."²²⁴ With this focus on the individual, it is no wonder there are individualistic tendencies within the contemporary church. The emerging church views the church as much more than an association of "like-minded" people. The church is where "the Spirit of God is forming a people who are the expression of God's redeeming work in the world."²²⁵ Doug Pagitt, pastor of Solomon's Porch, views community as the vehicle through which spiritual formation occurs.

At Solomon's Porch we are seeking a spiritual formation that, in its essence, is not about individual effort but communal action involving a spirituality of physicality, centered on the way we lead our lives, allowing us to be Christian in and with our bodies and not in our minds and hearts only; a spirituality of dialog within communities where the goal is not acquiring knowledge, but spurring each other on to new ways of imagining and learning...²²⁶

As Christians, we are being formed into the community of Christ, formed into his image, built for his purposes.

Pastor Brian Kay adds, "An individual Christian is part of a God-built structure made up of other believers in order to become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Obviously, a stone

²²³ Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*, 82.

²²⁴ Ibid. 220.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Doug Pagitt. *Reimagining Spiritual Formation: A Week in the Life of an Experimental Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 32.

that remains by itself doesn't make for much of a temple. While it is certainly true that individual believers have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, most of the New Testament language of indwelling is reserved for God's presence in the community of Christians."²²⁷ As the community of Christ, we don't exist for our own benefit, our own worship, and our own religious experiences, but as a witness to Christ in the world.

In Mark 1:15, Jesus declares: "The kingdom of God is near." Ray Anderson interprets this text, showing that the presence of Christ ushers in "a new order of God's reign already present as a transforming spiritual, social and economic power of liberation and rehabilitation of humankind." This is the mission he gives his church. In emerging churches, the focus isn't on getting people "into" the kingdom box, but on being the church in the world, taking the kingdom to places within to the one's influence. For Anderson, "The church does not drive the kingdom into the world through its own institutional and pragmatic strategies. Rather, it is drawn into the world as it follows the mission of the Spirit. The church is constantly being re-created through the mission of the Spirit."²²⁸

Churches are called to be "bodies of people sent on a mission rather than the storefront vendors of religious services and goods."²²⁹ The church of Jesus Christ is a holy temple and "filled with the Spirit of Christ, we are to live as disciples of the kingdom, partner with God, in the secular workplace."²³⁰

The emergent ethos fits into the goal of liturgy. Fagerberg writes "*Liturgy means to put on Christ...*" This happens through participating with Christ as informed by Scripture and tradition; "*the Church is the Body of Christ visible now, the authentic witness of restored life*

²²⁷ Brian Kay. "Sometimes Annoying, but Never Optional", in *The Relevant Church*, 3.

²²⁸ Anderson, 110.

²²⁹ Anderson, 110.

²³⁰ Ibid. 115.

which is ours in Christ...,”the Body only occurs as it functions as the community it’s meant to be; “*The unique function of the liturgy is to ‘make the Church what she is’ – witness and participant of the saving event of Christ, of the new life in the Holy Spirit, of the presence in ‘this world’ of the kingdom to come,*”²³¹ our lives are meant to be lived out “there” where our reach extends kingdom living and influence.

EMERGENT LITURGY AND THE TABERNACLE

*I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, **the hope of glory.**(emphasis mine)*

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Colossians 1:27-29

Ray Anderson provides a distinction for the emerging church. “The life of emerging churches is grounded in their conception and birth as the community of those who are children of God, whose lives are personally drawn into the very life and being of Christ - being in Christ, not just believing in Christ.”²³²

Paul reminded the Christians at Colossae of their experience of Christ, not just their faith in Christ. He calls this a *mysterion* – not just a mystery, a though it is a hidden secret, but a reality so intimate and personal that it defies explanation and rational terms. “Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27). It’s about being in Christ, not just believing in him.”²³³

²³¹ Fagerberg, 83.

²³² Ibid., 212

²³³ Ibid., 213.

This implies that our liturgy, the life we live patterned after Christ will be holistic, exercising all of who we are as we share the task with Paul of putting on Christ and being an authentic witness of the restored life found in him. The liturgy disciplines our nature, to take after the nature of Christ. To be transformed into his image. The movement of the tabernacle helps us in this process.

