

The Biblical - Confessional Lutheran Doctrine of Worship

by Donald L. Moldstad

The summer of 2006, I was asked to put together a Sunday morning service for the thirty-year reunion of my Lutheran high school class. Knowing that many of us were now in different churches, I made copies of the page five Common Order from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, which all of us had used in our youth. The service went well. Everyone seemed to remember what “Thee” and “Thou” meant. Following worship a number of friends approached me and made comments like this: “Thanks for using that old order. That was fun. My church doesn’t really use a liturgy anymore, and this was so refreshing!” How interesting that something which some of them may have considered to be so in need of replacement at one time, had now become “refreshing” and “fun.”

Corporate worship is a very personal part of the spiritual lives of all of us. For some their only contact with Christ each week is through the public service. The rites which we use Sunday after Sunday can become so deeply imbedded in our memories and hearts. Senator John McCain recited the Episcopalian liturgy from memory to his fellow prisoners while held captive in Vietnam. Stories are told of elderly Lutherans who were forbidden to worship under the Soviet system who retained a knowledge of their faith primarily through the liturgy.

As shepherds under Christ, pastors make important decisions regarding how the flock of Christ in their care should be fed. For the most part, we are the gatekeepers of what goes on in worship. Knowing this, “it is good, right, and salutary” that we deeply consider what directives our Lord gives us in His Word, and through the history and confession of our church regarding this highly important aspect of the public ministry.

Searching the Scriptures, one soon discovers doctrinal themes and principles which run throughout and are common to worship life for all ages:

- 1) Recognition of the devastating consequences of the Fall on mankind.
- 2) The gracious act of God through His Christ to redeem fallen man, justifying us.
- 3) The need for faith in the heart to possess the benefits of Christ.
- 4) The delivery system which God alone establishes to bring

these benefits to fallen man.

5) The believer's response to God's gracious salvation.

Worship in the Old Testament

“Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26). These words present us with the first corporate worship in Scripture. No command is mentioned for such an assembly, but God's children, moved by repentance and faith, naturally seek out each other and establish such worship. Throughout Scripture there is an “expectedness” to this spiritual activity. The desire for corporate worship is a given in God's elect. Love for the brethren is one of the signs the Holy Spirit gives for us to know we have passed from death unto life. All of the scriptural metaphors for the Church—stones in a building, a flock of sheep, parts of a human body—contain this element of togetherness in the faith, around which corporate worship is established. Choosing not to assemble for Word and Sacrament is a warning sign of spiritual illness (Hebrews 10:25). As St. Augustine once said, “One cannot truly claim God as his Father in heaven, who refuses to acknowledge the Church as his mother on earth.”

How interesting it would have been to observe the first worship gathering of Adam's family. In this era of oral transmission, what text from God's Word did he expound? Dr. Martin Luther elaborates,

“Calling upon the name of the Lord” includes the preaching of the Word, faith or trust in God, confession, etc. ...The generation of the godly gradually increases, and a small church is formed in which Adam, as high priest, rules everything by the Word and sound doctrine. ...Adam, Seth, Enos, exhorted their descendants to wait for their redemption, to believe the promise about the woman's Seed. ...What better and more useful message could Adam and Seth preach than the Savior Christ, who was promised to their descendants? ¹

Through the patriarchal age, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob cling to God's grace in the promise of the Messiah, as they erect altars for thanksgiving and monuments to His providential care. When the Lord records mandates for worship, every aspect of the Levitical priesthood paints this Messianic image before our eyes. The sacrificial rites, the Passover, and accompanying services were all about the Lamb who would remove the curse of sin. Through these ceremonies the faithful embraced Christ and all the benefits He would win. Salvation, grace, peace with

God were not to be considered far removed from sinful man, but through the Lord's prescribed distribution system they were here in time. Then as now, all true worship is about Christ, and the divine justification He alone provides with His gift of righteousness. Though worship stirs up the believer's response, the spotlight of is always primarily focused on God's gifts to man. This continues to be the defining characteristic of all true worship. As C.F.W. Walther stated, "Only hypocrites believe...that they attend church in order to be pious. We attend church, not really to serve God but rather that He may serve us there; not to create righteousness but to receive it from God." ²

Jewish worship life was not focused on converting the unbeliever (even though this may have happened at times), but was to strengthen, edify and teach the faithful, and serve them in their spiritual lives. For the Old Testament believer liturgical activity took place in three locations: the tabernacle/temple, the synagogue, and the home. Each had its own ceremonies, traditions and liturgies. All of them contained the use of particular Psalms for various festivals. The customary rubrics attached to these various rituals demonstrated a reverence for what they contained and conveyed. Even a child could clearly see that these sacred acts were special, since they were far different than any other aspect of daily life.

The temple liturgy centered around the sacrificial system which God had commanded, typifying the coming vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah through a massive outpouring of blood each day. Establishing any altar void of God's command, as with King Jeroboam, meets with God's extreme displeasure for it attempts to replace the divinely appointed Victim who alone wins our salvation. Following the destruction of the temple, the accompanying orders of service likewise ceased. New Testament believers understand there is no longer a need for such orders, since our true High Priest, in the order of Melchizedek, has accomplished His great and final sacrifice, through the shedding of His innocent blood once and for all. Our present-day lack of familiarity with the temple liturgy is evidence that the atonement is complete. "It is finished." Christ, our Temple, destroyed but raised up again in three days, now sits in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22). The sacrifices commanded by God have fulfilled their purpose in pointing the faithful to the one great offering of His Son. The curtain has been torn. We have peace with God.

The Passover was rightly considered to be the defining ceremony for God's faithful, reminding them of His deliverance through the lamb. Its accompanying liturgy, commonly celebrated in the home, came to be known as the "*seder*" (order, or structure), a term which would become

synonymous with the entire ceremony. In the upper room, Christ Himself follows this set order, and in so doing bridges a connection between the believers of both covenants. The early church marked this bridge with the singing of the *Agnus Dei*. Arthur Just, Jr. notes that our traditional Christian liturgy of the Sacrament is based on Jesus' Passover with His disciples. Unlike the temple liturgy, this rite has great familiarity for us, since the Passover liturgy at the Lord's Supper forms the basis for what the early Christians received in the liturgy of Holy Communion.³

The liturgy used in the synagogue was focused entirely on the Word (prayers, readings from Scripture and sermons), since no animal sacrifices were offered apart from the Temple. Centrally located at the front of the sanctuary was a special chest, similar to many enclosed altars today, which contained a full copy or portion of an old scroll. A special seat, or pulpit, was located near the front of the hall from which the readings were expounded to show the significance of the sermon. This sermon was not to be seen as a pep talk from a coach, but reflected the authority of God's Word among them. The one who read and/or preached would cover his head to show reverence and humility before God. Wherever Jews were located geographically, the synagogue worshipers always faced toward the temple, even as we today look toward the heavenly Temple (Christ) in the Jerusalem above. The service followed a set order which became rather consistent among the dispersed Jewish family. Many modern synagogues have not changed the liturgical order for thousands of years. The early origins of numerous Christian liturgical prayers, as well as the Service of the Word, are deeply rooted in Jewish synagogue worship.

