



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

I N S T I T U T E

Pastoral Theology and
Sacred Music for the Church

Journal for the
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CHRIST'S GIFTS IN LITURGY

The Theology and Music
of the Divine Service

The Good Shepherd Institute

Christ's Gifts in Liturgy

The Theology and Music of the Divine Service

**Edited by
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Contents

Foreword	
Daniel Zager.....	3
All Saints' Choral Vespers Sermon—November 4, 2001	
Dean O. Wenthe	7
The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service	
Paul J. Grime.....	11
The Ordinaries of the Divine Service: An Interpretation of Liturgical Texts	
Arthur A. Just Jr.	27
The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation	
Richard C. Resch.....	47
Preaching in the Divine Service	
William M. Cwirla	59
Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation	
John T. Pless.....	71
Children in Worship: A Place to Grow	
Barbara J. Resch.....	83
Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass	
Paul W. Hofreiter	97
Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team	
Mark E. Sell.....	129
The Pastor and the Church Musician: Building a Parish Team	
Kevin J. Hildebrand.....	143
Contributors.....	149

Foreword

In its second annual conference (November 4–6, 2001) The Good Shepherd Institute focused on the theme “Christ’s Gifts in Liturgy: The Theology and Music of the Divine Service.” Plenary papers were devoted to the theology and structure of the Divine Service, the Ordinaries, the Propers, and preaching. Other papers dealt with liturgy and vocation, children in the Divine Service, and Bach and the Divine Service. Finally, the topic of preparing for the Divine Service is considered from the vantage point of both pastor and cantor, the focus being on the pastoral and musical collaboration that is at the heart of worship planning (a collaboration that is, moreover, a primary concern of The Good Shepherd Institute). Each of these papers shares as a basic premise what John Pless has stated so succinctly: “The liturgy is not about our cultic activity; it is God who is giving His gifts in sermon and Sacrament to the people that He has gathered in His name.”

In considering “The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service” Paul Grime wrestles with the question of whether the Divine Service demonstrates great concern or little concern for the individual Christian. As he examines the Divine Service he resolves this potential contradiction by concluding: “Though the Divine Service seems at times to show little concern for the individual Christian, the reality is that even in these situations the service is uniquely positioned to care for the eternal welfare of the children of God.” Grime adds that “The worldview of the Divine Service provides a radically new perspective as it delivers to us a wisdom that has been handed down from generation to generation.” Arthur Just Jr. locates this wisdom in the Ordinary portions of the Divine Service: the Kyrie, the Hymn of Praise (both the Gloria in Excelsis and “Worthy is Christ”), the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. Just explores the biblical foundations of the Ordinaries and reveals the rich theological interrelations among these liturgical texts. In this essay he demonstrates that “Christ’s gifts in liturgy begin with the Invocation and continue to the Benediction.”

The Ordinaries are counterbalanced by Proper portions of the liturgy, whose texts change for each Sunday and feast day. Richard Resch considers Propers such as hymns, readings, psalms and antiphons, Introit, Collect, Gradual, Alleluia Verse, and Offertory Verse. Many of the Proper portions of the liturgy are proclaimed *musically*, and Resch explores musical *choices* in the context of our Lutheran identity as a confessional, sacramental, and liturgical church. He

The Good Shepherd Institute

leads the church musician and pastor through a careful planning process that results in “a Divine Service [that] flow[s] from one reinforcing element to another in all of the words and notes. . . .” The sermon too may be considered a “proper” portion of the Divine Service. In his essay, “Preaching in the Divine Service,” William Cwirla notes that “The liturgical preacher is under the salutary discipline of the lectionary, which frees both him and his hearers from the tyranny of the immediate and urgent.” In a broader way Cwirla considers preaching in the context of the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Divine Service. He concludes his essay by considering “The Point of Preaching: Death in Life,” noting that “*Life in death* is the theme of the Scriptures. . . . Preaching the Gospel is submersion in the death of Jesus.”

In “Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation” John Pless draws on Martin Luther’s Post-Communion Collect from his 1526 *Deutsche Messe*, suggesting that this Collect “is the hinge that connects God’s service to us in the Sacrament with our service to the neighbor in the world.” Pless adds that “Luther’s understanding of vocation is consistent with his liturgical theology. God serves us sacramentally in the Divine Service as we receive His benefactions by faith, and we serve God sacrificially as we give ourselves to the neighbor in love.”

As a music educator and children’s choir director Barbara Resch considers the topic “Children in Worship: A Place to Grow.” She notes that “the Divine Service is offered to an intergenerational community” and demonstrates that the Divine Service shapes children by teaching them *what* they need to learn and teaching children who they are. She points out that in the Divine Service children “are learning about their relationship to their God, they are saying the words He has given them to say, and they are beginning to practice a lifelong habit that will grow in richness as they grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically.”

Paul Hofreiter provides an essay on “Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass.” Hofreiter writes: “While this work was not composed for liturgical use in its final form, it is a picture or portrayal of the liturgy, and the listener is even drawn to the never-ending heavenly liturgy. The ‘not-yet’ of eternity is present in this work, but so too is the ‘now’ of the human condition. Thus theological counterpoint is interlaced throughout the Mass, offering the listener glimpses of both inaugurated and realized eschatology.”

Finally, Pastor Mark Sell and Kantor Kevin Hildebrand discuss the topic of “building a parish team,” a team that makes careful planning and preparation for the Divine Service one of its highest priorities. Sell draws on Luther’s two-kingdom theology to assist the pastor in conceptualizing how to build a parish team that finds its common understanding in the theology of the Divine Service: “. . . the pastor must work on his leadership skills (left-hand [kingdom]) to bring the people together (left hand) to work through (left hand) the theology (right hand, catechesis).” Hildebrand too notes that “The pastor and church musician

Foreword

must be united in theology” and that “the pastor and church musician must have respect for the distinction of each other’s vocations.”

These writers combine to explore the Divine Service in its theological and musical dimensions, its conceptual and practical implications. The Good Shepherd Institute of Concordia Theological Seminary offers these essays to the Church in the hope that the Church’s understanding of the Divine Service and of Christ’s gifts in liturgy will thereby be deepened and enriched.

Daniel Zager
Editor

All Saints' Choral Vespers Sermon

November 4, 2001

Dean O. Wenthe

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text for All Saints' reflection is the first lesson with particular focus on Revelation 22:1–5.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as a crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them. And they will reign forever and ever.

So far God's holy Word.

Evil. If there have been recent times when it seemed as though evil were abstract, limited in its impact and significance, we all now know better. Remember when prosperity and affluence seemed to be a given. Acquisition, consumption, self-absorption and endless entertainment—lulled much of Western culture into a false reading of the world. Who of us didn't feel the pressure to relax and go with the flow of flourishing markets?

But, now, that time and that assumption seem like a child's fantasy. Not a few commentators have observed that our thinking as well as our lives will now be very different.

Evil is in our world. The public display of darkness and death cannot be denied. Darkness . . . deep and deadly, surrounds us.

C. S. Lewis, writing during the dark days of World War II when St. Paul's Cathedral in London was surrounded by fires and clouds of smoke—arising from the daily bombings—suggested that at least in war there is the benefit of the darkness—evil—becoming obvious and visible.

Whether it be the expansive dome of St. Paul's in war-torn London or the

The Good Shepherd Institute

smoke billowing from the World Trade Towers on a bright September morning, it is impossible to deny or ignore these events—they witness transparently to real evil and real darkness.

C. S. Lewis was right. We misread and misunderstand our situation when we go merrily from one moment to another with no reflection on the realities we face in this world. From the first sons of Adam when Cain killed Abel to the violence-consumed generation before the flood—so violent that God regretted His creative work—to the present holocaust of the unborn, darkness—deep and deadly—is present in our world. Your world and my world as well . . . not just the world out there.

As St. Paul addresses each of us when he writes:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms. (Eph 6:12)

We come as a people on this All Saints' observance to acknowledge the reality that the Saints met and that each of us meets—the darkness without in our world and the darkness within—our sin.

We come as a people who stand in solidarity with the saints whose eyes remained fixed and aware of this darkness. We come with the saints who have seen an even more inclusive and cosmic manifestation of the darkness—the darkness of Good Friday.

On Good Friday, the whole earth was darkened as the devil and all the principalities and powers of darkness unleashed their hatred and sought to extinguish the light.

And there, on Good Friday, with the Saints, we hear from the depths of darkness, a dying voice announce: “It is finished.”

Yes, evil, darkness, sin and death—are finished for the saints . . . they are finished for you and for me.

In the Suffering Servant, in Christ the Paschal Lamb, darkness has been pierced and dispelled by the light of God's light. Where Christ is there is light, where light is there is the true God, where God is there is true and abundant light.

Isaiah prophesied our deliverance to light:

Isaiah 60:1	Arise, shine, for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
Isaiah 60:19	The sun will no more be your light by day Nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, For the Lord will be your everlasting light, And your God will be your glory.

All Saints' Choral Vespers Sermon—November 4, 2001

20 Your sun will never set again,
And your moon will wane no more;
The Lord will be your everlasting light and
Your days of sorrow will end.

St. John, in our text, speaks of reality foreseen by Isaiah:

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them. (Rv 22:5)

How fitting that the choral response to this lesson sang: “Through darkness riseth light to the upright!” Precisely!!! The Saints have been delivered to pure and healing light—the very presence of God. You and I rejoice in their deliverance. But, surrounded by darkness, we rejoice that the light of God’s gracious and atoning work has penetrated to the core of our being and driven out the darkness. In our baptism, we were joined to Christ’s death on Good Friday, that we might bask in the light of His resurrection.

In Christ’s most holy voice through prophets and apostles, we are swept to the presence of God’s mercy. Absolution in God’s Holy Name, removes every shred of darkness with the brilliant light of Christ’s mercy and grace.

Every doubt and fear are removed when we eat at the heavenly table of His holy presence. Light surrounds and saturates our soul for Christ has come to give His body and His blood for us poor children of darkness.

Sacred Scripture speaks to reality . . . it speaks to us . . . it names and describes the powers of evil and darkness. But, thanks be to God, it tells the truthful story of a cosmic reversal.

Evil has been defeated. Light has pierced the darkness. In Christ, and only in Him, there is sainthood now and sainthood forever.

Please consider, if you will, an analogy. Some years ago our family had the privilege of visiting Carlsbad Caverns. We were so enchanted with the cave and its beauty that we signed up for a ranger-escorted tour of an undeveloped cave called New Cave. With a dozen or so other tourists we showed up with flashlights at the mouth of a cave in a remote portion of the park and descended for several hours into the darkness. How different from the main cavern! No marked trails . . . no handrails to hold on to.

When we reached the deepest point, the ranger paused and asked us to be seated. He then invited all of us to turn off all of our flashlights. He also requested that we wave our hands in front of our eyes to see if we could observe any movement.

Profound and total darkness, he said, was what we were experiencing. And, he continued, if by some coincidence all of our lights would fail, we would be in real

The Good Shepherd Institute

peril. Profound and total darkness, he asserted, is so disorienting that one is literally helpless to keep directions in mind. Immediately, I might add, several lights went on just to feel somewhat safe.

Our fallen world is in such a state of profound and total darkness. Its religions simply escort one around in the darkness.

But, returning from the depths of that cave to the surface, I still remember the profound brilliance and beauty of the desert sun shining through the cave's entrance.

The light of Christ is even more brilliant and beautiful. It shines from His presence, through His Word and Sacraments, into the depths of your being.

And there is light!!! Beautiful, brilliant, life-giving light!!! It is yours by His grace. It is mine by His grace. And it shines from Christ upon the saints on high and upon us here below. They behold it in all its public display and power. We behold it in the cross and in the face of the crucified Lamb of God. But, it is the same light—pure and holy, the light of God's life.

As we with St. John, rejoice that the Lord God brilliantly shines upon the saints in heaven, may Isaiah's invitation to the faithful make us the light of the world—Christ's holy church on earth—in this challenging time.

"Come, O House of Jacob," Isaiah says, "let us walk in the light of the Lord."

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

Paul J. Grime

In the year 1520 Martin Luther found himself being pulled deeper and deeper into conflict with the Roman Church. Though Luther's excommunication and his ban from the Holy Roman Empire were still a year away, the outcome was all but inevitable. The year 1520, in fact, was pivotal in Luther's thought as he began to work out the ramifications of the charges that he had leveled against Rome. Toward the end of that year, over a span of three months, Luther published a trio of writings that laid much of the framework for the emerging church of the Lutheran confession. The first was titled "Address to the German Nobility." Among other things, it spelled out his rejection of papal authority and called for a thorough reform of the church. The second, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," attacked the sacramental system of the church and called for further reforms. The third writing, "The Freedom of a Christian," was, however, considerably different from the preceding works in that Luther struck a conciliatory tone, even dedicating it to Pope Leo X.

Though "The Freedom of a Christian" is a non-polemical document, it unfolds in clear fashion the heart and substance of Luther's reformational teachings, namely, that a Christian is free from sin through faith in God apart from works of the Law. Writing, as he indicates, for "the unlearned," Luther begins with a set of contradictory propositions:

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.