The biblical concept of tabernacle can be seen through a natural movement of God's Story through Scripture – the Garden, The Tabernacle, Jesus, The Church, and in the New Jerusalem. Using these five points, a liturgy (in the thick sense) will be developed that helps to articulate the divine pattern of worship (preparation, confession and forgiveness, consecration fellowship, dismissal) according to the tabernacle and the historical liturgical structure of the church (word and meal).

The Garden (Genesis 3:8) - Preparation

In the beginning of the Story, God creates the heavens and the earth as an expression of His love and goodness. As part of this outflow of love and goodness, God forms humans in His image to act as stewards over creation. However, the first humans attempt to become like God on their terms. Pursuing an alternate course of independence and self-will, they plunge creation and humanity on a trajectory of corruptibility, violence, alienation, and death.

The Garden of Eden functions as the meeting place between the LORD God and the first human couple. “Adam and Eve could enjoy God's presence; they could walk with God; commune with God, and serve God with undiminished capacity in their garden sanctuary.”²³⁴ 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.

²³⁴ Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 82.

The Garden is essentially a place of preparation. The Garden is both praise and lament. We praise God as Creator, as the initiator of life and redemption, and we are also able to lament the broken state of our relationship towards him and to the world.

The Wilderness Tabernacle (Exodus 25) – Confession and Forgiveness

Following the flood, God calls Abraham to be the Father of a new nation - a nation that would be blessing to the nations. This nation, Israel, would be God's chosen people, a people set apart, and living holy lives in the midst of a corrupted world. This nation, set apart for his purposes would enjoy an intimate relationship with God, allowing them to cooperate with him in re-creating this broken world toward redemption. Through the community of Israel, God would ultimately deal with the problem of Adam's sin in the promised messiah.

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. The tabernacle structure described in Exodus 25-40 was designed to symbolize the active and continual presence of the Lord among the Hebrews.²³⁵ 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.²³⁶

True worship is costly. It involves sacrifice. The sacrificial liturgy of the tabernacle reminds us that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who offered himself to make atonement for our sins. It is in the tabernacle that we bring our confession of sin, receive his forgiveness and offer a sacrifice of praise. Just as every act of worship in ancient Israel required the people to bring sacrifices and gifts to God to express their gratitude and commitment to him, so too must we

²³⁵ Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 71.

²³⁶ Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*, 188.

serve God sacrificially, not to obtain mercy, but to demonstrate our gratitude and devotion to him.²³⁷

Christ – Consecrated by the Word (John 1:14)

In the fullness of time, God sent his son. Jesus embodies God's full life and presence on earth (Immanuel, God with us). He models for us what it is to be human before a Holy God and what Israel as God's chosen people were intended to be. He shows us how to truly be God's children. He came to proclaim the good news: "The kingdom of God is near" (Mark 1:15). God's future new creation – the kingdom of God – is both now, and not yet.

As we are gathered for worship, the liturgy gives us the Word of God. By trusting and following Jesus, we learn from Jesus how to fully live in God's future kingdom now. Through His entire life – his birth, teaching, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension – Jesus embodies God's future new creation, inviting everyone to join him and to share in this new life. The word sets us apart, consecrates us as we learn to live according to his pattern, rather than the pattern of this world. As we hear his word, the Holy Spirit convicts us and empowers us for living in this world.

The Church (2 Corinthians 6:16) - Meal

The church responds to the invitation to participate in the life Jesus. The Christian church forms Christ's spiritual temple and constitutes the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:21). As the redeemed people of God, the church of Jesus Christ, the holy temple of the Lord, we are restored to fellowship with the Father. We renew the covenant, remembering his promises and anticipating the banquet that is to come. It is at the table that we remember that "Christ's perfect and complete sacrifice not only sanctified us so that we could come to his table

²³⁷ Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 208.

and have fellowship with him, but it also fit us for glory and service in the heavenly sanctuary.”²³⁸ And so we are sent out.