Every setting of Old Testament ceremonies and rituals had strong corporate, community, and familial aspects. Commenting on the Jewish mindset, Just notes that by the time of Christ, a person's identity was not formed by thoughts of individualism or what might please him personally. Rather, one's identity came from his relationship to the larger community and how he fit in as part of the whole. This mindset greatly impacted the Jewish view of worship, and carried over into the early Christian church as well. It is a concept lost today on much of American society where individualism has become such a valued ideal. Expecting the church to change its ways in order to accommodate what you might want was foreign to those in Jesus' day.

How sad that for many Jews, obedience to traditions came to replace the doctrine of justification which these traditions were originally made to serve. Compliance to the rites and customs became the method by which sinful man saw himself earning God's favor. In this way the devil

permitted the outward trappings of the faith to remain, while gutting them of the very treasure they were intended to offer. We see a similar abuse of tradition even today inside much of the visible church. Many are caught up in following the customs and outward trappings of the faith, while having the very substance of the Gospel removed. How many around the world ritualistically kiss crucifixes in hopes of earning God's favor, while the very Gospel symbolized by that crucifix is never given to them? The devil is a clever thief.

New Testament Worship

As our Lord begins the work of His public ministry, we see Him embracing and following the traditional liturgies and customs of Jewish worship life in all three locations. He also respects the established rubrics that accompany the service. In His home synagogue Jesus probably saw some bored teenagers in the seats, but He brings out no clowns and no puppets. Luke records, "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read" (Luke 4:16). As we would expect, Jesus was rather critical of the twisted doctrine promoted by the teachers of the Law in His day, and yet never utters any disapproval of their liturgical life. Even the Son of God accommodates Himself to the rituals of the church which served the truth, despite the fact that many of its leaders were espousing falsehood.

In all of the areas of Jewish worship life there were set Psalms for various services and occasions. This divinely authorized hymnbook presents us with poetry of great dignity and a beautiful display of the art of language. Through the pen of St. Paul, the Lord also commands that the New Testament church continue in the use of His Psalms, as well as hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19). We see evidence of the familiarity of these Psalms in a believer's worship life as reflected in the similar songs of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon (Luke 1 & 2). They were then and are now the language of the church.

Jesus instructs us on the true nature of worship when He declares, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). Here our Lord condemns the concept of *ex opere operato*, instructing us that true worship must flow from a heart of faith. Simply going through the proper motions does not constitute true worship.

Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to the Lord, but Cain's was not, though they both appeared similar on the surface (Hebrews 11:4).

The book of Acts introduces us to the New Testament church with a wonderful display of God's work. Before His ascension our Savior had commanded that repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name, beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). We again see how central this doctrine of justification is in Peter's sermon, and also in the distribution system which Christ has now instituted. Baptism, the breaking of bread, and continuing in the apostles' doctrine are all displayed as the marks of the church and the fellowship around which the church is united. Despite how odd such new ordinances may have appeared to the masses, the apostles practice them openly without apology, knowing that it is through these means alone that God adds His elect to the number of His church.

During the apostolic era we see the early evangelists very comfortable with staying inside the parameters of the synagogue liturgy as they now present the Messiah who *has* come. Though there would be a great division among the Jews over Christ, nonetheless we see no dismissal of traditional Jewish worship practices by the apostles. Salvation Won and Salvation Distributed stand as two shining principles for worship in the opening chapters of Acts, and are easily blended with the customary Jewish worship of their day. The apostles are simply reclaiming the doctrine of justification which has always been present in these rites.

This central doctrine shows itself as the defining rule among the apostles, even while retaining the structure of synagogue life. Paul's anger toward the Judaizers in Galatia was only over their legalism which perverted the Gospel, teaching justification through the Law. Despite Paul's reaction to their false ideas, he does not challenge their liturgical life throughout the entire letter. Though the apostles at times employ different tactics in various evangelism settings outside of the synagogues, yet in corporate worship they exhibit a great respect for the traditions of the church. The preaching of Law and Gospel is established as the chief jewel in the crown of public worship. Paul even sets limits on the use of tongues, so as not to impede what is preached (1 Corinthians 14). At this point, the celebration of the Holy Supper, with its own liturgy, is done in private settings, and not yet combined with the service of the Word.

The New Testament authors use three Greek words, all of which are at times translated "worship" or "service" in English.⁴ We will briefly examine each of them.

Προσκυνέω means the outward act of worship as seen in "falling down before someone," thereby showing reverence or respect. Jesus

quotes this word from the LXX in His response to the devil, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only’” (Luke 4:8).

Λατρεία typically implies “man’s service to God” (in the context of faith) and is most often used in reference to the general service toward God which all men owe. In the Apology, Phillip Melancthon hopes to redirect the use of λατρεία away from Rome’s understanding of it as man offering something of merit to God to earn His favor. He comments on the passive nature of λατρεία: “Faith is that worship (λατρεία), which receives God’s offered blessings. ... It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from Him what He promises and offers.”⁵

Finally, the word λειτουργία denotes a special service through an office and ministry – God’s service to man, primarily in the context of the ministry. It is a word also used to describe the work of Christ: “We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1-2). Richard Trench notes, “Every λειτουργία will of necessity be a λατρεία but not the reverse, that every λατρεία will be a λειτουργία.”⁶ The primary function of the λειτουργός is to serve men in the stead of Christ and by His command.

Worship in the Early Church & Middle Ages

In confirmation classes, and now in college religion courses, I have made a point of having students read Justin Martyr’s description of a worship service from early in the second century AD. Each year a student comments on just how familiar it sounds to us today. At some point in the early life of the church the Eucharist and the Service of the Word were joined together into one liturgical service. Already “by the time of Justin (153AD), the primitive division of worship into two assemblies, one for prayer and instruction and the other for the Lord’s Supper in connection with a common meal had ceased.”⁷ Alongside the sermon, the celebration of the Eucharist had taken on great significance due to the wonderful treasure it delivered. Ancient services were designed with a preparatory portion in the Word, followed by and concluding with the Sacrament.