A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

Luther then proceeds to spell out the paradoxical nature of the faith. On the one hand, the Christian is free from the condemnation of the Law, a freedom that comes through faith alone, apart from any obligatory works by which one might earn salvation. But on the other hand, precisely because the believer is free in Christ, the daily life of the Christian is marked by the same attitude that Christ had, namely, serving the neighbor in love.

Such a brief summary cannot, of course, do justice to Luther's brilliant treatise; it requires a full and careful reading. In the present context I refer to this treatise for a specific reason. My assigned topic, "The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service," is, as the conference planners admitted to me, an enormously broad topic. In order to bring some focus to this discussion, I intend to follow Luther's model of providing contrasting theses, the goal being to take a fresh look

The Good Shepherd Institute

at the service around which we are gathered week after week on the basis of these opposing theses. Of course, the theses will have to be tested to see whether they can indeed be supported.

Preliminary Matters

Before considering the theses, let me dispense with some preliminary matters. First, when I speak of the Divine Service, I refer to the chief service of the Christian Church, the gathering of God's people around Word *and* Sacrament. It goes by other names, like "The Order of the Holy Communion," "The Service of Holy Communion," and "The Mass."

Second, I will not be addressing the issue of how often the Divine Service should be observed in the congregation. Our Lutheran Confessions speak of the observance of the Mass on every Lord's Day (AC XXIV 1), but for most of the Lutheran Church's history that has not been the universal practice. To some extent, what follows may be applied to other services used in corporate worship, like the office of Matins or Morning Prayer. But in terms of specifics, I will be referring exclusively to what takes place in the Divine Service.

Third, in what follows I make no attempt to address the topic of musical settings of the Divine Service. While this is an extremely crucial issue, especially in our time, it is an entirely separate topic that deserves its own hearing. Suffice it to say that the Divine Service has been and continues to be set in various ways, and that this is both good and proper. Nevertheless, this is not meant to imply that just any setting of these ancient texts is fitting and beneficial. In every case, the music must serve the text and avoid the easy temptation of overshadowing it.

Finally, I have made no attempt to cover every aspect of the Divine Service. Other presentations during the course of this gathering will break open the historic texts of the Divine Service and introduce us to the richness of the Propers—those changing texts that move us through the church year. My primary purpose is to demonstrate the unique ways in which the service brings us before the heavenly throne and delivers to us our Lord's gift of life. In this sense, I will be using terms like "Divine Service" and "worship" interchangeably. That, ultimately, is what worship is about: being brought into the presence of the divine in order to have a share in His life. And that is why the Divine Service—the Service of Word and Sacrament—is the chief service of the church, for there, like nowhere else, God bestows His gifts on His people. Now, on to the theses.

Theses

- I. The Divine Service demonstrates great concern for the individual Christian.
- II. The Divine Service demonstrates little concern for the individual Christian.

Of course, both of these theses must be predicated on the truth that the Divine Service is first and foremost about God. He is the Author of our salvation; hence,

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

any worship that does not begin and end with God runs the risk of being false.

Nevertheless, having confessed that worship is about God, we must immediately acknowledge that it is also about us. There has been a tendency among some to suggest that worship is so much about God that the human participant is virtually excluded from the discussion. The reality is, however, that the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve are not insignificant participants in this divine encounter. We come into God's presence, at His invitation, to receive the life that He gives us through the forgiveness of sins. God gives us His good gifts, and we receive them—with thanksgiving. Yes, there is a response to the good Giver's giving. Our Lutheran Confessions call it a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Making it crystal clear that our response is in no way to be understood as a means by which we merit God's grace, the confessors nevertheless go on to explain that through our sacrifice of thanksgiving, "those who have been reconciled give thanks or show their gratitude for the forgiveness of sins and other blessings received" (AP XXIV 19). Hence, prayer, praise, confession, and thanksgiving are a response of each Christian. Together with the proclamation of all that God has done, this response forms an integral part of our worship.

Great Concern for the Individual

Turning then to the first thesis, let us consider some ways in which the Divine Service shows great concern for the individual Christian. Above all else, it delivers the forgiveness of sins. Beginning with the Absolution and concluding with the Benediction, the service is filled with words of blessing that point us to the purpose for our Lord's taking on human flesh. The word may be a direct address—"I forgive you all your sins"—or a declaration of God's grace—"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us and has given his only Son to die for us *and for his sake forgives us all our sins.*" It may be the first blessing of the service when the divine name is placed on us—"In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit"—or the blessing by which we are sent off to our various callings—"The Lord bless you and keep you . . . and be gracious to you . . . and give you peace." The good word from God may be as brief as "the Lord be with you" in the Salutation or as profound as "The peace of the Lord be with you always," spoken as the pastor holds the body and blood of Christ before the congregation, announcing the true significance of these gifts of God.

Of course, as Lutherans know, the good news of forgiveness and life is never spoken in isolation but, rather, in tandem with the stern warning that we are condemned sinners. This is Law and Gospel—always distinguished, never separated. And so the Divine Service cares for us by giving us the Word of God in all its fullness. Whether it is the texts that are repeated week after week in the service itself or the readings from Holy Scripture that change each week, the worshiper is exposed to the Word of God in all its living color. This is important to

The Good Shepherd Institute

Lutherans who confess that God's Word does what it says. With the prophet Isaiah we really do believe what God has said about His Word:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall My Word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to Me empty
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Is 55:10–11 ESV)

So it is in the Divine Service, where the Word of God sounds forth from beginning to end, setting before the sinner both God's word of condemnation and His word of release and pardon.

There is even more that the Divine Service sets before us. In its fullest form, it prepares a rich table from which God's people feast. This is the Sacrament of the Altar where the body and blood of the incarnate Son of God are given for our eating and drinking. Just as our Lord has promised not to leave us destitute but comes in this sacred meal to share Himself with us, so does the Divine Service care for us by elaborately preparing the table at which we feast. Whether it is the song of the angels in which the whole company of heaven joins or the prayer for mercy that we address to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is now present under the bread and wine—throughout, our gaze is directed to Jesus who graciously condescends to give Himself to us through an act as common as eating and drinking. In the Divine Service, God drags us to the heights of heaven and lowers Himself to the depths of our world to unite us to Himself.

The Divine Service does show great concern for the individual believer, pointing us again and again to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Are you aware that in the course of a single service, we sing of Jesus taking away "the sin of the world" five times—twice in the Gloria and three times in the Agnus Dei? In the creeds we recount the miracle of our Lord's Incarnation, His suffering, death, burial, Resurrection, and Ascension—all that He accomplished for us. The song of the angels that rejoices in Jesus' birth is sung not just at Christmas, but all year long, reminding us of the significance of His coming—that He brings peace on earth and reveals God's good will and favor toward us. And using the words of Simeon, who held the infant Jesus in his arms, we too rejoice that our eyes have seen the salvation that God has prepared for all people. In fact, we have more than seen him—we have tasted the goodness of the Lord. All this the Divine Service gives to us. And yet there is even more that comes with each service, like the hymns we sing and, of course, proclamation on the Word of God in the sermon.

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

But we are still not done. The Divine Service not only brings Jesus and all His benefits to us; it also gives voice to our response as it leads us to bless and thank and praise the God of our salvation. This relationship is made very clear in the Offertory in Divine Service II in *Lutheran Worship*, where we borrow the words of the psalmist and ask:

What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?

In other words, what is the response of faith to all that God has done? Answer:

I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and will call on the name of the Lord.

Clearly, there will be a response. Rather than leaving our response to the feelings of the moment, the Divine Service hands down to us the sacrifice of thanksgiving that has been uttered for centuries by countless brothers and sisters in the faith.

This response to all that God has done for us in Christ takes various forms. At times, it is pure rejoicing, such as these opening words of the Gloria in Excelsis:

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
We glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory.

Or consider the acclamations that surround the reading of the Holy Gospel:

Glory to you, O Lord!
Praise to you, O Christ!

These are words of pure joy as we give praise and glory to the Lord whose very words are proclaimed in our hearing.

At other times, the response is much more focused. For example, toward the end of the Gloria in Excelsis there is this wonderful confession of the holy Trinity:

For you only are holy, you only are the Lord,
You only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
Are most high in the glory of God the Father.

In many ways, the response given to us in the Divine Service simply reflects the worship of the angels in heaven as it is recorded in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Revelation to St. John.

But our response includes more than thanksgiving and praise. It is also prayer. In the Confession of sins, we pray for God's mercy, acknowledging our own unworthiness and our inability to free ourselves from bondage to sin. In the Kyrie,

The Good Shepherd Institute

we call again for God's mercy, though this plea is not a repetition of our confession. Rather, our plea now is for all of fallen humanity, a plea that God would break in and spare us, and all people, from the ravages of sin that tear at the very fabric of our existence. And so we pray for the church, for the whole world, for believers in Christ. This, too, is our response, as the mercy of God takes hold of us and leads us outside of ourselves to intercede on behalf of all those in need.

The response of prayer is interspersed throughout the Divine Service. In the Offertory, we pray for a clean heart and a steadfast spirit. Following the distribution, we pray with Simeon:

Lord now let your servant depart in peace
according to your word.

And in the final prayer of the service, we pray for strength to love God and our neighbor, and for pardon and peace.

There can be little doubt that the Divine Service shows a great deal of concern for the individual Christian. Throughout, it offers comfort and hope as it points us to Jesus and all His benefits. And at the same time, it gives us the words to say in response to God's rich and abundant mercy. So, our first thesis holds.

Little Concern for the Individual

But what of the second thesis, that the Divine Service demonstrates little concern for the individual Christian? Can any evidence be mustered to support such a claim?

For example, what are we to make of the weekly repetition of the same texts of the Divine Service? Just how many times must we confess with the Nicene fathers that our Lord was "begotten, not made"? For several decades now we have heard from various sources that rote learning and meaningless repetition are not the ideal. And certainly we have all experienced the problem firsthand. Our minds have wandered during the praying of the "Our Father." Our thoughts have strayed during the singing of the Gloria as we wondered to ourselves whether we locked the car door or turned on the oven so that the roast will be done when we get home. We have confessed the Creed while giving our children "the stare" because *they* are being inattentive. We say the words, but our hearts are far from them.

But is it accurate to say that the Divine Service shows little concern for us when it invites us to repeat these texts week after week? After all, is the fault with the liturgy or is it with us? If we are bored with the same old Creed or Confession of sins, is that because these venerable texts do not speak profound truths to us? Or is the problem more likely that our hearts tend to grow cold and calloused as we fail to recognize the truth that is set before us?

Some have suggested that the remedy to the problem of boredom with the

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

liturgy is continually to recast it. So each week the Confession of sins changes. And so do the creeds and other parts of the service. Surely this will make worship more relevant and thus increase our attentiveness to it. Or will it?

More often than I care to admit, I've read to the bottom of the page of a completely new book and suddenly realized that my mind was on something else. I know I've read every word on the page, yet I have no idea what I've just read. The problem is not with the book, nor is it a matter of knowing the book well due to repeated readings. I simply was not paying attention.

No matter how much we change the Divine Service in order for it to speak to us with renewed relevance, there is no guarantee that such changes will have the desired effect. In fact, continual changes to the liturgy for the purpose of showing care for the individual can have exactly the opposite effect. After all, what happens to all those people who rely on their memory of the texts of the Divine Service in order to participate? I refer to the elderly whose eyesight may be poor, causing them difficulty in moving around on an unfamiliar page. The same may be true for others who are sight-impaired. And what of young children who cannot read but who can most certainly participate in worship—precisely because through weekly repetition they have begun to take these texts into their being? We dare not forget the 35+ million adults who are functionally illiterate. Which is more caring for them: to give them familiar texts that they have learned over time, or to fill the service folder or the overhead screen with new words every week, words that they cannot decipher?

On this matter, the Divine Service demonstrates great wisdom. Already in its structure it opens the door to variety even as it provides stability and predictability. Not everything is the same week after week: there are different hymns, the Introit or Psalm changes with each service, and variety makes its way into the service in other, little ways. Yet, in the overall scheme of the service, there are many things that do remain the same, precisely for the benefit of those who are incapable for whatever reason of taking in so much that is new each week.

But I would contend that this sameness in the liturgy is for the benefit of us all. Is the rote learning of a liturgical text and the subsequent repeated use of that text really a bad thing? In many ways, it is only after a text becomes a part of us that it frees us to focus our attention where it actually belongs: on God. Furthermore, the continued use of the texts of the Divine Service invite us to contemplate and reflect on them. Rather than growing tired of them, we are given the opportunity of growing into them, of being drawn deeper and deeper into the riches that these texts convey.

Thus far, my second thesis has not been supported. The repetition that one finds in the Divine Service does, in fact, demonstrate evangelical concern for the worshiper. In other words, repetition of the texts of the Divine Service is provided precisely to bring the Gospel to bear on the lives of the whole people of God.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Another example that might support the thesis that the Divine Service shows little concern for the individual has to do with the matter of relevance. Very often, the service is described as not being relevant to the lives of the worshipers. Frequently, this charge focuses on the way in which the liturgy asks the people of God to speak a language that is not their own, one that is both formal and foreign. For an example, let us return to the Nicene Creed and this particular confession of who Jesus is:

Begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father.
And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary.