The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3) - Dismissal

The tabernacle represents God coming down to earth to fellowship with man. Through the Holy Spirit, the church is now the dwelling place of God. The picture given to us in Revelation echoes the intent of the Garden. John looks up and a voice from the throne says, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

Just as the Israelites carried the ark before them, symbolizing God’s presence as they entered the Promised Land, the church carries the presence of God into the world. Paul’s emergent theology of Christ as Lord of the kingdom enabled him to define the people of God filled with the Spirit of Christ as the living temple of God (Ephesians 2:13-22).²³⁹ The dismissal represents that the church is called to be a salt and light, a royal priesthood, a city on a hill, an incarnational community redeeming the world as it participates in the liturgy of Christ.

The structure that has just been expressed represents a “thick” liturgy. The movement rehearses the Story in broad strokes, with a Christ-centered, redemption oriented order. The overall theme of the tabernacle reminds us that God desire to dwell with his people. We are reminded of our state before a Holy God, understanding that our approach to him is only possible through the atonement made for us by Jesus Christ. The word represents Christ and the meal Christ in the church. We are then dismissed to take the presence of Christ to the world. Our worship follows his divine pattern.

²³⁸ Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 217.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

The above structure may take the following shape. It reflects the twofold pattern of word and meal and also leaves room for the “thin” elements of the liturgy that will help to provide stylistic considerations.

Preparation (Garden)

Liturgy of the Word

Confession and Forgiveness (Tabernacle)

Sacrifice of Praise

Sermon (Christ)

Liturgy of the Meal

Prayers

Lord’s Supper (Church)

Dismissal (New Jerusalem)

Ross reminds us that, “Worship, or worshipful acts, of course, can occur in any setting; but when it is necessary to have a place for the congregation to gather to complete the acts of worship in communion, the surroundings must be given careful thought so that they encourage and enhance all the aspects of worship and focus the worshippers attention on the Lord.”²⁴⁰ Since the old sanctuary was patterned after heaven’s eternal places; it remains relevant for our instruction. Its principles and purposes should help us to think more seriously about what we design for worship and also how we approach our Holy God in worship. If it is true that the tabernacle is relevant for our instruction, let us seek to learn through our participation in its pattern through a liturgy that calls us to the Story, through community for the sake of the world.

²⁴⁰ Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 190-191

CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY - A LITURGICAL ORDER

The Setting: The name “Christ in You, the Hope of Glory” liturgy is the name given to the liturgy because of its meaning – the liturgy place you in Christ and Christ in you.

The worship space made into two distinct worship spaces, with a some sort of wall that separates the two. The first space is to be designed to facilitate the gathering and communion with the ability for corporate song. The second worships space needs to facilitate the sermon and corporate song as well. A doorway needs to be available for access from one space to the other. The content of the service is not dependent on theme. The word portion can be thematic (sermon series) or follow the Lectionary. For this service, the word section is based on John 3:13-17.

Gathering: In the Garden

The gathering space is meant to signify the Garden of Eden. Artistic elements will help to create an atmosphere of light, life and communion. The doorway leading to the second space will need to creatively signify the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As people gather, there are a few moments of unstructured time, allowing for fellowship or reflection.

Opening Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-3

Songs: (2 from this selection or like them would be good)

- *God of Wonders* by Marc Byrd, Steve Hindalong
2000 New Spring Storm Boy Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
Meaux Mercy (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
- *How Great is our God* by Chris Tomoin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
2004 worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
sixsteps Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing), Alletrop Music
(Admin. by Music Services)
- *All Creatures of Our God and King* by St. Francis of Assisi, Andy Albritton
2007 Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

Confession Processional:

This processional marks the transition from gathering to confession. First, a reading from the leader, taken from Genesis 3:8-9. After the reading, people are asked to process into the second worship space in silence. As the people move through the doorway signifying the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, identifying with the first sin, audio is played of various voices asking, “Where are you?”