Orders of service from the synagogue are molded into the Christian community’s worship life. Scholars have uncovered evidence that portions of the Psalms were chanted with great regularity at Sunday services even before the end of the first century AD. Vigils held on the eve of great festivals were generally structured around the singing of

Psalms.⁸ Our traditional order still shows this amazing connection to the ancient church with its prolific use of the Psalms as the vocabulary of the faithful. In times of persecution the church has a tendency to preserve her rites tenaciously. “Very little creative liturgy goes on, for what is most important is preserving the faith and handing it on to another generation.”⁹ We see a similar love for traditional orders among those who in recent decades have come out from the heavy hand of Communism. In addition, the importance of ritual in the early church may have been heightened in an era where printed copies of Scripture were somewhat scarce, and few had access to them. Just notes:

Prosper of Aquitaine, a lay monk and disciple of Augustine, first coined the phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi*, . . . that is, “the law of worshipping founds the law of believing.” . . . This maxim maintains that since the time of the apostles, liturgy has been the primary way the church has handed down the faith to future generations. . . . The church’s belief and confession are inseparable from her liturgical life.¹⁰

Very slight changes in the liturgy begin to emerge only after the time of Constantine, when Christianity becomes the imperial religion. Four ancient rites are found by AD 400 (all in Greek): the Oriental, attributed to St. James; the Alexandrian, attributed to St. Mark and revised by Cyril; the Ephesine-Gallic, attributed to St. Paul, St. John & Polycarp; and the Roman, attributed to St. Peter. All show great similarities in structure (see Appendix A).

Once Christianity had the imprimatur of the Emperor, new sanctuaries would be built, a professional clergy would be established, and highly trained craftsmen, artisans and singers would now be employed, committing their talents in service to the church. Along with this would come a growth of new liturgies and special rites. Services could be offered daily at all hours in the larger cities, and long, repetitive liturgies would permit the faithful to come and go during the day. In the centuries that followed, as Christianity expanded north into Europe, changes in worship orders were sometimes made in order to reach a new people who had not heard the Gospel. Along with many of these compromises came abuses and liturgical changes, that led to the demise of faith and doctrine.¹¹ As time went along, innovations in liturgies began to include the perversion of the Gospel growing under Rome’s leadership. Eucharistic prayers were expanded, to include false doctrine of our works meriting the grace of God through the unbloody offering by the priest. These changes began

to place more importance on the priest and his role, rather than on Christ, our true High Priest. Whenever the sacrificial part of worship trumps the sacramental, the work of Christ is diminished or negated. The church was primed for reform.

Lessons in Worship from the Reformation Era

Attempts at reformation in the medieval church had always focused on correcting various abuses, usually among the clergy. By God's grace, the Lutheran Reformation began with the Gospel, and Luther was enlightened to see that restoring this wonderful treasure was of utmost importance. All else would soon fall into place once this jewel was restored in the crown. Worship became simply an extension of this central concept. The liturgy, above all else, must present the doctrine of justification front and center. Early on, Luther and his followers primarily saw worship as the place where sinful man receives the mercy of God for Jesus' sake. One can see this direct connection even in the structure of the articles in the Augsburg Confession: Article IV on Justification is followed immediately by Article V on the Office of the Ministry.

As the early Lutherans went about reform, basic doctrinal themes—Law and Gospel, the emphasis of the sacramental over the sacrificial, Gospel-centeredness, Salvation Won/Salvation Distributed, the proper place of tradition beneath Scripture, the three *solas*, etc.—were all brought to bear on cleansing the service. Knowing of Rome's corruption of the Gospel, one might expect Luther to have been rather dismissive of the church's rites. (If there ever was a time when the preceding, traditional order of worship handed down to a generation could have been completely abandoned it would have been in the Reformation era.) Hoping to lead the church out of its captivity in Babylon, Luther and his followers simply cleansed the order of the Roman Mass to restore the Gospel, and continued to use a conservatively modified liturgy. He set the tone: "It is not our intent to do away with the service (liturgy), but to restore it again to its rightful use."¹² His conservative liturgical reforms were always for doctrinal and theological reasons, and never for sociological reasons or to introduce a new dynamic to worship. Even his desire for a German service had theological motives, so that the Gospel was not hindered. One passage the good doctor repeats frequently in the context of liturgics is St. Paul's directive, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

Paul Kretzmann comments, "Luther had no intention of tearing

down and destroying without regard to history and custom, but aimed to edify and build up.”¹³ Andreas Carlstadt pushed for an entire reform of the liturgy, since it was an *adiaphoron*, and he felt that it only got in the way of true spirituality. Luther reacted strongly against such an approach, and separated himself from this thinking. He did not want to appear as a sect, removed from the church catholic. The Lutherans were disturbed to be labeled as radical change artists.

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass, for the Mass is retained by us and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, except that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone: that the unlearned be taught. And not only has Paul, in I Corinthians 14, commanded that the Church use a language understood by the people, but it has also been so ordained by human law.¹⁴

Again, regarding the Mass,

To begin with, we must repeat the prefatory statement that we do not abolish the Mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. We keep traditional liturgical forms such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc.¹⁵

This conventional approach demonstrated itself even in the use of terms. “In spite of the fact that Luther has such a strong antipathy against the word Mass, . . . and although he cordially wished that he might return to the ancient designation ‘Communion,’ he retained the name ‘Missa,’ thus signifying that in the external form of service he did not wish to establish anything new, but merely had the intention of leading back to the old, correct form of worship.”¹⁶

The first German Mass at Wittenberg was celebrated in 1525, five years before the Augsburg Confession. Luther writes in its preface,

In the first place I would kindly and for God’s sake request all those who see this order of service or desire to follow it: Do not make it a rigid law to bind or entangle anyone’s conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where, and how you

find it to be practical and useful. For this is being published not as though we meant to lord it over anyone else, or to legislate for him, but because of the widespread demand for German masses and services and the general dissatisfaction and offense that has been caused by the great variety of new masses, for everyone makes his own order of service.¹⁷

Luther's desire to retain the old rites was so thorough that in the larger cities he believed the liturgy should continue to be done in Latin, since it was the common language of people of various backgrounds. Melancthon comments frequently on the thinking of the reformers, "We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquility, and we interpret them in an evangelical way."¹⁸ Though the confessors do not bind us to any particular order, this approach to worship is part of our confessional subscription, and may explain why many who strive to remain faithful to them are often disturbed by radical changes in liturgy.