Begotten? Substance? Incarnate? To many, such formulations sound foreign and cold. And that's just one example. Some would argue that throughout the liturgy there are words and phrases that simply do not speak to the people of God who live in the real world of the twenty-first century. What does it mean that it is "good, right, and salutary" that we give thanks? Or who is this "Lord God of Sabaoth"? Why in the world should we use old language that refers to God as "Thou"?

But the issue of relevance goes beyond the matter of words. What is the purpose of standing for a doxological stanza? Or kneeling for confession or the reception of Christ's body and blood? Or making the sign of the cross? And why is the Divine Service structured the way it is, with the Service of the Word always preceding the Holy Communion? Why not put the sermon last so that the people have a better chance of remembering what the pastor said as they leave the service? Some would contend that the Divine Service is filled with such idiosyncrasies that simply do not serve the people of God in our day and, thus, that the service really shows little concern for the worshiper.

You may already have surmised that these examples do not support my second thesis either. Concerning the issue of language, obviously, the primary purpose of the liturgy is not to raise the literary standards of the congregation. But neither is it to search for a lowest common denominator that mirrors our everyday discourse. The language of the Divine Service meets us at many different levels. Some is informal and colloquial, such as in the sermon. At times, it is highly poetic, as in the hymns. The creeds present us with very precise language. At other places, like the Gloria or the Sanctus, the language is boisterous and exuberant. But whatever the level, the language of the Divine Service is heightened, that is, above the language of everyday life, precisely because "the ideas it expresses are not everyday."¹ It lifts us outside of ourselves, pointing us to a reality that is bigger than any of us individually and even bigger than the sum of the whole. This is, after all, the Triune God who speaks to us and to whom we respond. Our voices aren't raised in isolation but are joined to the heavenly throng of saints and angels.

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

In a perceptive book entitled *The School of the Church: Worship and Christian Formation*, Philip Pfatteicher explores many of these ways in which the language and ritual of the Divine Service cares for the individual. He writes:

The language of the liturgy, immersed as it is in the language and thought of the Bible, requires us to learn the language, new to us, of symbolism and ritual. The principal problems lie not with the imagery but with the competence of the readers of the Bible and the doers of the liturgy to experience themselves and their world in terms of the story of Israel and of Jesus. A religion worth one's time is not an expression or projection of oneself or one's own idea of the world but rather an external world that shapes and forms believers in its image, which is grander than any individual can imagine or comprehend.²

Put a different way, the Divine Service, as it has been shaped and molded by countless Christians over centuries of use, has more to offer us than we have to offer it. Elsewhere, Pfatteicher writes, "The purpose of the liturgy is not to express our thoughts and feelings but to develop them, and like any good school the liturgy expands our horizon, liberating us from captivity to the moment and to the familiar."³ The issue of relevance depends considerably on one's perspective. Who determines what is relevant: me, the individual, and the world around me, or God, my Creator and Redeemer who knows far better what I truly need?

As a case in point, consider the Confession of sins in the Divine Service. There are many who would prefer not to begin the service in this way. It's depressing. It doesn't present a positive image of Christianity, especially to visitors. Who, after all, wants to be called a "miserable sinner" or to say that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves? We know, of course, that this is the reality of our sinful condition. The wisdom of the liturgy is such that it invites us into this reality, as uncomfortable as that sometimes may be, in order to know the full measure of God's forgiveness in Christ. What seems totally irrelevant and out of touch is, in fact, precisely the reality that we need to see. Again, Pfatteicher: "Because the liturgy does not always express what we think or feel it has the potential to transform those who share in it."⁴

A word of caution, however, is in order. If we are going to respond to the charge that the Divine Service is irrelevant by saying that relevance must be more broadly defined to include that which is truly for our good, then it is essential that our worship be genuine and done with integrity. I suspect that the complaint that worship is irrelevant is often fueled by the fact that it simply isn't done with integrity. For example, a pastor can lead worship in a way that demonstrates genuine concern and love for those in attendance, or he can act as though the people are of little consequence and "do" the liturgy in spite of them. The choice

The Good Shepherd Institute

of hymns can either reflect an ideal of what is absolutely best for the people to sing, or it can take into consideration the past practices of the congregation and the abilities of the musical leadership, and then build on that foundation to lead the congregation into a richer and expanded repertoire. The weekly Prayer of the Church can be either a perfunctory recitation with little preparation given to it, or it can be an intentional opportunity to lead the people of God in their priestly work of interceding on behalf of the congregation, the whole church, the community, and the world. Worship that is genuine will take its task very seriously, consciously asking how this community of God in this particular place and time can best provide for the faithful proclamation of God's grace and then enable those who are gathered to offer their sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Clearly, my second thesis is not finding support. Consider one more example. The question has been asked whether the lectionary, that schedule of appointed readings for each Sunday and festival of the year, is really of benefit to the people of God. In fact, some view the lectionary not as a beneficial tool, but as a straightjacket that prevents creativity and relevant worship. Abandoning the lectionary, it is suggested, can result in greater opportunities to shape one's ministry at the local level and demonstrate leadership.⁵

Certainly, a sense of immediate relevancy can be achieved by abandoning the lectionary. If you need a sermon that addresses the issue of polygamy, then the story of Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel is the place to turn! All kidding aside, there are those very rare occasions when an event may warrant the setting aside of the lectionary in order to address a pressing topic. That was certainly the case in the fall of 2001 following the terrorist attacks on the Trade Towers and the Pentagon. But even then, the Propers for a Day of Supplication and Prayer were ready and waiting. So there can be exceptions.

The problem with all of the reasons one might give for abandoning the lectionary on a regular basis is that they fail to acknowledge the significant benefits of following the lectionary. Time does not permit a complete review of these benefits. The chief consideration, however, has already been addressed, namely, that like the Divine Service itself, the lectionary protects us from the temptation to latch on to that which is immediately relevant. For the pastor who chooses to "kick the lectionary habit," what will be the guiding principles by which biblical texts are chosen? Will the themes for successive Sundays move from discussion of pro-life issues to environmental protection to the fear of anthrax exposure? Far from suggesting that these and other current topics shouldn't be addressed in worship, it is essential to ask, nonetheless, what principles will shape the pastor's selection. How will the pastor see to it that the full counsel of God is given to his people? In the rush to be relevant, will uniquely Lutheran (and, therefore, biblical) concerns be evident, like an emphasis on the grace of God and on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel?

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

The truth is, the lectionary is far more relevant than most realize. How often haven't pastors found an appointed text for a given Sunday to be exactly what the doctor ordered? Returning to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, had a pastor chosen to remain with the appointed readings for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, he would have found in the three-year series these marvelously relevant words in the Epistle from Hebrews 13: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (13:8). What a marvelous text on which one could preach about the enduring hope that is in Christ Jesus.

But even more generally, the lectionary is relevant precisely because it sets before us a carefully chosen set of readings that are representative of the entirety of sacred Scripture. It should not be surprising that upon first glance a particular text might not seem to have any relevance. Yet, after careful and in-depth study of that text, the pastor often comes to see a relevance that he might never have considered. And then, through the preparation of his sermon, the pastor leads the congregation into the world of that text, drawing out for them the implications of what God has to offer in these specific words. What is required here is not only an analysis of the needs of the people but, first, a careful reading and interpretation of the Word of God itself and the application of that Word to the people of God who gather each week to be drawn into that biblical world and the saving realities that it delivers to us.

No Luther Here

By now it should be plainly evident that I am no Luther. My contradictory theses have failed to hold up to scrutiny. But perhaps a slight recasting of the theses into a single proposition will work better:

Though the Divine Service seems at times to show little concern for the individual Christian, the reality is that even in these situations the service is uniquely positioned to care for the eternal welfare of the children of God.

An acceptance of this proposition is impossible until we are willing to give ourselves over to a worldview that is different from our surrounding culture. The worldview of the Divine Service provides a radically new perspective as it delivers to us a wisdom that has been handed down from generation to generation. This worldview frees us from the tunnel vision that can so easily trap us into thinking that we are the first who have ever had to wrestle with these issues. The truth is that countless believers in Christ have worshiped before us and countless more will after, unless, of course, the Lord returns first.

None of this is to say that the Divine Service is perfect or that it will not undergo further refinements in the future. Since the beginning of the church's existence, her worship has been undergoing reform. Like a giant glacier that almost

The Good Shepherd Institute

imperceptibly moves along its path, the Divine Service has slowly changed over the centuries. Just as a glacier tears up dirt and rocks and deposits them elsewhere, so has the liturgy borrowed, exchanged, and excised various components. The change is slow and gradual, but it has and will continue to occur. We do the people of God no favors when we try to deny this reality, either by attempting to preserve a current worship practice for all time or by trying to repristinate a practice from an earlier, supposedly golden age.

Of course, neither do we do ourselves any favors when the unilateral decision is made to cast off the glacial reform of worship and advocate instead rapid, wholesale changes to the church's worship. The danger with this approach is that we become cut off from that wisdom of the ages that the liturgy provides. Change will occur, and we should not be afraid of it. The issue will always be what it is that motivates and guides the change. Once again, Pfatteicher sums up the matter nicely:

One begins not by reforming the liturgy according to one's predilections but rather by being formed and informed by the great treasure of the church. . . .⁶

That is the gift that the Divine Service has to offer, if only we will be shaped by it.

Luther One More Time

Before concluding, I would like to return to Luther one last time. Less than five years after authoring "The Freedom of the Christian," Luther wrote a letter to the Christians in Livonia, part of present-day Estonia.⁷ Severe dissensions had erupted there concerning worship. In his pastoral letter, Luther applies his theses from his earlier treatise to demonstrate how on the matter of worship one is both free and a servant. Luther's insights are so applicable to our current worship debate that I quote here several portions of his letter.

Luther begins with a rather startling thought, namely, that he is not surprised by the dissension that was being experienced in Livonia. After all, he writes, ". . . it will not be any better with us than it was with the Corinthians and other Christians at the time of St. Paul, when divisions and dissension arose among Christ's people" (AE 53:45). While such words may not be encouraging, they provide a welcome sense of perspective, as Luther reminds us that divisions and trials are part of what it means to follow Christ.

But at the heart of Luther's advice is his use of the twin poles of faith and love. He summarizes it in this way:

For even though from the viewpoint of faith, the external orders are free and can without scruples be changed by anyone at any time, yet from the viewpoint of love, you are not free to use this liberty, but bound to consider the edification of the common people (AE 53:47).

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

When these seemingly contradictory virtues of faith and love are ignored, trouble enters on both sides:

For those who devise and ordain universal customs and orders get so wrapped up in them that they make them into dictatorial laws opposed to the freedom of faith. But those who ordain and establish nothing succeed only in creating as many factions as there are heads, to the detriment of that Christian harmony and unity of which St. Paul and St. Peter so frequently write (AE 53:46).

Luther continues with further warnings about the dissension that results when faith and love are used to trump each other:

Now when your people are confused and offended by your lack of uniform order, you cannot plead, “Externals are free. Here in my own place I am going to do as I please.” But you are bound to consider the effect of your attitude on others. By faith be free in your conscience toward God, but by love be bound to serve your neighbor’s edification. . . .

But at the same time a preacher must watch and diligently instruct the people lest they take such uniform practices as divinely appointed and absolutely binding laws. He must explain that this is done for their own good so that the unity of Christian people may also find expression in externals which in themselves are irrelevant (AE 53:48).

Only someone with Luther’s evangelical insight could so clearly diagnose the problem. But what does he propose for a solution?

Therefore, we will deal with factions in our time as St. Paul dealt with them in his. He could not check them by force. Nor did he want to compel them by means of commands. Rather, he entreated them with friendly exhortations, for people who will not give in willingly when exhorted will comply far less when commanded. Thus he says in Philippians 2 [:1–4]: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing through strife or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Then he adds the example of Christ, who in obedience to the Father made himself the servant of all (AE 53:46–47).

The Good Shepherd Institute

At first glance, Luther's advice doesn't seem all that satisfying. We'd much prefer a black-and-white judgment indicating who's right and who's wrong and then receive clear directions on how to remedy the situation. But not Luther. His way is to exhort, cajole, and encourage. Listen to these words that he writes to the pastors:

In praise and thanksgiving for all these gifts, let them so conduct themselves that they establish and preserve unity of mind and spirit among themselves. They should be on their guard lest the devil sneak in through vainglory, which is especially dangerous and chiefly attacks competent men who hold the office of the Word. There is no better way to do this than for each not to take himself too seriously and to think little of himself, but very highly of the others, or—as Christ teaches in the Gospel—to seat himself in the lowest place among the guests at the wedding (AE 53:47).

And finally, he advises:

Therefore, I pray all of you, my dear sirs, let each one surrender his own opinions and get together in a friendly way and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there will be one uniform practice throughout your district instead of disorder—one thing being done here and another there—lest the common people get confused and discouraged (AE 53:47).

Perhaps Luther's advice should be urged on our Synod. How easy it is for all of us to take ourselves too seriously, even when we know that the cause is just. And how true it has become that very often we no longer know how to come together in a “friendly way” to reach agreement on these matters. The gifts God gives us in the Divine Service are too important for us not to find a way to urge others to receive them with gladness. May the Lord of the church grant us the grace and the will to come before Him in all humility that He may open our lips to declare His praise.