*After everyone has moved into the second worship space, the leader leads a reading.
(1 John 1:8, 9; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Romans 6:6-11)*

Leader: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Songs of Praise:

- *Throne of Grace* by John Barnett,
1991 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing (Admin. by Music Services)
- *Grace Like Rain* by Chris Collins, Edwin O. Excell, John Newton, Todd Agnew
2003 Ardent/Koala Music (Admin. by Ardent Music LLC)

Scripture Reading: Numbers 4:8-9

Song:

- *Be Lifted Up* by Paul Oakley
2001 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Sermon: John 3:13-17

Prayers of the Saints

The prayers take on the form of a call and response. The leader makes petitions while the people respond with a few refrains from the song – “Are the prayers of the saints like sweet smelling incense, Are the prayers of the saints like sweet smelling incense to Your heart”

- *Prayers of the Saints* by Matt Redman
1998 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Restoration Procession:

Processing back into the Garden worship space signifies the eschatological aspect of a restored creation. As the tabernacle of the wilderness was a type of Garden, taking communion in the Garden worships space represents restored fellowship. As the people process, The Lord’s Prayer is chanted by everyone (the community will be taught this, although I’ve yet to write one.)

Pass the Peace

Words of Institution

Song:

- *Be Unto Your Name* by Gary Sadler, Lynn DeShazo
1998 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Communion: (*Communion will be served from different stations within the room. People will be administered the elements during this reflective time. People are invited to pray with each other, reflect silently or sing*)

Songs:

- Eagles Wings by Reuben Morgan
1998 Hillsong Publishing (Admin. in U.S. & Canada by Integrity's Hosanna! Music)
- *Majesty* by Martin Smith, Stuart Garrard
2003, 2004 Curious? Music UK (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
- *Alive in You* by Matt Maher
2005 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
spiritandsong.com (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Benediction: 1 Peter 2:9-10

Dismissal: “Go in peace and serve the Lord”

APPENDIX A – COMPARITIVE CHART OF LITURGIES

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.²⁴¹

- Entrance by means of **Sacrifice**
- Proclamation of **Word**
- Response** of Covenant Community
- Partaking of **Covenant Meal**

The Pattern of Worship from Moses to the New Creation			
Moses (Ex 24)	Solomon (2 Chr 5-7)	Synagogue (no biblical examples)*	The Heavenly Worship (Rev)
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

²⁴¹ 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)

APPENDIX B – SERMON ON COMMUNITY WORSHIP

This sermon was developed as part of a series on the nature of Christian community.

This particular sermon is a teaching based on Romans 11:33 – 12:8. The goal was to draw the focus of worship off the platform and onto Christ. One of the best moments was when I talked about Jesus Christ being our High Priest and how he is actually our worship leader. Then I started talking about how the worship leaders feel pressure to “lead people into the presence of God” week after week. I then asked, “Would you like that responsibility? The worship leaders role is to help reveal Jesus to the you.” I got some chuckles and a lot of remarks saying how they never thought of the pressure that kind of language might put on a person leading worship.

The Community: Shaped to Worship

Big Idea – Because we are shaped to worship, community worship is the process where we re-center our lives on God through Christ as we gather as the body of Christ, mutually serving and building up each other for the glory of Christ the head.

Introduction – the problem

Handsome beyond description, some would even call him beautiful. He had the type of “movie star” looks that would surely place him on the covers of today’s magazines and bill boards. His list of suitors and the offers of love seemed endless, but he rejected them all. He had never seen his own image, but the praise and descriptions given to him by others secured his own sense of uniqueness. His name was Narcissus. He rejected the love of all others, concluding that no suitor was ever worthy of him. One day, passing through a forest, Narcissus bent down by a wading pool to drink from the clear water. There he saw an image so beautiful that for the first time, he found himself wrapped in love. He reached out to embrace the vision of beauty, to place his lips upon the lips of his newfound love. But in his effort, reaching out, the image shattered into ripples. He had fallen in love with his own reflection. Every time he reached out, the image would shatter and he would be in anguish. When the image returned, he would find himself once again wrapped in love. Narcissus eventually realized he was in love with his own reflection, and knowing he would never hold himself, he pined away, longing for nothing but his reflection. His self-love paralyzed him, leaving him at the pool, costing him the richness of being in the world. Oddly enough, his greatest admirer was named Echo. They were the perfect match. He only spoke about himself and she could only repeat his self-indulgent praise.

- The story represents self-love, self interest... pattern of this world. This self-centeredness hinders community worship.