In the history of all orthodox Lutheran reformation movements, the reason for changing anything in regard to worship is always to purify an order or correct false doctrine, not simply to come up with new and "refreshing" ideas. Other than a shift in the language of the service, changes have always been made for the sake of doctrinal substance and not for a trend or fad in society. It should also be noted that no Lutheran church body in history has ever died because of attempting to hold on to its worship heritage. However, many have died—at least theologically—by letting go of it.

Despite their high regard for the historic liturgy, the Lutherans at the same time saw no need to elevate it to the status of doctrine.

It is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be rightly administered in accordance with divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places.¹⁹

Charles Porterfield Krauth describes the truly reforming nature of our Lutheran church:

Over against the abuses of a separatistic and one-sided progressiveness, she is to see to it that her Reformation

maintains that due reverence for history, that sobriety of tone, that patience of spirit, and that moderation of manner, which are involved in Conservatism.... The Reformation, as Christian, accepted the old foundation; as reformatory, it removed the wood, hay, and stubble; as conservative, it carefully separated, guarded, and retained the gold, silver, and precious stones, the additions of pious human hands, befitting the foundation and the temple which was to be reared upon it.²⁰

The Reformers saw their love for traditional worship as an extension of their mission and evangelism. Many times we may falsely see traditional worship as a hindrance to such work. Yet, how many souls have been saved and preserved in the faith due to the repetitive nature of the historic liturgy? Even today inside of liturgical church bodies whose pulpits completely lack the Gospel, were it not for the liturgy, hymns and readings the true faith would scarcely be heard. Tradition does have an evangelistic nature to it as well. It is interesting to note that more tradition-minded Pharisees converted to Christianity in the early church than did Sadducees. How many converts from Rome have been drawn to Lutheran altars by finding familiarity and comfort in our traditional forms of worship?

The Proper Place of Tradition

As noted above, Jesus demonstrates a high regard for the churchly customs of His day. Similar to the use of human reason, we may draw a distinction regarding traditions: Christ held highly ministerial traditions which served the Word, and yet condemned magisterial traditions which added to the Word or distorted it, as seen by His chastisement of the Pharisees (Matt. 15:6). The Lutheran reformers follow a similar pattern in renovating the worship life of the church. Traditions which serve the truth were maintained and practiced, but those which do not were abandoned. This thinking ruled all aspects of their reform. They even painted Bible passages over the images of saints in previously Roman sanctuaries so that they would be understood in the proper context of the Gospel.

Likewise, they understood that many of the rubrics of worship serve a wonderful purpose. It is not the mindset of Lutheranism to either insist upon such things, or to overtly throw them aside. Many of our historic worship customs have been well-vetted through the centuries: pastoral garb, vestments, the pulpit, the altar, the font, the sign of peace, etc. Casting them aside in our day appears to undermine our connection to the historic church and unintentionally implies a disregard for the path the

Gospel has taken to reach us. We must instruct our members against two extremes: on the one hand considering these traditions to be equal with doctrine, and on the other hand treating them as if they have no relevance for us today.

In studying the historic tradition of liturgics, you gain a great appreciation for our connection to the ancient church, but you also realize how easily one could wrongly turn the practice of tradition into a mark of the true faith. This sort of adoration would be just as damaging as throwing the customs aside. The liturgy is intended to strengthen us internally through Word and Sacrament, but can itself also become the object of an improper focus on externals. Luther frequently urged caution regarding what he calls a “godless regard for the ceremonial,” and writes against the use of liturgies where there is no preaching, which only encourages such views.²¹

Melanchthon also warns against an adoration of the liturgy in various parts of the Apology:

Our opponents say that universal traditions should be observed because they are supposed to have been handed down by the apostles. How devout they are! Apostolic rites they want to keep, apostolic doctrine they do not want to keep. We should interpret those rites just as the apostles themselves did in their writings. They did not want us to believe that we are justified by such rites or that such rites are necessary for righteousness before God. They did not want to impose a burden on consciences.²²

Although the holy Fathers themselves had rites and traditions, they did not regard them as useful or necessary for justification. ... They observed these human rites because they were profitable for good order, because they gave the people a set time to assemble, because they provided an example of how all things could be done decently and in order in the churches, and finally because they helped instruct the common folk. For different seasons and various rites serve as reminders for the common folk. For these reasons the Fathers kept ceremonies, and for the same reasons we also believe in keeping traditions.²³

As the different length of day and night does not harm the unity of the church, so we believe that the true unity of the church is not harmed by differences in rites instituted by men, although we like it when universal rites are observed for the sake of tranquility. So in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord’s day, and the other more

important feast days. With a very thankful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances, especially when they contain a discipline that serves to educate and instruct the people and the inexperienced.²⁴

Luther had little time for those who clamored for change, simply for the sake of something new:

I have been hesitant and fearful, partly because of the weak in faith, who cannot suddenly exchange an old and accustomed order of worship for a new and unusual one, and more so because of the fickle and fastidious spirits who rush in like unclean swine without faith or reason, and who delight only in novelty and tire of it as quickly, when it has worn off. Such people are a nuisance even in other affairs, but in spiritual matters, they are absolutely unbearable.²⁵

Our customs and liturgy should not become the sole definition of our faith, and yet they do help to define us and what we profess. In our present American culture, when continually pressured to throw aside our traditions of worship, we might heed the words of C.F.W. Walther, who faced similar pressure in his day:

We refuse to be guided by those who are offended by our church customs. We adhere to them all the more firmly when someone wants to cause us to have a guilty conscience on account of them...It is truly distressing that many of our fellow Christians find the difference between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism in outward things. It is a pity and dreadful cowardice when a person sacrifices the good ancient church customs to please the deluded American denominations so they won't accuse us of being Roman Catholic! Indeed! Am I to be afraid of a Methodist who perverts the saving Word, or ashamed in the matter of my good cause, and not rather rejoice that they can tell by our ceremonies that I do not belong to them?