Notes

1 Philip H. Pfatteicher, *The School of the Church: Worship and Christian Formation* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 116.

2 Ibid., 113.

3 Ibid., 104–5.

4 Ibid., 105.

5 Philip Bickel, “The Lectionary Captivity of the Church . . . or Ten Reasons to Kick the Lectionary ‘Habit,’” *Worship Innovations* (Winter 1997): 6 ff.

The Theology and Structure of the Divine Service

6 Pfatteicher, 10.

7 Martin Luther, “A Christian Exhortation to the Livonians Concerning Public Worship and Concord,” in *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, Luther’s Works, vol. 53 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 41–50.

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service: An Interpretation of Liturgical Texts

Arthur A. Just Jr.

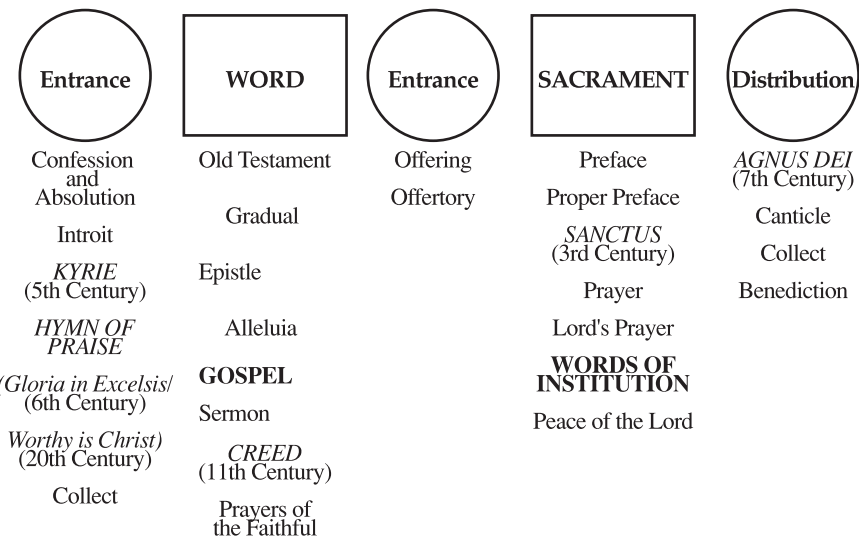
The title of this conference—*Christ's Gifts in Liturgy: The Theology and Music of the Divine Service*—was intentional. The words “Liturgy” and “Divine Service” have been bantered about in our church for the past fifteen years, and our title now states plainly what many of us have been saying—that the Liturgy of Word and Sacrament and the Divine Service are one and the same thing. In this Liturgy/Divine Service Christ is present bodily, the very flesh that was crucified for us and broke the bonds of death on the third day. To speak of Christ’s bodily presence is to speak of the gifts that come from his presence. No one describes these gifts better than Martin Luther in his *Small Catechism* in response to the question: “What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?” He describes the gifts that come from Christ’s body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar as “forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation . . . for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.” The reason people come to the Liturgy/Divine Service is to receive these gifts. They come to be freed from their sins, released from the guilt and shame under which they labor and struggle. They come to join their life to the life of the Son of God, a life that began in the waters of Holy Baptism, continues at the table of His body and blood, and will be consummated at the marriage feast of heaven. They come to be saved, rescued from enemies they know and fear, and enemies they know not.

The Shape of the Divine Service

The gifts come to us through the historic liturgy of the church, a five-fold shape inherited by Luther from the ancient church and continued today in our Divine Service. The two rectangular shapes represent the two structures of the Divine Service from the time of Jesus—Word and Sacrament. The pattern of Christ’s presence in Word and Meal is a continuing table fellowship with God that reaches back into the Old Testament and looks ahead to the marriage feast of the Lamb in heaven. If one traces the liturgical structures of Word and Sacrament through the history of the liturgy, these structures are foundational in every period as stable cornerstones.

The three circular shapes correspond to the times of movement in the liturgy, the only significant additions to the two structures of Word and Sacrament. These

DIVINE SERVICE II
Lutheran Worship, p. 158



additions are the great liturgical hymns of praise, *the Ordinaries*, which have located themselves around the structures of Word and Sacrament. The *Kyrie* (Lk 18) and *Gloria in Excelsis* (Lk 2) precede the Liturgy of the Word and the *Creed* follows it. The *Sanctus* (Is 6 and Ps 118) precedes the Words of Institution to form the conclusion to the Preface, and the *Agnus Dei* (Jn 1) is the first hymn to accompany the distribution.¹ The Ordinaries first appeared in the Divine Service to accompany the three new structures of liturgy that required movement in the huge basilicas of the Constantinian era that replaced the smaller spaces of the early church. Psalmody and liturgical hymns always accompany movement in the church’s liturgy, whether that movement involves the entrance of the clergy and their attendants into the liturgy (the entry, circle no. 1), the entrance of the bread and wine into the church for the Eucharist (the preparation, circle no. 2), or the distribution of the Sacrament (the communion, circle no. 3).

Both the structures of Word and Sacrament and the Ordinaries are from Scripture. The historic liturgy is transcendent and transcultural because of its biblical foundation. It is clean, elegant, and simple. This combination of Word and Sacrament with the Ordinaries make up what is commonly called “the historic liturgy of the church” that was fully in place by the seventh century.

The Ordinaries—What Are They and What Is Their Significance?

This paper will focus on the biblical content of the Ordinaries, their place and function in the flow of the Divine Service, and their character as the proper response

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

of praise, thanksgiving, and petition by the people of God. In discussing the Ordinaries, the Creed will be omitted since it was a much later addition and brings with it issues unrelated to the Kyrie, Hymn of Praise, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.

More than anyone else in our church body Norman Nagel, in his introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, helped us to see Christ's gifts in liturgy. Here are some excerpts from this oft-repeated statement that relate to the significance of the Ordinaries in the church's life:

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard *acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise* [emphasis added]. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. . . . We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may service in its own day—the living heritage and something new²

In my essay on “Liturgical Renewal in the Parish,” in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, the principles of *reverence* and *fidelity* were offered as watchwords for liturgical renewal.³ When it comes to the Ordinaries, what is more faithful and reverent in the acknowledgement of gifts received with thankfulness and praise than singing back to God what He has said to us in liturgical hymns that are grounded in Scripture, are true and sure, and have been sung by Christians in response to gifts received for thirteen hundred years? The Ordinaries are a vital part of the rich tradition handed down to us, a tradition that even now we continue to make our own in a new Lutheran hymnal for the church.

Here is my central thesis: *The Ordinaries form the core of our acknowledgment of gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise.* And this means that it is not only Christ who stands as the giver of gifts in Word and Sacrament, but it is also Christ who stands as the one in whom we respond back to the Father with eager thankfulness and praise. The church, for reasons unknown and unknowable, placed these Ordinaries where they are in order to respond to the reality of Christ's presence in Word and Sacrament, that is, the Ordinaries are where they are *for both liturgical and theological reasons.* To discover the theology of the Ordinaries, we must look at the very words of these liturgical texts.

The Good Shepherd Institute

The Liturgical Texts of the Ordinaries

In studying the liturgical texts of the Ordinaries there is a temptation to spend a great deal of time on the history of the development of these texts: when and where they come from, as well as the evolution of the text itself. Needless to say, the history here is complex and convoluted, sometimes obscure, as it often is when dealing with the origins of liturgical texts. Only a select few find these details engaging, and most, including myself, find it a necessary evil.⁴ Remarkably, there is not much written about the Ordinaries in book or monograph, and any search for the origins of liturgical texts requires patience and diligence.

Kyrie

In the ancient world the king would sometimes visit a village or city. Anticipating his coming, villagers would line the road waiting for him to appear, and as he entered the city they would cry “Lord have mercy.” Amid their shouts, one could also hear petitions from the crowd for gifts that reflected his mercy—such things as food, protection, lower taxes, and always and most importantly, *peace*. Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem is an excellent example. In the Eastern church, Christians adopted the practice of petitioning for gifts with cries of mercy as the clergy entered the church during the procession to the altar at the beginning of the service. Christians adopted this secular practice for their King—the King of the Universe—for He was coming to them in His Word to bring the gifts of His presence. As Reed puts it: “The Kyrie is not another confession of sins, but a prayer for grace and help in time of need—’the ardent cry of the Church for assistance.’”⁵ The cry for mercy is biblical, particularly for those seeking release from bondage that only Jesus the King could give. It is the cry of the ten lepers, who seeing Jesus and knowing He can heal, cry out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (Lk 17:13). It is the cry of a blind beggar at the gate of Jericho who, on hearing that “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by,” cries “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Lk 18:38).⁶ This petition for mercy has been explained in this way:

[It is] the most comprehensive and most expressive of all prayers. . . . To beg God’s mercy is to ask for the coming of His kingdom, that kingdom which Christ promised to give to those who seek it, assuring them that all other things will be added (Matthew 6:33). Because of this, it is a perfect example of a universal petition.⁷

The Kyrie is the *acknowledgement of gifts to be received with eager thankfulness and praise* because the King is coming in His Word. The most ancient form of the Kyrie was the simple acclamation “Lord have mercy,” but early on it took the form of a litany similar to the one in Divine Service II:

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

In *peace*

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the *peace* from above and
for our *salvation*

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the *peace* of the whole world,
for the *well-being of the Church of God*, and
for the *unity* of all

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this *holy house* and
for *all who offer here their worship and praise*

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

The cry for mercy in the Kyrie is a cry for *peace*. The entire Kyrie is prayed “in *peace*,” and two of the first three petitions are for “*peace* from above” and for “the *peace* of the whole world.” The petition for “*peace* from above” acknowledges that peace came from heaven to earth through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and petitions the Lord to continue to be present among us in our worship. The invasion of peace from above is why we petition for “the *peace* of the whole world”—a peace realized in *salvation*, the *well-being* of the Church of God, the *unity* of all, a peace for this *holy house* and for *all who worship here*. *Peace* is the condition of “wholeness and well-being”⁸ that now exists on earth and in heaven because of the Incarnation and atoning death of Jesus, a theme echoed in the opening verse of the Gloria in Excelsis from Luke’s Gospel.⁹

Peace is also the *new* greeting of the post-Pentecost church in mission. Jesus sent the seventy out to greet households in peace, and His first greeting to the eleven after the Resurrection was the greeting of peace as He ate roasted fish before them. Peace and hospitality at the table go hand in hand in the mission of Jesus and His disciples. God’s mercy is expressed at the table of His Son through forgiveness offered and received, the very mercy and forgiveness that Jesus showed to sinners as He went from house to house with the greeting of peace. The petitions conclude with a list describing the essence of our cry for God’s mercy: “help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.” And so the Divine Service as table fellowship with Jesus begins in peace as the people cry for mercy in the Kyrie.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Hymn of Praise: Gloria in Excelsis

The movement from the peace of the Kyrie to the peace of the Gloria in Excelsis is seamless, as if the Gloria now interprets the peace of the Kyrie. Attached to the song of the angels from Luke's record of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is a Trinitarian hymn that reiterates the peace and mercy of the Kyrie as it centers itself in the *Lamb of God* who takes away the sin of the world. The Gloria in Excelsis first appeared in the liturgy in morning and evening prayer, although there is a liturgical "rumor" that it was first used in Rome by Pope Telesophorus at Christmas early in the second century (d. A.D. 136). Athanasius refers to the Gloria as a liturgical text in the fourth century. As with all the Ordinaries, its origin is shrouded in anonymity, although as significant a scholar as Josef Jungmann assumes that "the Gloria has been known throughout Christendom since the fourth century."¹⁰

From the beginning, the Gloria has been associated with the feast of Christmas, and therefore with the Incarnation itself. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the Gloria entered the Divine Service as a prelude to the Word service to balance the Sanctus—the prelude to the Words of Institution, there may be some evidence for such a suggestion from none other than the evangelist St. Luke himself. This may be an excellent example of the biblical character of the development of the historic liturgy, without resorting to a biblicistic argument of proof-texts for every part of the liturgy.

In Luke's Gospel the Gloria in Excelsis is a foreshadowing of the entrance hymn of the people of Israel when Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem for His death. The parallels between the song at Jesus' birth and the song of the people as He enters Jerusalem are striking, especially in view of Luke's version of the entrance hymn:

- 2:14: **"Glory in the highest** to God,
 and *on earth peace*
 among men of his favor."
- 19:38: "Blessed the Coming One,
 the King, in the name of the Lord!
 In heaven peace,
 and **glory in the highest!"**

When Luke is compared to Matthew, Mark, and John, what he has in common with them is what liturgical scholars call the *Benedictus* from Psalm 118:26, that is, "Blessed the Coming One . . . in the name of the Lord!" This may be seen in the following comparison of the texts:

Mt 21:9 "*Hosanna* to the Son of David!

Blessed the Coming One in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!"

Mk 11:9 "*Hosanna!*

Blessed the Coming One in the name of the Lord!

Blessed the coming kingdom of our father David!

Hosanna in the highest!"