TEXT - Romans 11:33 – 12:8

33Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and^[a] knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

34"Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?"^[b]

35"Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?"^[c]

36For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

1Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

3For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

- What we're talking about today is worship. It's a subject we each have opinions about. We all have preferences; we all know just how it should be done and how it shouldn't be done. With this, just like in other areas of life, we know what we like and we like what we know, what appeals to us, what suits our tastes.
- Biblically, worship is about responding in right ways to God... Worship is primarily about God. This is something that each one of us knows as a "duh", but in practice, is very difficult for us to engage with.
- We live in a very self-centered world, where self-gratification, self-satisfaction, self-fulfillment and the other 'selves' drive so much of our activity and determine so much of our responses. If we're not careful, we'll find ourselves evaluating our worship in this self-centered way

- Of course, worship involves me; I am a participant in it, but worship isn't primarily about me. There are some biblical reasons for worship.

Verse 36 - "for him, through him, to him, all things are made. To him be the glory forever, Amen!

A. Who – God deserves our worship. Worship is a right and fitting response to God both because of who He is and because of what He has done.

We worship God in His infinite goodness and greatness.

God reveals himself to us through many ways – Scripture, Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

God in his self-revelation – What is your picture of God? Father, Friend, Savior

Biblical Examples - Creator/Redeemer – Psalm 104, 103

Psalm 103 – Redeemer

Let all that I am praise the Lord;
 with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.
 Let all that I am praise the Lord;
 may I never forget the good things he does for me.
 He forgives all my sins
 and heals all my diseases.
 He redeems me from death
 and crowns me with love and tender mercies.
 He revealed his character to Moses
 and his deeds to the people of Israel

Psalm 104 – Creator

Let all that I am praise the LORD.
 You placed the world on its foundation
 so it would never be moved.
 You clothed the earth with floods of water,
 water that covered even the mountains.
 At your command, the water fled;
 at the sound of your thunder, it hurried away.
 Mountains rose and valleys sank
 to the levels you decreed.
 Then you set a firm boundary for the seas,
 so they would never again cover the earth.

- How we view God will often dictate our worship responses. Have you ever considered your picture of God?

B. Why – God requires our worship. The relationship between God and His people is established by God’s initiative and on God’s terms.

- God tells us to
 - Exodus 20 – "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God
 - Matthew 4:10 - Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'
 - John 4:22-24 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."
 - When we start to put external boundaries around worship, worship as we require in order to have a worship experience, rather than how God requires us to worship our worship becomes misdirected – we become the object and subject of our worship

C. How – God enables our worship. It is only possible because God has made it so.

- Jesus our High Priest
 - Hebrews 10:19-21 we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. 20 By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.
- Through the Spirit of God
 - Ephesians 2:18 Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.
- Without a proper perspective of **who** it is that enables worship, we may put an improper emphasis on people, music, or other “idols” that become our means of worship.
- “for him, through him, to him, all things are made. To him be the glory forever, Amen!

1. Shaped to Worship

Romans 12:1 – 3

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- God has revealed himself to us – “in view of God’s mercy”
- We are shaped to respond – offer bodies as living sacrifices
- Worship in response to God’s mercy, not to obtain God’s mercy (that would be an example of worship that is untrue)
 - **This is an all of life response.**
 - When we say that worship is a lifestyle, we are saying that worship affects and permeates all of life – our choices, our relationships, our attitudes
 - Our worship is transferred out of the temple and into the streets - we are the temple
- Unpack the word worship – submission, service, reverence
 - Psalm 95:6 - Come, let us bow down in worship (**submit our lives**)
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
 - Exodus 3:12 - And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship (**serve**) God on this mountain."
 - Matthew 15:8,9 - 'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
They worship (**fear**) me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught by men.'
- Worship is an ongoing life action – we don’t go to church to worship, we continue our worship as we gather as the church
- Transformation is a result of worship – as we turn our eyes towards Jesus –author and perfecter of our faith – there is a renewing of our minds.
- There is a pattern to this world – the self-love, self-interest, gaining possession - those things that break and tear community
- Transformation of our minds so that we can know God’s good and perfect will – how we live out our Kingdom lives here... today

2. Shaped for Others

Romans 12: 3-5 (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 12:14 -16)