We are not insisting that there be uniformity in perception or feeling or taste among all believing Christians, neither dare anyone demand that everyone be of the same opinion as his in such matters; nevertheless, it remains true that the Lutheran liturgy distinguishes Lutheran worship from the worship of other churches to such an extent that the houses of worship of the latter look like lecture halls, while our churches are in

truth houses of prayer in which Christians serve the great God publicly before the world.... Someone may ask, "What would be the use of uniformity in ceremonies?" We would answer, "What is the use of a flag on the battlefield? Even though a soldier cannot defeat the enemy with it, he nevertheless sees by the flag where he belongs. We ought not refuse to walk in the footsteps of our fathers."²⁶

The traditions of worship connect us to the historic church, even before the time of the Reformation. There is a legacy which has come down to us through the effort, energy, offerings, gifts, and even the blood of many confessors before us. Kretzmann refers to it as "the beautiful and pure heritage of the ages."²⁷ Luther Reed made similar points regarding its "Spirit of Permanence":

The church may undergo reformation and reorganization, but the spirit of devotion and the desire for common communion with God will not perish. An institution which survived in the bare chambers of the catacombs, which filled the cathedrals of Europe with beauty and which lives in countless communities throughout the world today has within it the vigor of eternal youth. ... Worship as an experience therefore rests upon worship as an institution. This must be appreciated as something more than a passing interest or phase. It must be understood as having within it the momentum of history, the assistance and inspiration of art, the power of intellect, and the strength of discipline and order.²⁸ (See Appendix B)

Worship as a Symbol of Unity

One can see easily how extremely important worship is in presenting the church's confession. Any union between two church bodies of different doctrinal confessions (e.g., the Prussian Union) is accompanied by the creation of a new liturgy for the newly "united church." Most frequently such ungodly unions in the history of Lutheranism involve movements toward Reformed church bodies. Herman Sasse saw such deterioration when he wrote regarding the Lutheran churches in his land, "Just how is it that every founding of a union between the Evangelical churches of Germany has also simultaneously been an outbreak of enthusiasm?"²⁹ The change in confession automatically produces a change in worship. F. Bente comments on the laxity in the General Synod of the nineteenth century, "Wherever Lutherans unite with the Reformed, the former gradually sink

to the level of the latter. Unionism always breaks the backbone of true Lutheranism.”³⁰ For many people, how we worship is a more powerful confession of our faith than the actual confessional statements we agree to, since worship is much more visible and easily understood.

Like injecting red dye into a can of white paint, weaker doctrine will always color the stronger doctrine. It will always be shaded with pink. Visit a Covenant church in your community and it will become obvious that the capitulation to the Reformed by the Lutheran Church of Sweden ultimately sold the theological farm. Their present worship bears witness to the defeat of Lutheranism. The weaker always suffocates the stronger when forced to unite.

“It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places,” states the Augsburg Confession, VII. Such words would appear to give free license to us for experimentation and change. Yet the confessors also balanced these words with a larger concern for preserving unity, since, as Luther writes, “(Satan) will even use external divisions about ceremonies to slip in and cause internal divisions in the faith. This is his method, which we know well enough from so many heresies.”³¹ Dr. Luther often encourages pastors to use a traditional order so as not to discourage or confuse the members. He finds it interesting that prior to the Reformation, while still under Rome, the devil was happy to let there be peace over issues of worship, but now that the Gospel has been restored he must stir up all sorts of trouble in this regard.³² One will find many statements such as these in his writings: “As far as possible we should observe the same rites and ceremonies, just as all Christians have the same baptism and the same sacrament, and no one has received a special one of his own from God.”³³ Again, “Let us feel and think the same, even though we may act differently. And let us approve each other’s rites lest schisms and sects should result from this diversity in rites.”³⁴

One of the forefathers of our Norwegian Synod, Herman Amberg Preus, lists this as one of the benefits of having the church body agree upon standards for worship:

Uniformity in ceremonies and liturgical customs is not, to be sure, necessary to preserve unity in faith, but it is indeed edifying while diversity in ceremonies often fosters deplorable antagonisms and the cooling of love. On the other hand, the inward bond and collaboration between congregations can be promoted by the greatest possible uniformity in liturgical customs and church order.³⁵

St. Paul reminds us not to make decisions which will hurt the harmony we have in the Body of Christ: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you’” (1 Cor. 12:21). Decisions on how we will worship must take into consideration how it will impact the others, especially those inside of our fellowship.

This matter of doctrinal unity exercised through worship is very real. Once unity in worship is lost, it often leads to a loss of unity in confession. According to the headquarters of the Wisconsin Synod, six congregations have left their fellowship in the past twenty years to become independent/community churches. In at least four of them a dramatic change in worship style preceded their leaving. In this same time frame, the WELS has also lost nineteen pastors, of which fourteen have left for independent churches. Among them I personally know of six who had begun using non-traditional formats for worship. LC-MS pastors refer to similar statistics in their midst.

How you worship matters. It begins to define you and your confession. Worship style is a powerful force, which for many unknowing souls often trumps doctrine. If we look, sound, and feel like the worship of other heterodox church bodies, we should not be surprised when our members join them someday.

Shall We Drink Wine with Zwingli?

It is interesting to note that Luther was willing to preserve much of Rome’s Mass, though they buried the Gospel, and yet he would borrow nothing from the radical Reformers, despite their willingness to praise the Gospel. This demonstrates how important the sacramental aspect of worship had become for him. It is also an important lesson for us to learn, since most of the worship ideas tempting present-day Lutherans away from our traditional roots have been picked from the tree branches of the radical Reformers. Paul Kretzmann marks this distinction:

When Luther, at Marburg, in 1529, uttered the memorable words: “Yours is a different spirit from ours,” he had reference mainly to the doctrine. But his words receive their application also in externals, in the cultus (worship, liturgy) and in life. The Lutheran Church developed the science of theology, the Reformed that of morals. ...This difference became apparent as early as the time of Zwingli. ...Zwingli’s service deteriorated with his theology. ...In a similar manner, Calvin was not in sympathy with anything that savored of Roman liturgy.³⁶

Why did Luther keep the forefathers of present-day Reformed churches at arm's length? For two primary theological reasons: the doctrine of justification was not central to their theology, and they had mutilated God's distribution system. Before we run to borrow worship styles which are championed by their spiritual descendants, we need to understand whence many of these ideas are born.

Reformed churches approach spirituality through human emotion since this has become their means of grace. On purpose they target emotion as a channel to reach a person's soul. Lutherans do not fear emotion (contrary to popular opinion – we just look like we do), but do not intentionally target it with our theology as if the Holy Spirit needs our help. For a Lutheran, when emotion is touched it is by doctrine which has moved the heart, in other words, at the end of the sequence. The Reformed seek to stir emotion deliberately on the front end in order to make a path for the doctrine to reach the heart. The preacher or the music must arouse an emotional impulse through which the Holy Spirit can then carry out His work. There is no trust in the efficacy of the Word. This may appear to be a very slight difference, yet it exposes a great difference in theology and in understanding the sacramental nature of worship.