Lk 19:38 "**Blessed the Coming One,
the King, in the name of the Lord!**

In heaven

peace,

and glory

in the highest!"

Jn 12:13 "*Hosanna!*

Blessed the Coming One in the name of the Lord,

even the King of Israel!

What is unique in Luke compared to the other evangelists is the final two phrases (shown in bold italics), and it is here that Luke reports words that echo the angelic hymn of Luke 2:14, emphasizing his themes of peace and glory by placing them toward the center of the circular structure with "heaven" and "in the highest" as the frame. What is in the center is the Benedictus: "Blessed the Coming One, the King, in the name of the Lord." At the birth of Jesus, there is glory in the highest; this same highest glory is proclaimed as He enters Jerusalem for His death. The great mystery here concerns *peace*: at Jesus' birth, there is peace *on earth*; as He enters into Jerusalem for His passion and resurrection, there is peace *in heaven*. Thus *earth and heaven* are joined together in *peace* through the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ.

This incarnational and biblical reality recorded by Luke is exactly the same reality that happens every time God's people gather for the Divine Service, where Christ's presence in Word and Sacrament joins heaven and earth together in peace. This is what will be called below "inaugurated eschatology." The Sanctus will state this plainly when Isaiah's vision is used to declare that "*Heaven and earth* are full of your glory." What is most curious about this phrase in the Sanctus is that Isaiah does not include "heaven" in his record of the words of the seraphim, but has only "the whole *earth* is full of his glory" (Is 6:3—*ESV*). It is the church that added "heaven" to the Sanctus, and where do you think it came from—from Luke's Gloria in Excelsis and the entrance hymn of the pilgrims into Jerusalem! The reality of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper demanded that the church acknowledge that heaven and earth are joined together in the breaking of the bread. When it came time to declare that this same reality exists in the hearing of Christ's Word, the source for the Sanctus' "heaven and earth" became the logical choice for

The Good Shepherd Institute

the hymn that leads to the breaking open of God's holy Word. Therefore, the Gloria prepares for Christ's Incarnation in His Word, and the Sanctus for His atoning presence in His Supper.

There is more to the Gloria in Excelsis than the opening verse from Luke's Gospel. The main body of the hymn is a liturgical text that is Trinitarian.

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father:

We worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your *glory*.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, *Lamb of God*:

You take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father;
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the *Holy One*,
You alone are *the Lord*,
You alone are *the Most High*, Jesus Christ

With the Holy Spirit,

in the *glory* of God the Father.
Amen.

That this is a hymn of praise is clear from the opening acclamations. The reason for our worship, our thanksgiving, and our praise is that the glory of our Father, the heavenly King and almighty God, now dwells on earth in the flesh of Jesus Christ, who is present among us in Word and Sacrament.¹¹ This glory is described in the center of the hymn, a proclamation of what Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father, the Lamb of God, has done for the world through His death, on account of which we ask for His mercy, and His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, for which we ask Him to receive our prayer (an echo of the Kyrie). Here the Gloria announces what is at the center of the Divine Service: the heavenly conversation of the Lamb who was slain and raised again in the Word, and the ongoing feast upon this very Lamb in the Lord's Supper.¹²

The proclamation by the congregation of His atoning work and vindicating Resurrection/Ascension leads to our declaration of who He is: the Holy One, the Lord, the Most High Jesus Christ. Two of these titles (the first and third) come from the Annunciation in Luke's first chapter (1:26–28). By calling Him “the Holy One,” we join the angel Gabriel, who announced to Mary at the moment of conception that what she bore in her womb was Holy, the Son of God (Lk 1:35b).

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

Wherever God's holiness dwells, there is His temple, and just as Mary's womb became a temporary vessel for God's holiness, we declare in the Gloria in Excelsis that the humble space set apart for Divine Service is God's temple of holiness.

By calling Him "Lord" we join Peter and the rest of the twelve, along with the diasporan Jews at Pentecost when, at the climax of his sermon, Peter announces: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both *Lord and Christ*, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36—*ESV*). The acclamation, "Jesus is Lord," was the great confession of faith in the earliest Christian communities, and it is to this "Lord" that we have just petitioned for mercy and peace.

Finally, to declare Him "the Most High" returns us to the angel Gabriel who declared to Mary that the child she will bear in her womb will be called "Son of the Most High" (Lk 1:32). This designation acknowledges that precisely because He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, He has ascended to the Father and received the honor of sitting at His right hand. This final designation leads us to the Holy Spirit, through whom Jesus Christ is present in the glory of God the Father. Christ's presence through the Spirit concludes the hymn, so that the Trinitarian portion of the Gloria begins and ends with the glory of God, whose presence we worship, give thanks, and praise.

Hymn of Praise: Worthy is Christ

The magnificence of the Gloria in Excelsis has caused some to wonder why the church ever agreed to add a new Hymn of Praise. It was only in the Roman rite (which is the foundation for the Lutheran rite) that there were no options for any other Hymn of Praise.¹³ The introduction of *Worthy is Christ* as another Hymn of Praise is perhaps the most significant innovation of *Lutheran Worship*.¹⁴ Most people are unaware that the text comes from the canticle section of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (p. 122), specifically the first two verses of the canticle *Dignus est Agnus*, a liturgical text from Revelation 5:12–13, 15:3–4, and 19:4–5. "Worthy is Christ" joins to *Dignus est Agnus* texts from Revelation about "the Lamb who was slain" (Rv 11:17). The Lamb of the Gloria is now the Lamb of the victory feast, showing the connection between these two hymns, as the antiphon-refrain of "Worthy is Christ" suggests. As Philip Pfatteicher says:

The antiphon-refrain, "This is the feast of victory for our God," is, like many traditional antiphons in the church's liturgy, not an exact biblical quotation but rather a gathering and a restatement of the many biblical references and allusions to banquets and feasting as signs of the gladness and intimacy of God's kingdom. It draws upon the picture of the messianic banquet in Isaiah 25:6, which celebrates the destruction of death and which proclaims therefore God's victory and triumph (see also Rev. 5:5; 22:6, 17; Isa. 55:1). The New

The Good Shepherd Institute

Testament image for the gladness of the kingdom is often the wedding feast (as in Matt. 22:1ff.; Rev. 19:9) but is sometimes simply a “feast” as in Matthew 8:11. Nonetheless, the image looks back to the Passover meal which celebrates Israel’s deliverance from slavery, to the Easter victory both in its past and present (and future) dimensions, and to the messianic banquet of the future, when the kingdom comes in all its fullness.¹⁵

The text from Divine Service II is as follows:

This is the **feast of victory** for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Worthy is *Christ, the Lamb* who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.

This is the **feast of victory** for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his.

This is the **feast of victory** for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and *the Lamb* forever.
Amen.

This is the **feast of victory** for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.

This is the **feast of victory** for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

“Worthy is Christ” proclaims “the feast of victory for our God,” and so a legitimate question is this: “What is this feast of victory?”¹⁶ It is not, as some might think, simply a reference to the Lord’s Supper but to all God’s acts of table fellowship stretching back into the Old Testament, where God’s redemption is often accompanied by a meal. There is common ground between these Old Testament meals, especially the Passover, Jesus’ meals during His earthly ministry, Jesus’ Passover on the night in which He was betrayed, the breaking of the bread and opened eyes at Emmaus, and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the church since Pentecost. The feast of victory not only refers to the liturgy of the Lord’s Supper, but to both Word and Sacrament, because table fellowship with God in both Old and New Testaments and in our own churches today involves three essential elements: the presence of God in Jesus in His teaching at the table and in the breaking of the bread. And because we share this fellowship at table with Him

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

now, we have a “foretaste of the feast to come,” where we shall “celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in his kingdom, which has no end.”¹⁷

The content of this hymn comes from John’s Revelation, and there is a progression of thought throughout the hymn as it proclaims the victory feast. In the first stanza from Revelation 5 John describes the heavenly liturgy, the new song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders who fall down before the Lamb with harps in hand and bowls full of incense that contain the prayers of the saints. Joining the new song of heaven we proclaim with them Christ’s worthiness as the Lamb who was slain (Rv 5:9–10). The Atonement is the content of heaven’s joyous song, and the foundation for the rest of our hymn. Flowing from the Lamb’s blood is the freedom we have now as His people in the new creation realized in the forgiveness of sins as well as the healing of the entire creation through His blood. For this He is worthy.

The second stanza continues the new song of Revelation 5, but with the voices of myriads and myriads and thousands and thousands of angels joining our song, together with every creature in heaven and on earth and under earth and in the sea, that is, with all creation. What we announce with all creation is that the Atonement of the Lamb—His scandalous suffering and humiliating death—is now the source of power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory. In Jesus’ suffering and death, God is showing us His glory and power, and therefore, the essence of heaven itself.

The third stanza reiterates this heavenly song from Revelation 5 with the hymn of all creation that comes from Revelation 15 and 19. This hymn of all creation we now sing with the host of heaven as the people of God is the song of the saints standing by the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb that signals victory in the battle with the beast (Rv 15:2–5), as well as the song of the multitude at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rv 19:1–10). Notice how heaven and earth are joining together in the hymn of all creation singing “blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever.” And heaven and earth also sing together “Amen!” In theological terms this is called “inaugurated eschatology,” that is,

the believer’s *present* possession and enjoyment of blessings which will be fully experienced whenever Christ comes again. . . . the proverbial tension between the *now* and the *not yet* . . . the believer now receives the promised eschatological blessings through the Gospel and sacraments. On the other hand, the consummation is still a future reality. The Christian has *not yet* entered into the glories of heaven.¹⁸

This “inaugurated eschatology” could not be more beautifully stated than in the last stanza of the hymn: “For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Alleluia.” The beginning of the Lamb’s reign is the ongoing victory feast of Word and Sacrament that Christians have been celebrating since that first Pentecost, and continue to celebrate even now.

The Gloria in Excelsis is appointed to be used as a hymn of praise during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons; minor festivals of the Incarnation like the Presentation, the Annunciation, and the Visitation; and throughout the Pentecost season. “Worthy is Christ” is reserved for Easter Sunday through Pentecost Day, All Saints, and the Sunday of Fulfillment. There is wisdom in these rubrics, giving preference to the Gloria, the more ancient of these two hymns of praise, but recognizing the Paschal character of Worthy is Christ.

Sanctus

Returning to the five-fold shape of the historic liturgy, Kyrie and Hymn of Praise as the entrance to the Liturgy of the Word are balanced by the Sanctus that, with the Preface and Proper Preface, forms the entrance rite to the Liturgy of the Sacrament. Just as the Kyrie announced that the King was coming in His Word, so now the Sanctus announces that the King is coming in His Lord’s Supper: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” The Gloria’s accent on heaven and earth being joined together in peace is echoed in the Sanctus so that both Kyrie and Gloria are embraced by the Sanctus. The following diagram illustrates the delicate, but significant balance between the Ordinaries.

ENTRANCE	PREPARATION	DISTRIBUTION
Psalms/Introit (chanted)	Psalms (chanted)	Psalms (chanted)
Kyrie (Lk 16, 17, 18)	Sanctus (Is 6/Ps 118)	
<i>The Coming of the King</i>	<i>The Coming of the King</i>	
“In peace . . .”	Blessed is He who comes	
Lord have mercy		
Gloria (Lk 2:14)		Agnus Dei (Jn 1:29)
“Glory be to God on high		
“We praise you . . .		
God the Father Almighty		
Lamb of God, Son of the Father		Lamb of God
takes away the sin of the world		takes away the sins
with the Holy Spirit . . .”		
Collect of the Day		

The Sanctus is the most ancient of liturgical hymns, although it too has a textual history that is hidden in the mists of liturgical communities East and West, Jewish

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

and Christian. Bryan Spinks, a good friend of this seminary and frequent presenter at our January symposia, published his doctoral thesis from the University of Durham with Cambridge University Press as *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer*.¹⁹ After careful investigation of the sources he offers no conclusive assertions about its origins, but does affirm that it was a hymn sung in both temple and synagogue, appearing as early as the third century in Syrian and Palestinian churches, and perhaps present even earlier. It is highly probable that Jesus sang the Sanctus at some point in His liturgical life. Many have noted that Clement of Rome may refer to the Sanctus as a liturgical text in his first letter, and Origen in a sermon on Isaiah. Clement was bishop from A.D. 92 to 101, meaning that the Sanctus may very well be of first-century origin.²⁰ It first appears as a liturgical text in a eucharistic liturgy from Serapion, who died in A.D. 360,²¹ and by the end of the fourth century it was present in every major eucharistic liturgy.²² The general high estimation of the Sanctus by liturgical scholars is summed up by Reed: “[The Sanctus] has been called ‘the most ancient, the most celebrated, and the most universal of Christian hymns.’”²³

There are two parts to the Sanctus, and each comes from a different book of the Old Testament. The first part is from Isaiah 6:3:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow’r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Pfatteicher describes the biblical context of Isaiah’s vision as follows:

The Sanctus . . . derives from Isaiah’s breathtakingly majestic vision of the transcendent otherness of the All-Holy in confounding contrast to the mortality and impurity of humanity (Isa. 6:3; see Dan. 7:10; Rev. 4:8). The prophet sees the exalted and utterly unapproachable Thrice-Holy enthroned as sovereign, surrounded with seraph attendants who hide their faces from the divine glory. The swirling incense becomes the robes of the Holy One whose glory fills the earth, whose holiness radiates upon the world. Isaiah was terrified by what he saw. A sinful man had penetrated the heavenly court and gazed upon the face of God.²⁴

Even though the reason why the Sanctus was first placed as a preface to the eucharistic prayer and the Words of Institution is unknown to us, it is the presence of God that Isaiah’s vision and the Lord’s Supper have in common. Like Isaiah, we too are sinful human beings who are about to enter the heavenly court as we prepare to approach the table where we will gaze upon His flesh in the Supper He has prepared for us. As noted above, the church added “heaven” to Isaiah’s words for they believed *as we do* that in the Sacrament of the Altar heaven meets earth

The Good Shepherd Institute

in the flesh of Jesus. The liturgy of heaven and the liturgy of earth are joined together, and although we cannot see or hear the heavenly choirs, we are joined with them in singing songs to the Lamb who was slain and raised again.²⁵ Perhaps the common hymn between the liturgies of heaven and earth is the Sanctus, for both in heaven and on earth saints stand on holy ground before a holy presence with whom they have holy communion.