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

- We don't gather as individuals in a crowd or seek to have personal worship experiences. That is not the point of meeting as the body. We gather to give ourselves to each other as we meet as the body of Christ.
- Paul is teaching us that part of the transformation of the renewed mind is the re-centering of our lives on God and each other (community) rather than the patterns of this world – reflects on self.
- Each member of the church is equally vital to the life of the church.
- What unites the church is its diversity
- Each member is dependent on every other because how each of us is shaped contributes to the well being of the whole.
- Consequently. The body of Christ functions effectively only when all members utilize whatever gifts they have for the benefit of the whole.
- Being invited to a dinner with Kathy-Sue – we disengage from the rest of the group and just enjoy each other's company

Bonhoeffer (from Life Together)

It is the voice of the Church that is heard in singing together.

It is not you that sings, it is the Church that is singing, and you, as a member of the Church, may share in its song. Thus all singing together... serves to widen our spiritual horizon, make us see our little company as a member of the great Christian Church on earth, and help us willingly and gladly to join our singing, be it feeble or good, to the song of the Church.

3. Shaped to Give (Also 1 Cor. 14)

Romans 12: 6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 14:26 - What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

- Paul is teaching that each of us has something to bring to the worship gathering. The point isn't whether or not everyone gets their turn, but that each is coming willing to participate in the glorifying of Christ – the head of the body as we mutually serve and build each other up as his body.

1. Everyone has something to bring. We are gifted to participate.
2. We must bring something, because in Christ we have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to encourage and build up the church body.
3. Many come to church bringing nothing to give away.
4. If we bring nothing, we give nothing, therefore becoming a spectator or evaluator.
5. Spectators are entertained or not by what happens – often remaining unchanged.
6. Evaluators seek to change - How's the sermon, music, dress, service style, readings, time, etc.? Were my needs met?
7. Evaluators often lead to disunity and body wounding.

So the point is to come being ready to give... to offer expressions of worship that don't just suit my tastes, but serves the strengthening of the church.

“Are we praying for something to give away?”

APPENDIX C – NEW TESTAMENT LITURGICAL LANGUAGE

There are elements of liturgical language in the New Testament that Christian worship has borrowed and adapted for its worship planning. A survey of the New Testament shows us the following elements were involved:

- **Reading of Scripture** – “Until I get to there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church...” 1 Timothy 4:13
- **Preaching (Exposition)** – “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- **Preaching (Teaching)** – “We apostles should spend our time preaching and teaching the word of God...” Acts 6:2
- **Singing** – “Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts.” Ephesians 5:19
- **Giving (to the poor)** – “Yes, you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will break out in thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:11-15
- **Collection/Offering** – “On every Lord’s Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don’t wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.” 1 Corinthians 16:2
- **Public Confession of Faith** – “Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:12
- **Receiving God’s Blessing** – “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:13
- **The Holy Kiss of Greeting** – “Greet each other in Christian love (sacred kiss). All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.” Romans 16:16
- **Response of Amen** – “Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshiped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen.” Romans 1:25

- **Lord's Supper** - On the first day of the week, we gathered to observe the Lord's Supper. Paul was preaching; and since he was leaving the next day, he talked until midnight. Acts 20:7
- **Baptism and Confession of Sin**– “And this is a picture of baptism, which now saves you by the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Baptism is not a removal of dirt from your body; it is an appeal to God from a clean conscience.” 1 Peter 3:21
- **Giving Thanks** – “And whatever you do or say let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.” Colossians 3:17

There are also certain classifications used for New Testament liturgical material. These classifications provide useful descriptions of how worship is expressed.

- **Doxology** – (expressions of praise to God) “Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ himself was a Jew as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.” Romans 9:5
- **Creeds/Confessions** – (primary focus is the saving work of Christ and his Lordship) “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.” Romans 9:10
- **Benedictions** – (expressions of wish or desire for a group – in particular they invoke grace or peace) “May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father, who loved us and in his special favor gave us everlasting comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and give you strength in every good thing you do and say.” 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
- **Prayers** – From a liturgical perspective, what is common in New Testament prayer is that “Abba” (Father) is taught to be addressed for the opening, and “Amen” (let it be so) often closes the prayer.
- **Hymns** – The hymns contain the most profound Christological content in the New Testament and reveals how central Christ was.

“The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.” Hebrews 1:3

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