One of the great American revivalist preachers, Charles Finney, explains this concept well:

Religion is the work of man. It is something for man to do. It consists in obeying God. It is man's duty. ... Men are so sluggish, there are so many things to lead their minds off from religion and to oppose the influence of the Gospel, that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them, till the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must be so aroused that they will break over these counteracting influences, before they will obey God. ... There must be excitement sufficient enough to wake up the dormant moral powers, and roll back the tide of degradation and sin.³⁷

Kretzmann observes, "In most evangelistic services, a sentimental climax is carefully worked out, and the exhorters, choir leaders, and various other officers and assistants are carefully drilled in their role, in order that everything may reach the culmination according to the prearranged plan."³⁸

Many Reformed hymns and songs take biblical stories and attempt to stir up an emotion one would have as if he had been there: How would you feel if you were sitting in the barn the night of Jesus' birth? What

was it like to carry Jesus' cross? What would it have been like to have experienced seeing the stone rolled away? There is nothing wrong with such thoughts, but we must recognize the theology behind them.

As an example, consider the theology in the song, "Were You There?" Q: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" (A: No, I'm sorry, I wasn't.) "Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble." Notice there are no means of grace, but your feelings become the very thing that opens you up to Christ. Just thinking about Him on the cross causes you to react emotionally, and this is then how spirituality is found. The actual words don't convey anything at all about the atonement. Is it sinful to sing this song? No. Contemplating Christ's passion certainly can have its benefits. But God does not send us to our trembling thoughts about Christ to benefit from His atonement. He sends us to His Word, water, bread and wine, despite how boring and lifeless they may seem to be. This song was born out of a theology which denies the very way God has promised to come to us, replacing His means of grace with an emotional response intended to make me closer to Jesus. It supports the notion, "If you want to really experience Jesus, just look deep inside your own heart, and get in touch with your feelings." By the way, if it doesn't make me want to tremble, then what? And if we sing this in a service, what did it replace from our Lutheran hymns that it improved upon?

In the mid-1800s C. P. Krauth saw similar Reformed influences lurking Lutherans in his day. The more he studied Lutheran theology, the more he was drawn to a traditional liturgy. His rival, S.S. Schmucker, on the other hand, always carried an antipathy for it. One historian notes, "His son, B. M. Schmucker, remarked that 'the whole cast of his mind revealed his aversion to a liturgical service, his rejection of all right of past usage to influence the present.'"³⁹ Knowing that issues from the Reformation era were rearing their ugly head in his day, Krauth frequently makes observations like this:

Think of the precedent set by the Reformers: They chose to use the liturgical order of the very church which had excommunicated them, by merely purging it of all that harmed or covered up the Gospel. By retaining a cleansed order of the Mass they showed their desire to remain connected to the *Una Sancta*, demonstrating their belief that the true, invisible Church had always been alive even under the abuses of Rome. The radical reformers could not stomach such a view, and chose to reject everything which had Rome's seal on it. The difference between Luther and Calvin on the subject of the visible and

invisible church can be seen in their handling of the Roman liturgy. One kept it and purified it, the other destroyed it. The descendants of each theologian continue on the same paths today.⁴⁰

It is common for those who push for contemporary Christian worship (CCW) to be attracted to it more for emotional rather than theological reasons. We must be alert to recognize that this is an intended target of Reformed theology, since it has become one of their means of grace. (See Appendix C, “Two Different Spirits.”)

Lyle Lange provided an important warning in a Reformation lecture:

It is in three areas in particular that Lutherans today are making liberal use of Reformed materials: in the areas of church growth, worship and hymnody, and teaching about sanctification. Lutheran churches that use church growth materials without understanding their theological background may soon lose sight of the Gospel. The method may get in the way of the message. Contemporary Christian music is so full of the emphasis on how I feel about God that it neglects the needed emphasis on the objective means of grace and on objective justification. . . . As our forefathers discovered, you cannot package the Gospel in Reformed theology without losing the message of *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide*.⁴¹

The great irony is that boredom, or lack of emotion, can grow inside any church body, even those who strive for exciting worship. Even Charles Finney had to wake up his dead church with some new life, though it already claimed to be a “revival church.” I have attended a number of Reformed churches (and even a few CCW Lutheran churches) who claim to have conquered this problem, and have observed just as many people visibly bored as we see in our traditional Lutheran services, which are actually designed to be boring (just kidding). “Rituals themselves are neither dead nor alive. Those who participate in them make them appear as living, vital rituals or as dead ones. Said plainly, it is not the ritual that is dead; it is we who are dead.”⁴² The problem of boredom is not in our liturgy or music, but in us. If I pay more attention to a loud, tearful, emotional prayer from Jimmy Swaggart than I do to the Lord’s Prayer, the problem is not in the prayer Christ provided, but in me.

Reformed worship places a heavier emphasis on the sacrificial rather than the sacramental aspects of our faith, on sanctification rather

than justification. It is interesting to note that in their desire to run so far from Rome in their style of worship, they have actually joined Rome in the focus of their worship. Our Lord Jesus says, “I am the Vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). A Lutheran theology of worship places its attention on where the branch meets the Vine: repentance and forgiveness of sins. A Reformed theology of worship places its attention on where the branch produces the grapes.

A Lutheran theology of worship sees repentance as an ongoing, lifelong condition in which we must live; therefore, to paraphrase Walther, “Each service is like a mini-conversion.” A Reformed approach sees repentance as something you did once upon entering the faith, and the focus of their theology of worship is on how you can be a better person and praise God. If we feel a need to utilize contemporary ideas for worship, let us at least make sure they are flowing from a source that is in line with the very faith we profess (see Appendix C).

Slowing down the Pendulum

The entrance of CCW practices inside of Lutheranism has produced a negative response among some and a positive response among others. For many college-age confessional Lutherans today this has sadly developed into a great divide, and a wound which may not heal in the near future. Arguments fly on entries to Facebook. Groups of pastors are polarizing inside of synods, often organized primarily by preferences in worship. How wise were the forefathers of the Synodical Conference to work toward and encourage the use of a common hymnal as a way of providing unity among all of their synods!