The second part of the hymn is from Psalm 118:25–26, one of the psalms used in the procession to temple and altar. Originally, processional psalms were sung as the ark proceeded down the *via sacra*, especially as David brought the ark to Jerusalem from Obed-Edom (2 Sm 6). Later these “psalms of ascent” were sung as the Israelites ascended to the temple for worship. Psalm 118 describes the “Gate of Righteousness” through which the faithful and righteous Israelites entered as worthy participants in the temple liturgy (vv. 19–20). The righteous enter with thanksgiving, for God has answered their prayers and has become their salvation in the very place they now stand (v. 21).

Psalm 118, then, continues with a verse cited in all three synoptic Gospels in the parable of the workers in the vineyard as Jesus’ final preview of what will take place in Jerusalem: “The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner” (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17, all quoting Ps 118:22; cf. Acts 4:11). Jesus uses Psalm 118 to describe His upcoming rejection by the Sanhedrin. What is so extraordinary about Jesus’ imminent crucifixion is that *His rejection is the means by which He will become the cornerstone* and is therefore a reference to His glory. God’s glory is manifested in the rejection of God’s Son (v. 22). For the Psalmist, this great reversal of rejection as a means for glory is the Lord’s doing, and therefore is marvelous in our eyes (vv. 23–24). For this day of rejection on Golgotha is the day the Lord has made, a day for rejoicing and celebration in the temple of the Lord, for Jesus begins His ascent to the heavenly sanctuary when He is lifted up on the cross. As Hebrews puts it: “But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of creation), he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (Heb 9:11–12).

This brings us to the words of the Sanctus in the second stanza of the hymn. As a Psalm of Ascent, these words begin with the people crying “Hosanna,” that is, “Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success!” The priests, speaking for Yahweh, then pronounce a blessing on the righteous as they now enter the temple “in the name of the Lord.” To enter in His name is to enter in His presence.²⁶

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

This is also the song of the people of Jerusalem when Jesus entered the holy city on Palm Sunday. When Jesus the King enters Jerusalem, He enters to receive the kingdom promised Him by His Father (Lk 22:28–30). Before Jesus entered Jerusalem, He had prophesied that the people would acclaim Him, “Blessed the Coming One in the name of the Lord.” As Jesus enters, all the evangelists announce that Jesus is the Messiah who will ascend the tree and then break the bonds of death from a tomb now empty. In fact, it has been suggested that the church’s placement of the Sanctus at this point in the service is to create in the worshipping assembly the image of “our Lord upon the cross, with all creation gathered about; the Sanctus proper brings in the angels, the Benedictus the disciples, and the entire composition assumes the character of a drama.”²⁷

So also today in our sanctuaries the righteous gathered in the presence of the Holy One of God are blessed as they prepare to ascend to the altar to receive the holy food of body broken, blood poured out. The Benedictus—“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”—announces the reality that the King now comes in His Supper to feed His people holy food so that they might depart in *peace*. In some eucharistic liturgies, the Benedictus is the people’s response “to the invitation to holy communion, ‘Holy things for the holy people.’”²⁸

Luther permitted the singing of the Sanctus during the consecration with the elevation occurring during the Benedictus.²⁹ Luther’s concession shows that for him the Sanctus affirms his belief in the bodily presence of Jesus at the Lord’s Supper, although the traditional placement of it as the conclusion to the Preface/Proper Preface is preferred. Senn notes that along with the elevation during the Benedictus in Luther’s rite there would be the ringing of the bells and genuflection.³⁰ The association of the Sanctus with the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar caused some churches in the Protestant communion to drop it from the liturgy, including some Anglicans. This was especially true of the Benedictus. Lutherans, however, have remained steadfast to the Sanctus as an affirmation of Christ’s bodily presence in the Sacrament.

Agnus Dei

The final Ordinary, and the last one to become a permanent part of the Divine Service, is the Agnus Dei. It is the only medieval addition besides the Creed, and has been dated anywhere from the sixth to the eighth century. Pfatteicher notes that it was “introduced as an independent song, according to the *Liber pontificalis*, by Pope Sergius I around A.D. 700.”³¹ Liturgical scholars offer little comment on it, although most agree that it is the first hymn accompanying the movement during the distribution, and was sung during the breaking of the bread and repeated as long as there was bread to break.³² Perhaps it was introduced into the liturgy because there were questions about Christ’s real presence, for the Agnus Dei states in unequivocal terms that what is present on the altar is none other than the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

Grant us *peace*.

Christ as the Lamb of God is a prominent description of Him in the New Testament, beginning with John the Baptist's declaration in the first chapter of John's Gospel "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Thirty times Jesus is called the Lamb in John's Revelation, the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 53:7: "Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

Within the Divine Service, the Agnus Dei sums up the themes that have been weaved throughout the Ordinaries. The Atonement of the Lamb is the most obvious, harkening back to both the Gloria in Excelsis and "Worthy is Christ." Likewise, the petition for mercy begun in the Kyrie now takes concrete shape as the communicants ascend to the altar to receive Christ's mercy in the Supper, singing "**Lamb of God**, you take away the sin of the world."³³ Most remarkable, however, is that the Agnus Dei ends as the Kyrie began, with the petition for *peace*. *Peace* describes the condition of the faithful in the Divine Service from beginning to end, and the Lord who joins earth and heaven together in peace now gives the Prince of Peace into the mouths of the communicants.³⁴

A Summary of Christ's Gifts in Liturgy

Christ's gifts in liturgy begin with the Invocation and continue to the Benediction. To begin with the Trinitarian Invocation and the sign of the cross is to declare the we stand before God in eternal space where heavenly realities reign though hidden in common flesh and blood. As baptized pilgrims lining the royal highway we confess our sins and receive absolution, and having been freed to worship, we then petition the King who enters our midst bearing holy gifts, and we exclaim that every gift from the King is an expression of His mercy, for we are sinners who lift up our eyes in expectation of the Lord's compassion (Lk 17:13; 18:35–43). And then, with voices united with angelic choirs, we proclaim that at His Incarnation there is glory in the highest heavens and peace on earth (Lk 2:14), and through that Trinitarian hymn we praise the ongoing visitation of the Lamb's holy presence for, as we sing in another Paschal hymn, "the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign, Alleluia!"

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

This victory feast reaches its first climax as God's word breaks open and we banquet on the living voice of God through prophet and apostle, a word that creates what it says. This Word comes from the Word made flesh, a Word that has power to cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, and release us from our sins. With the Old Testament saints, we acknowledge that God's Word is God's Food for hungry pilgrims who have journeyed in Christ through a baptism of His death and resurrection towards final destination of full communion with Him in heaven. "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (Lk 4:21) says Jesus, and from ear to mouth to eye we hear and taste and see that the Lord is good, that the promise of heavenly gifts from the King is true, that He is merciful and His love endures forever.

Prepared by the Word that makes hearts burn from holy gifts, the table is set and invitation is made with angelic words that declare that the Lord is present to feed with more holy food. Hearts are lifted to heaven and thanks are given that with all the saints we now make passover into heaven itself as we feast upon the food of the new creation, the reality of our redeemed life, for Jesus Christ is our food, our Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our end. With cherubim and seraphim we join heavenly choirs singing "*Heaven and earth* are full of your glory . . . Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." Pilgrims first shouted these words to Jesus as they lined Jerusalem's entrance and strewed palms in His path, but in their giddy joy they knew not that they were preparing His funeral procession to the apocalyptic tree. Pilgrims now, we line the aisle to Jerusalem new with table set for eucharistic feast, as we sing those same words knowing that He continues to come as heavenly Lord to feed us holy food. Earth and heaven are joined together in peace as the King prepares to enter His kingdom. Prayer is offered, petitioning the Father: Thy kingdom come—give us today our daily bread—forgive us our trespasses.

And so eyes are opened in the breaking of the bread, and our journey ends as we recline at His table where He offers us the best seat and the finest food as He girds His loins and serves us as our liturgist. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is now our festal board. We have come home to be with God in the Father's house, a foretaste of our final homecoming at the Lamb's banquet in His kingdom that has no end. And so we depart in peace as Simeon bids us do. Our eyes have seen His salvation, and His face shines upon us in a final benediction. But our summons home in Christ has not ended, for by His Spirit His fleshly presence goes with us, and we now depart as messengers of His peace, greeting pilgrims on the way as heralds of the kingdom.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Notes

1 The dates for the Ordinaries come from Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 85–86, 138. There is much debate about the dates of the liturgy. For earlier dating, see Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947). For example, on the Kyrie, see pp. 255 ff.; on the Gloria, pp. 258 ff., on the Creed, pp. 284 ff., on the Sanctus, pp. 313 ff., and on the Agnus Dei, pp. 344 ff.

2 Norman Nagel, “Introduction,” *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.

3 Arthur A. Just Jr., “Liturgical Renewal in the Parish,” in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 25.

4 Reed tends to date the introduction of the Ordinaries into the Divine Service very early, often using the date for their appearance into the liturgical life of the church, whether it be the liturgy of Word or Sacrament or one of the offices of prayer. The dates on the diagram describing the shape of the Divine Service in this paper are from Senn’s monumental work, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*. He traces the history as carefully as one can given the sources, and his dates are later, reflecting when each Ordinary became part of the Divine Service. For those interested in such an historical search, also consult Philip Pfatteicher’s *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship: Lutheran Liturgy in Its Ecumenical Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990) whose data is closer to Senn’s, but who also serves as a mediating source between Senn and Reed.

5 Reed, 255.

6 See Pfatteicher, 115.

7 *The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, with commentary by Basil Shereghy (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1961), 14–15; quotation and footnote cited from Pfatteicher, 115.

8 Pfatteicher, 118.

9 Cf. J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 88, who describes Paul’s use of peace in his corpus in this way: “In his use of the term ‘peace’ Paul speaks of the well-being of the *world*” that “lies in its being regrasped from the power of evil by God’s deed in Jesus Christ . . . [this] happens in his apocalyptic battle against the forces of evil and sin . . . peace is to be understood as a confident cry of victory in the midst of God’s battle of liberation.”

10 Josef A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy* ([Notre Dame, Ind.]: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 295.

11 For God’s glory on earth, see Nm 14:21 and Is 6:3.

12 See the Transfiguration in Luke’s Gospel where Moses and Elijah are speaking of His “exodus,” which He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem (Lk 9:31).

The Ordinaries of the Divine Service

13 Cf. the Ambrosian, Mozarabic, and Celtic rites.

14 See Pfatteicher, 124.

15 See Pfatteicher, 125.

16 There are some who would like to change the language from “the feast of victory *for* our God” to “the feast of victory *of* our God.” Pfatteicher, *Commentary*, 125, anticipates this by saying: “The celebration is described as ‘the feast of victory for our God,’ that is to say, a feast of God’s victory: it is victory for God that we celebrate and proclaim, the victory over death won by Christ. It is the feast of victory of our God, but it is also a feast *for* God, that is to say, in honor and celebration of his triumph” (emphasis Pfatteicher).

17 See Pfatteicher, 124–25 for a similar analysis. The quotations are from *Lutheran Worship*, pp. 169 and 144.

18 *The End Times*, a document prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 17–19. See also James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), particularly pp. 244–62, “Addendum 11-B: The Christocentricity of the Scriptures: The Kingdom of God and Biblical Eschatology as Key.”

19 Bryan D. Spinks, *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

20 Pfatteicher, 161.

21 Charles J. Evanson, “The Divine Service,” in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 420.

22 Senn, 85.

23 Reed, 313–14.

24 Pfatteicher, 161.

25 As Senn, 107, puts it: “The liturgy of Jesus Christ occurs simultaneously in heaven, by virtue of his ascension into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:11–12), and in the earthly assembly, by virtue of his sending of the Spirit. The Spirit enables the worship of the earthly church to be joined to the heavenly worship by creating faith through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, since the liturgy of Christ in its earthly mode can only be done by faith and not by sight (Heb 11:1).”

26 These comments on Psalm 118 were gleaned from Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 170 ff., particularly 180–82.