Between these two camps sit the majority of the members not giving it much thought either way. As with all conflicting ideas in the church, we must avoid the reactionary, pendulum swing. One camp must be careful not to gravitate so far from CCW that we create a new hyper-Lutheranism and further separate ourselves. The other camp must take caution not to so fully embrace CCW that fellow confessional Lutherans feel out of place in their midst. Our spiritual forefathers certainly exercised great caution when adopting anything new for worship, and yet they also avoided the extreme of demanding that anything novel must come only from the sixteenth century or earlier. Luther himself might say, “A pox on both your houses!” We must not elevate our traditions to the level of doctrine, and at the same time do not cast them aside or handle them with contempt. Caution must also be exercised when judging the motives in the

hearts of members or pastors. At the heart of both camps is a love for souls, and a desire to see the church grow, so that more can come to know Christ and remain with Him.

It is important for us to have a burning desire to reach the souls of the lost with the wonderful Gospel delivered to us by the saints. Where this fire does not burn in the heart of the pastor, how low must the flame of faith be burning? Yet, in our fervent desire to bring in the lost, let us not give up who we are in return. Let us not abandon our very identity in hopes of having others join us. May we return again to learn who we are, be confident in God's promise to work through His chosen means, and... just do a good job being Lutheran! Middle-aged, overweight, Caucasian choir members of a Nordic or Germanic background do not look right trying sing and sway like a black gospel choir from the Bahamas. Let us not be shy about who we are, or try to act as though we are something different, as do the Mormons. The way to win over people who have little or no time for the means of grace or justification is not to pretend we are like them, but rather to boldly display to them what biblical, Christ-centered worship is. Rather than running away from who we are, let us run toward it and show it in all its splendor.

A community with a poor sense of identity will not promote itself with any degree of confidence. A community that knows what it believes and is secure in its traditions will perform its public work with a degree of certainty that commends it to others who are also looking for meaning in their lives and an opportunity to grow in their awareness of God.⁴³

We must also refresh our appreciation for the wonderful heritage we have been given and not shy away from it. A growing element of today's "throw-away" generation has a renewed interest in and appreciation for traditional worship. We are seeing it in wedding services and in musical selections. Gene Edward Veith encourages us to rethink how we might reach the modern visitor:

The traditions of the church—including traditional forms of worship—may have more appeal than we realize, especially to a generation that lacks traditions but yearns for them. ... Church growth experts...argue that churches need to change in step with the culture in order to attract members. The purpose of the church, however, is not so much to change as to change lives. ...Changes in style tend, often inadvertently, to produce

changes in content. Revising worship services to make them more emotional and entertaining can only teach the congregation subjectivity and spiritual hedonism. ... “The pattern of this world” (Rom. 12:2) is not to determine church ministry.⁴⁴

The following is a summary of practical directives from the sainted Prof. Juul Madson, instructor of liturgics at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary:

- 1) Stick to the historic liturgy, yet each week change one thing in it (for instance a hymn to replace the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, a different Exhortation, etc.).
- 2) Conduct the liturgy as if it were the first or last time you were allowed to do it.
- 3) Practice your readings ahead of time. Be prepared.
- 4) Speak the responses with meaning, passion and sincerity. Let the people know this is important by how you conduct the service. Don’t give the impression that you are just filling time until you can get to the really important thing: your sermon!
- 5) Do not become so fixated on a liturgy that you are not willing, once in awhile, to make use of a different order of service (note: once in a while).
- 6) Before using any new song, find out where it came from, who wrote it, and closely examine its theology. Also pay attention to what it does NOT say.
- 7) Don’t let sanctification get in the way of justification.
- 8) Teach your people how to sing difficult hymns, don’t just surprise them. Use your choir to instruct the congregation.
- 9) Do not pick more than a few challenging hymns each Sunday, and make sure that at least two of them are familiar.
- 10) If you are not sure if you should chant, don’t even try.

“O, come! Let us worship the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation!”

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Endnotes

¹ LW 1, 327-328.

² C.F.W. Walther, *Convention Essays* (n.p.: Lutheran Synod Publishing, n.d.), 15.

³ Arthur A. Just, Jr., *Heaven on Earth* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 61.

⁴ For a more detailed explanation of these terms see “Lutheran Theology of Worship,” by James Krikava, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1982.

⁵ *The Book of Concord* (AC, Ap IV), ed. T.G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 114.

⁶ R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London: Trubner & Co., 1915), cited in Krikava, 4.

⁷ Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1970), 84.

⁸ Just, 101, 108.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹² LW 53, 11.

¹³ P. Kretzmann, *Christian Art in the Place and in the Form of Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 275.

¹⁴ AC XXIV.

¹⁵ Ap XXIV.

¹⁶ Kretzmann, 276.

¹⁷ LW 53, 61.

¹⁸ Ap XV, 38.

¹⁹ AC VII.

²⁰ C.P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation*, Preface.

²¹ LW 53, 11.

²² Ap XV.

²³ Ap XV, 20-21.

²⁴ Ap VII & VIII, 33.

²⁵ LW 53, 19.

²⁶ C.F.W. Walther, “Essay on Adiaphora,” in *Essays for the Church*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 193-194.

²⁷ Kretzmann, 228.

²⁸ Luther D. Reed, *Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 8-9.

²⁹ Herman Sasse, *Union and Confession*, 34.