27 Pius Parsch as cited by Reed, 314.

28 Pfatteicher, 162.

29 Cf. Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523, trans. Paul Zeller Strodach, revised by Ulrich S. Leupold, in *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 53

The Good Shepherd Institute

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 28, where he says: “And while the Benedictus is being sung, let the bread and cup be elevated according to the customary rite for the benefit of the weak in faith who might be offended if such an obvious change in this rite of the mass were suddenly made.”

30 Senn, 278. From the beginning, Lutherans have followed the practice of bowing during the Sanctus and making the sign of the cross at the Benedictus, even though this custom has fallen out of use in most Lutheran churches today.

31 Pfatteicher, 188, whose information comes from Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, rev. Charles K. Riepe (New York: Benziger, 1959), 485.

32 Pfatteicher, 188.

33 Luther added “O Christ” to the Agnus Dei, but many have returned to the original wording.

34 Cf. Martin Luther, “Admonition Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord” (1530), in *Word and Sacrament IV*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann, Luther’s Works, vol. 38 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 123, where he shows how well he understood the significance of the Agnus Dei for the liturgy: “Particularly the Agnus Dei, above all songs, serves well for the sacrament, for it clearly sings about and praises Christ for having borne our sins and in beautiful, brief words powerfully and sweetly teaches the remembrance of Christ.”

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

Richard C. Resch

Since Sunday we have been sitting at a feast in Kramer Chapel. The food of the feast, given to us in many ways, has been a strong proclamation of what God has done in Christ. The ways are really forms, such as readings, homilies, liturgies, psalms, motets, chorale preludes, and hymns that were all carefully planned to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly concerning the present and eternal life of the saints. This paper focuses on the musical aspects of this proclamation. It advocates the high view of musical notes as servants of God's Word. It examines how a myriad of musical choices are made when the task is one of proclamation for the building-up of the body of Christ. And it explores how our Lutheran identity guides all of these musical choices.

The longer I serve as Kantor at Concordia Theological Seminary and at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the more I realize that the most important part of my work, after leading the singing, comes down to the choices that I have the responsibility and high privilege to make concerning what will be sung and played. I am putting words on the lips of singers in the pew and in the loft, and therefore what will be given to their hearts and minds. These choices are crucial to music as proclamation. And the careful attention extends to instrumental notes without text—music filled with clear textual associations that will surround and reinforce all the other forms of proclamation in the Divine Service.

It is the hardest part of the job, but it is the part that makes all of the difference in the end—because it is about choices. In fact the title of this paper could be: "Church Music Is About Choices." I shudder to think of all the bad choices I made in my youth; I now realize that they were made because I was asking the wrong questions and often seeking the wrong result. I now know they were made out of fear, as I tried desperately to avoid choir zingers such as: "Where did you get this?" or "We can't do this and we don't want to," or a nine-voice choir asking, "Couldn't we sing Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* instead?" I fear this choral intimidation is the case on a regular basis for a significant part of the music-making throughout our church. Very real fear of how the choir will respond in rehearsal to the choices ends up shaping choral decisions more than anything else. That is why there is a need to address this topic.

How Lutherans Should View Musical Choices

Understanding of this subject flows from a clear and true understanding of

The Good Shepherd Institute

Lutheran identity. We are a confessional, sacramental, and liturgical church. That identity shapes who we are, what we believe, and how we will pray; in other words, our theology *is our practice*. It is the reverse of and necessary foundation for Prosper of Aquitaine's fifth-century gem: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. What we pray becomes our belief, but that prayer is first based on our belief. Let us look at each part of this identity to see how it affects musical choices for the Divine Service.

The Lutheran Confessional Identity

A confessional church not only cares deeply about what is confessed, belief is required. Words—said or sung—must be true to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and that requirement is unique to a confessional church. This means church musicians must always look beyond notes to the teaching and admonishing function of their music-making. Therefore the musician must ask the question: What will this music preach in my parish?

This proposition presents a challenge for all Lutheran church musicians, but especially for two groups: those unable to discern the theology of a text, and those with a limited knowledge of the music literature available. Theological discernment can be taught, and it is natural that this would be a result of the pastor and church musician working together over a period of time. When this mentoring relationship grounds the musician in the ability to see strengths and weaknesses in texts, see false doctrine, and see confused Law and Gospel, then the musician is learning and growing in one of the most essential skills of his or her work—I say it again, *it is about choices*. Such discernment takes a four-year seminary education for the pastor, and it will take time and patience to develop in the musician—who may be seeing these distinctions for the first time.

Even though the body of music that fits us is rich and virtually limitless, a church musician must be familiar with it in order to make the best and most appropriate choices. This requirement is complicated by the fact that in our times we are surrounded by music in the mail from publishers offering what will reach the widest “audience” (*sic*), and therefore result in profits for the publisher. A large part of what is advertised through packets, CDs, and sample catalogues is either too generic or blatantly wrong theologically for Lutherans. Musical elements in the Divine Service should never be wasted on statements that would please even the Unitarians.

Help for the musician confused by what is available and appropriate could come from the pastor and congregation as they encourage the musician to attend conferences like this one, the River Forest Lectures in Church Music, and the Summer Organist Workshops here and in many other locations. At such conferences they will be exposed to the difference in Lutheran music, not only on the page but in practice. It is salutary for the musician to attend choral reading sessions and hear Lutheran singing outside one's own local setting.

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

The church musician is clearly one of the most important leaders in the parish. The chief musician is the number two leader every time the congregation gathers for worship, because this person leads the people's response in liturgy and hymnody throughout the service. That high duty requires more than a willingness and interest on the musician's part, it requires a knowledge of the theology and musical resources that can make it happen faithfully. A parish benefits by a well-informed musician, and often that insight comes through exposure to what is happening at the seminaries and synodical colleges, and through listening to the right musical recordings.

This is in reality continuing education, but unfortunately for many it is primary education. Parishes should encourage their church musicians to take full advantage of these opportunities for growth and offer significant financial support. Such an educational benefit for a valued member of the staff is not an extra, not a fluff benefit. I have seen the results of such continuing education every summer for twenty years on this campus. Annually about forty-five organists come, see, hear, learn, and are immersed in something that for most of them is new. After five days of being immersed in theology and practice, students leave with insights that make them different church musicians, able to understand more fully—and put into practice more effectively—their responsibilities in proclamation and teaching.

The Lutheran Sacramental Identity

Sacramental identity brings the means of grace, and the proper distinction and application of Law/Gospel to the forefront in the decision-making process for musicians. Obviously, the three identities of this outline will overlap because of the beautiful unity of Christ's work in all of them. But this specific part of the identity is about how God gives Himself to us in His gifts of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and peace through His means. While we are shown our desperate need, we are also shown how God met that need. A confession of these gifts is the proclamation that Lutheran music should offer and reveal to the saints.

A useful way to illustrate this Lutheran sacramental identity is to draw on hymnody as a model for textual and musical choices. The principles shown here can easily be applied to decisions about choral literature in the sacramental parish. Consider three hymns that sing of the gifts: first, from *Hymnal Supplement* 98, the first two stanzas of hymn 844:

God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many? I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free Lasting to eternity!

The Good Shepherd Institute

Sin, disturb my soul no longer: I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger: Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me Since my Baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood, Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood?

Even children love to sing of their Baptism and their wealth of gifts in this type of music. Texts that remember Baptism and its benefits are some of the most important texts that church musicians should seek, find, and use.

Second, a hymn about Confession and Absolution (*TLH* 331: 5–6):

The words which absolution give
Are His who died that we might live;
The minister whom Christ has sent
Is but His humble instrument.

When ministers lay on their hands,
Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;
He who by grace the Word believes
The purchase of His blood receives.

This hymn is filled with what is needed and received by everyone of us. The saints should not have to wait for the sermon for such preaching. All the musical and liturgical elements of the day could and should be about the same task and theme. Often it is the musical preaching that is the most eloquent and powerful preaching of the day.

Third, a Lord's Supper hymn (*HS* 98 853: 3, 6):

The holy Lamb undaunted came
To God's own altar lit with flame;
While weeping angels hid their eyes,
This Priest became a sacrifice.

The body of God's Lamb we eat
A priestly food and priestly meat.
Our sin-parched lips the chalice pours
His quenching blood that life restores.

This type of singing reveals how God works. The confession is clear and the music is appropriate. Unfortunately, sacramental music is not what surrounds Lutherans today. There is no doubt that Law dominates the church music of our time. Much of what is offered as Gospel music is in reality Law music, showing us

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

how we work, think, strive, and, of course, fail. Truly Lutheran music is about what God has done, and is therefore predominantly beautiful Gospel. It is so important that the Lutheran musician understand this distinction, for they too are offering proclamation and teaching about how Christ's gifts are offered.

A sacramental understanding will lead to musical choices appropriate for a host of subjects, but since that is not the main topic of this paper, I will give just one example: sacramental understanding has a profound influence on the subject of reverence. Reverence naturally accompanies the real presence of Christ. It dictates a music-making appropriate to Christ among us and Christ in us, and naturally manifests itself in music filled with a sense of "the other." In his exposition of Colossians 3:16, Martin Franzmann offers masterful exegetical insight into "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." He calls this music of the Spirit that "speaks . . . with accents of His own . . . distinct from the world's." He says that "A spiritual song must . . . breathe the air of eternity, must have a scent of heaven about it." With that in mind, how can church music not be mainly about Christ's work expressed in music of, from, and for the church?

The Lutheran Liturgical Identity

The main characteristic of Lutheran identity for the church musician to understand and live is the liturgical part. Why? Because every word of the Lutheran pastor and every note of the Lutheran musician is governed by it. Even if the musician is deficient in the confessional and sacramental parts of our identity, the liturgical part could guide them faithfully. As a liturgical church all decisions flow from what the lectionary gives to those who make the choices. Thus, I was not free on Sunday evening simply to give you music that I thought the choir would like, or music I have always wanted to do with choir and chamber orchestra. I was given a theme by our lectionary, which dictated what Sunday's Vespers Service would be about in every word and note.

The lectionary governs a relatively small group of liturgical church bodies. This guiding factor for these churches is a strength, not a restriction, and it is certainly not a weakness. It provides a disciplined freedom for the church musician in the same way that it does for the liturgical preacher. The lectionary itself develops the overall structure of the church year. The genius and beauty of this church year is something that church musicians should know inside and out. And I might add that it is, without a doubt, a worthy subject for parish Bible study. It is also the first step in the working relationship for the pastor and musician. It is a fundamental beginning in developing a liturgical musician, a liturgical choir, and a liturgical music-making throughout the parish, even, and perhaps especially, with our children.

In his very fine four-volume work *The Sermon and the Propers*, Fred Lindemann writes: "The Standard System of Pericopes . . . was not produced by an

The Good Shepherd Institute

individual or a group, within a week or a year or a lifetime, but it represents the accumulated experience of centuries. Progressively it unfolds and develops the plan of salvation.”² “The . . . Church Year is approached with greater understanding . . . if we do not lose sight of the Sacramental Year. It is called sacramental because it is governed by the life of grace.”³

One year of grace after another is the sublime and natural progression for the saints, from the life of Christ into the life of His church. Each segment within the larger two-part division has its own theme, such as endurance, readiness, and hope as the year comes to an end. The overall themes and the sub-themes give invaluable direction for musical choices. Often these broader themes offer the musician a place to turn when they are unable to find specific music appropriate for a Sunday.

From there the liturgical parish looks at individual pericopes, or readings, and all of the Propers that develop another year of grace. Propers are the elements that change for each Sunday, such as: hymns, Introit, Collect, Gradual, Alleluia Verse, Offertory Verse, and music at the distribution—all of the service music. Here we find all that is necessary for the annual rehearsing of what we need to hear, say, and sing again and again for the building-up of the church. I cannot emphasize enough that the Propers are what govern our prayer life together—more than anything else. Decisions at every level spring from this source. The Propers of the day naturally speak to that day and develop the proclamation of that day in the richest possible way for the liturgical musician.

Unfortunately, our lectionary life is also under attack. Often the formula for change recommended by the self-named “successful and growing churches” is first, music; second, liturgy; and third, lectionary. Even if the order is different in some places, all three changes have serious ramifications for the church musician—and eventually for the whole parish. Challenging the use of the lectionary is not new, but it has escalated significantly in the last thirty years.

When I was a teenager in the early sixties I experienced this challenge for the first time. I was in the organ loft practicing at a neighboring Lutheran congregation when the pastor came to the loft to visit. I will never forget this, even though I did not begin to understand the importance of it at the time. He asked me, a seventeen-year-old, why it was necessary to recite the Creed every Sunday. I wish I could tell you that I responded with a profound and theologically astute answer, but I did not. As I look back now to view how this pastor’s theology and practice has evolved, I see that it was for him the beginning of setting aside those things that he did not view as important. Already in the early sixties other ideas were suggested to him by outside “experts.” I am sorry to report, although it is no surprise, that today this pastor’s practice—and therefore his theology—is outside the whole identity that I have identified as Lutheran. And for him the lectionary became history about ten years after our conversation in the loft.