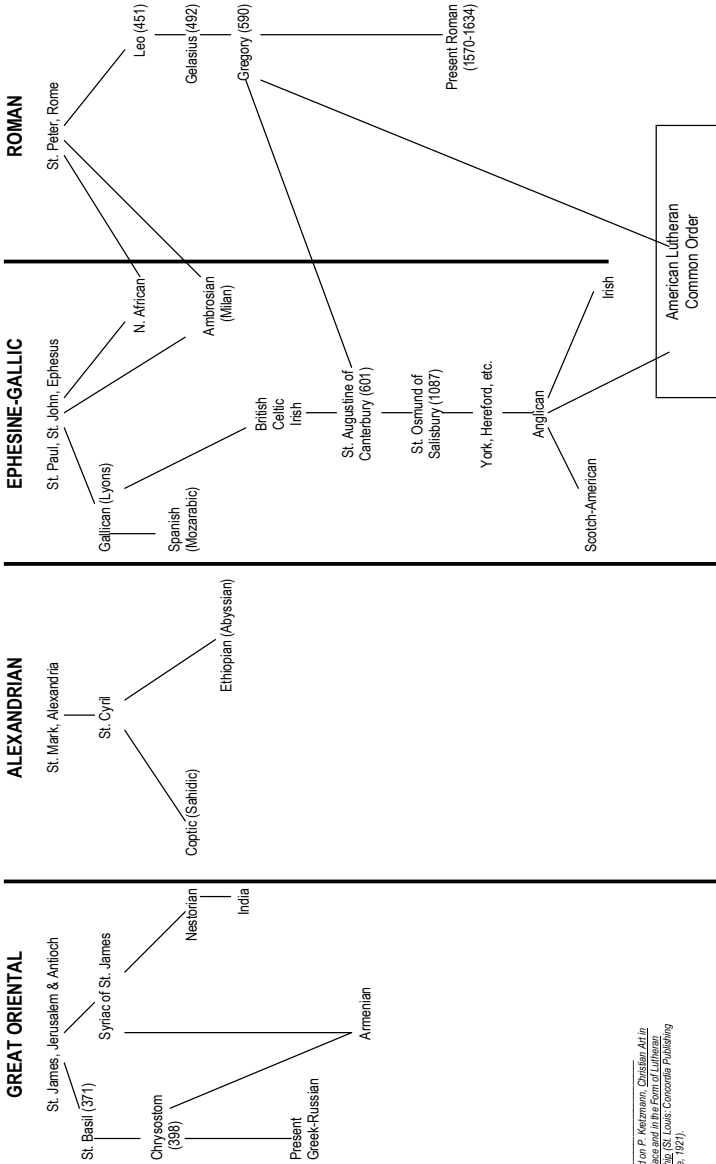
- ³⁰ Friedrich Bente, *American Lutheranism*, Vol. II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), 68.
- ³¹ LW 53, 46.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 49.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 61.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ³⁵ H.A. Preus, *Vivacious Daughter* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), 49.
- ³⁶ Kretzmann, 307-308.
- ³⁷ Charles Finney, 1- 2.
- ³⁸ Kretzmann, 310.
- ³⁹ Vergilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, reprinted 1987).
- ⁴⁰ Krauth, vii-viii.
- ⁴¹ Lyle Lange, from 37th Annual BLC Ref. Lectures, Lecture Two, 25.
- ⁴² Just, 35.
- ⁴³ Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy, Catholic and Evangelical* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997), 705.
- ⁴⁴ Gene Edward Veith, *Postmodern Times* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 227-228.

Appendix A
Earliest-known Rites in the Ancient Church

ORIGIN	Region used:	Attributed to:	Key cities:
GREAT ORIENTAL (GREEK)	Eastern	St. James	Jerusalem & Antioch
EPHESINE-GALLIC (GREEK)	Ephesus, N. Italy, France	St. Paul, St. John & Polycarp	Ephesus
ROMAN (GREEK)	Italy	St. Peter	Rome
ORDER OF LITURGY	Entrance Prayers Salutation & Response Bidding Prayer Song of Praise Lectioins from Scripture Prayer & Kyrie Gospel Reading & Sermon <i>(Dismissal of Catechumens)</i>	Little Entrance (Procession w. Choir) Lectioins from Scripture Prayers	ORDER OF LITURGY Anthem & Gloria Patri Salutation & Response Trisagion (Holy, Holy, Holy) Kyrie & Benedictus Prayer (Collect) Lectioins from Scripture (OT, Ep) Gospel Reading & Anthem Sermon & Prayers
MASS: Incessory Prayers Great Entrance Credo Kiss of Peace Inclination (bow toward altar) Offertory Prayers Salutation & Response Thanksgiving & "Lift up your hearts." Preface Sanctus Invocation Intercession Lord's Prayer Blessing Manual Acts Sanctus Sanctus Communion (Distribution) Thanksgiving Dismissal Closing Prayer	MASS: Preface Prayer & Oblations Offertory Reading Names of Saints (Diptych) Collect Salutation & Kiss of Peace Collect for Peace Eucharistic Prayers, Preface Thanksgiving Sanctus Words of Institution Collect Oblation of Consec. Elements Breaking of Bread Lord's Prayer Benediction w. Amen Communion (Distribution) Collect of Thanksgiving	MASS: Preface Prayer & Oblations Offertory Reading Names of Saints (Diptych) Collect Salutation & Kiss of Peace Collect for Peace Eucharistic Prayers, Preface Thanksgiving Sanctus Words of Institution Collect Oblation of Consec. Elements Breaking of Bread Lord's Prayer Benediction w. Amen Communion (Distribution) Collect of Thanksgiving	MASS: Preface Prayer & Oblations Offertory Reading Names of Saints (Diptych) Collect Salutation & Kiss of Peace Collect for Peace Eucharistic Prayers, Preface Thanksgiving Sanctus Words of Institution Collect Oblation of Consec. Elements Breaking of Bread Lord's Prayer Benediction w. Amen Communion (Distribution) Collect of Thanksgiving

Based on P. Kravtsov, Christian Liturgy in the Form of Lutheran Worship (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971).

Appendix B
Historical Development of
The Christian Liturgy



Based on F. Keitzmann, *Christian Art and Its Place and in the Form of Lutheran Worship*, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1927.

American Lutheran
Common Order

Appendix C

Two Different Spirits

Reformed

Stems from a sinner struggling to become sanctified

Law is a means of helping us make a moral choice & commitment toward God

Law is a teaching tool to make people happy by following commands of God

Word is important because it tells us God's will for our lives

Emphasizes person's experience & emotion as channel Holy Spirit works through

Conversion is turning from wrong to right

Theology of Glory promises to effect empirical results in a person's life if we just obey God

Presents the Christian life as one of joy, happiness and success

Millennial hope that the world can become more godly and moral

Worship is primarily seen as our praise to God

Forgiveness of sins is an important doctrine among many others

Lutheran

Stems from the relief a sinner feels when he knows God has justified him in Christ

Law is God's tool to make us see our sin, and realize we can never measure up on our own

Law is a teaching to make man miserable; happiness comes later as we know of Christ

Word is important because it contains God's forgiveness in Christ

Emotion flows from a heart already touched by the Holy Spirit

Conversion is turning to a Savior whose work is completed for us

Theology of the Cross, where the sinner glories only in the cross by faith

Christian may experience some joy, but lives under the cross in a real world of sorrow as we hope in the glory to come in heaven.

Focus is on our heavenly home, the home of righteousness

Worship is primarily God's outpouring of grace toward us

All doctrine is viewed through the lens of the forgiveness of sins in Christ

Compiled from Robert J. Koester,
Law and Gospel, Foundation of Lutheran Ministry
(Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).