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

Of course this challenging of the church's practice is more about theology than it is about music. For Lutherans theology is practice and practice is theology. And while this paper is mainly about church music, I have to state for pastors and musicians to hear: the musician's right choices flow from and are based on the pastor's right choices. If the pastor chooses not to be liturgical, where does that leave the liturgical musician?

Günther Stiller writes in *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*:

Johann Sebastian Bach . . . was called to participate in the proclamation . . . through his presentations of the sermon music, and he attended to this assignment with the conviction that, beside his commitment to the liturgy for Sundays and festival days and to the church hymn . . . he was bound above all to Holy Scripture as *the* foundation of all liturgical proclamation."⁴

Thus, we can hardly imagine adequately how close was Bach's actual regular cooperation with the Leipzig pastors in their common task, the proclamation of the Gospel, which self-evidently had to take place in agreement with the basic statements of Lutheran theology. The printed publication of the cantata texts alone must have prompted Bach again and again to seek the advice and guidance of his pastors. . . . The comparison between the statements of the cantata texts and the basic thoughts of the sermon in any case makes clear that the preacher and the St. Thomas cantor agreed on the proclamation within the service. . . ."⁵

You either treasure something, you live with and tolerate it, or you abandon it. A significant part of Missouri Synod Lutheranism lived with something for decades without an understanding of what they had, and it was not treasured, except perhaps as an icon of stability. The result, then, was that they often went looking for ways other than Creeds, liturgies, and hymns for worship.

The solution to this situation comes through catechesis. It comes from leaders who know how to teach a subject that they understand and love. It comes from holding high the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all of the church's catholic forms. Our church year, lectionary, liturgy, hymnody along with our doctrine require this kind of careful catechesis.

I suppose it is possible for a congregation to live without teaching if the practice somehow remains rich, and quite often this is through the efforts of the musician. But the uninformed parish can reject the church musician's work as simply high-brow, rigid, and formal because they do not know any better. I plead with pastors to view the liturgical part of our identity as worthy of their teaching, their liturgical preaching, and their attentive overseeing. While it is very difficult to give attention

The Good Shepherd Institute

to what all ages are singing throughout the parish, it is essential for the theology of that parish.

More About the Choices

Let us develop this decision-making process for musicians. The Propers guide a parish into a unified proclamation between pulpit and loft for the building up of the body of Christ. It is basically the following approach that I take in planning services every week for my parish.

First, study the weekly bulletin inserts produced by Concordia Publishing House; these are the Proper texts that will guide spoken and musical proclamation for each Sunday and festival of the church year. If your parish does not use this insert, open your hymnal to the front Propers section, read what is given there, and look up the texts. All of this takes time, but it is time extremely well spent.

Look carefully at the antiphon for the Introit. Since the Introit itself is meant to set the theme, the antiphon highlights the essence of the day's theme often better than anything else. From there you move to the Collect of the Day and look at the petition portion. The request of God found there is based on all of the day's readings. Then move on to the Alleluia Verse, which will add another specific text to your understanding of the day.

Next read all three of the assigned lessons. Begin with the Gospel, because that often makes it easier to see the thematic connection with the Old Testament and Epistle. I read the Gradual next to see the more general theme of the time in the church year. Only after this study should you read the italicized summary provided on the Concordia insert. It is often helpful in bringing everything together and may well reinforce the conclusions you have already drawn.

Now look at the hymns chosen. Hymns are Propers. They should reveal even more about the richness of this Sunday's theme in a poetic and eloquent way. Thoughtful hymn selection is incredibly important and should have been done sufficiently in advance to guide the musician's decisions. Most choirs, organists, instrumental groups, and parochial schools need at least one month of advance rehearsal and practice to be confident with their liturgical part.

When haphazard, last-minute preparation is replaced with thoughtfully planned music that interprets parts of the Divine Service choristers of all ages *love it!* But they have to be well prepared so that what they bring to the service is not in any way an embarrassment to them. I have been hearing from church musicians every summer for the last twenty years that there are parishes where some form of embarrassment is a weekly occurrence. If that is the case, it is no wonder that church choirs are struggling to find new members and keep them. Give them appropriate music that they can do well. Then rehearse them thoroughly as you make sure they are ready to take their musical offering into the Divine Service.

When care is given to the "what" and the "how" of the church choir's work,

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

they see how important they are in the Divine Service as they help to unite the Proper texts, both those that are read and those that are sung. Little by little they begin to see how their personal preferences and opinions should be set aside, because proclamation is something more important and far bigger than matters of personal taste.

Hymns as Propers are one of the highest forms of proclamation. Very often this sung preaching reaches the saints in the pew more clearly and powerfully than the sermon. Therefore, it better be right! Hymns chosen for the wrong reason are an abomination. Hymns are not fluff, tools for manipulating feelings, or enjoyable filler on the way to the important things—they are important things! Those who have authority over hymn choices have been given a high responsibility, for they place words on the lips of God’s people.

The musician then looks at how the choir may function on a particular day in the church year. Lutheran choirs are not anthem choirs, they are liturgical choirs. From its beginning, the Lutheran church has been called the “singing church,” and we gladly accept and live that title as we sing throughout our services every week. Therefore the choir’s first function is that of leading the corporate voice and response of the gathered saints. The human voices of the choir lead the human voices of the congregation better than any instrument or group of instruments. Secondly, the liturgical choir helps us hear again and again that day’s proclamation through the musical propers. We listen while they sing Psalm verses in the Introit that help us to focus. Then we listen as the Gradual, Alleluia Verse, and Offertory Verse reemphasize the scriptural theme yet again.

The organ music and instrumental music serve the same function. Why should useless notes be played if they do not preach? We do not have time for that in our brief moments together. Beautiful music may surround our people in their everyday life, if that is what they want and seek. But this music is beautiful in a different way from a symphony concert, the music on National Public Radio, or a collection of compact disc recordings. This beauty is about our pilgrimage through another year of grace. Notes should have meaning. Notes should direct us to the hymns we will be singing and into a deeper understanding of what we are to receive on that specific day as the faithful.

Concordia Publishing House has published an important resource, entitled *Proclaim*,⁶ for this work. This aid for the church musician gives a written summary of the day, possible hymn choices, and choral and organ resources based on the theme and its hymns. It helps the musician understand the wealth of what is available even if their knowledge of available resources is limited. The pastor and the church musician should each have their own copy.

Permit me an important aside: The work I am holding up in this paper requires a music budget that allows the choir to serve not only faithfully, but legally. When I see churches beautifully landscaped with well-equipped kitchens, and then I see

The Good Shepherd Institute

their music library filled with illegally photocopied music, it is not only the misplaced priorities that are obvious, but it is a blatant disregard for the law and for the compensation due the composers and church music publishers. Churches should never put their musicians in this position; instead, they should acknowledge that musical proclamation has a price, as do the words heard from the pulpit.

The whole decision-making process is ideally accomplished by the crucial team of pastor and church musician in regular meetings. There must be good communication between these important leaders, and good communication does not just happen. The person in the pew is aware when there is zero to little communication between those who plan this time and are now trying to bring it off. Just as communication is one of the chief characteristics of a good marriage, it is also one of the chief characteristics of the team entrusted with bringing strong and unified proclamation to the Divine Service. This was clear in the relationship that Bach had in Leipzig. I sincerely believe this relationship to be the most important in any parish. These pastoral and musical leaders plan what will happen every time the flock gathers around the gifts. While there is no meeting plan that works for all parishes, I simply suggest that those involved in the day's proclamation work out a schedule of planning *together* for the sake of a unified proclamation.

Serving a confessional, sacramental, and liturgical church is a joy. It is not easy work, but the rewards of seeing a Divine Service flow from one reinforcing element to another in all of the words and notes is in itself one of the highest rewards possible for pastors and musicians. For this work of proclamation is really about helping to lift the saints from this life to the next every time they gather. When one sees the exquisite beauty of this process, it is hard to imagine why so many continue to live in disjointed and confusing worship time together.

Take the hard road—the one that requires study, thought, working together, planning ahead, rehearsing again and again, serious practice on your instrument, and a care for what will be offered when the saints come for the feast they need. This is not about perfection, it is about purpose and beauty. This is not about forms, it is about clear proclamation. This is not about difficult music, it is about appropriate music. This is not about us, it is about what He has done for us.

With that in mind I would like to close with a hymn I wrote for the one-hundredth anniversary of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Illinois. This text is about what He has done for us. It is a sung confession of what Lutherans believe. It holds high the sacramental understanding of how God gives Himself to us in many ways. Liturgically it could function again and again throughout the year of grace. I wrote the text, but the tune is from *TLH*, where it is used twice, one of those times coupled with Martin Luther's first hymn, *Ein neues Lied* (*TLH* 259).

The Music of the Divine Service: Propers and Proclamation

The gifts Christ freely gives, He gives to you and me,
To be His Church, His Bride, His chosen, saved and free!
Saints blest with these rich gifts are children who proclaim:
That they were won by Christ and cling to His strong Name.

The gifts flow from the font where He calls us His own;
New life He gives that makes us His and His alone.
Here He forgives our sins with water and His Word.
The Triune God Himself gives pow'r to call Him Lord.

The gifts of grace and peace from absolution flow;
The pastor's words are Christ's for us to trust and know.
Forgiveness that we need is granted to us there;
The Lord of mercy sends us forth in His blest care.

The gifts are there each day the Holy Word is read;
God's children listen, hear, receive and they are fed.
Christ fills them with Himself, blest words that give them life,
Restoring and refreshing them for this world's strife.

The gifts are in the feast, gifts far more than we see;
Beneath the bread and wine is food from Calvary.
Christ's body and His blood removes our every sin;
We leave His presence in His peace, renewed again.

All glory to the One who lavishes such love.
Praise Triune God whose love assures our life above.
His means of grace for us are gifts He loves to give;
All thanks and praise for His great love by which we live!

Notes

1 Martin H. Franzmann, *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 93.

2 Fred H. Lindemann, *The Sermon and the Propers*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 1:3.

3 Ibid., 1:1–2.

4 Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald, ed. Robin A.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Leaver (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 156.

5 Ibid., 220–21.

6 Barry L. Bobb and Hans Boehringer, *Proclaim: A Guide for Planning Liturgy and Music*, 2d ed., 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994–96).

Preaching in the Divine Service

William M. Cwirla

Let Us Pray: Grant, we implore you, almighty God, to your Church your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from above that your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve you and in the confession of your Name abide to the end; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Before considering the *place* of preaching in the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Divine Service, and the *point* of preaching, here are some definitions of preaching:

To preach—*verb, intransitive, from the Latin praedicare*. 1. To deliver a sermon. 2. To give advice or urge a course of action, especially in a meddlesome or tedious way [*The Doubleday Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 570]. Well, that's not terribly optimistic, is it? It sounds like the adolescent being lectured on the dangers of staying out all night with her friends.

Greek has twenty-eight words that all are translated “preach” by our homiletically challenged English. Now there's a language that honors the spoken word! Here is but a sampling:

κηρύσσω—to cry aloud, proclaim, declare an event. [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1963) 3:697–714 (hereafter *TDNT*)]. That's pretty much the gist of it.

ἄγγελλον—to herald, to deliver a message, and from it the lovely noun, ἄγγελος, angel or messenger, who may be the bearer of good news or bad, depending on who sent him and what the message is. [*TDNT* 1:60–61]

Put an εὖ in front of ἄγγελλον and you get εὖ αγγελίη ζομαι, the word for bringing home good news from the battlefield [*TDNT* 2:707–21]. “The fight is o'er, the battle won.” Good news indeed! And when the good news is Jesus' victory over sin and death, that is 200-proof good news with no ice, water, or sweet vermouth, much less ginger ale or even a twist—the kind of good news that could make an Augustinian monk giddy enough to post 95 theses and start a Reformation.

Last, but not least, is John's favorite word, μαρτυρέω “to bear witness or give testimony,” from which we get the word “martyr” with that glorious ring of death

The Good Shepherd Institute

to it [TDNT 4:474–508]. In the theology of the cross, there is no good news without a death, and the preacher of good news is likely to become a martyr.

So far the definitions. Now on to the place of preaching.

The Place of Preaching in the Scriptures

Preaching begins in the mouth of God, with His Word and breath. The Scriptures are the exhaled (θεό πνευστος, 2 Tm 3:16) record of God's preaching through Moses and the prophets, the apostles and evangelists. God speaks His Word in the Spirit to His people, and through His people to the world. The Scriptures reveal the God who speaks, His living Word in action.

Through the preached Word all things were made. “Let there be,” and there was. Just like that. God makes something out of nothing with His Word, which is frightfully good news for the preacher on a Sunday morning. Mary conceived by the preached word of the angel. John came preaching baptism in the wilderness, preparing the people for the coming Messiah. Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus is the divine Word Incarnate, the very Word through whom all things are made and in whom all things hold together, the creative and redemptive Word made flesh, dwelling among us. He is the Mystery hidden for the ages, the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world, manifest in the fullness of time, “vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Tm. 3:16). He is the apostle of the Father, sent to reveal the Father in the Spirit, to reconcile the world to God in His death, to announce the coming of the kingdom of God in His flesh.

Preaching, along with teaching and healing, are Jesus' messianic agenda. Straight on the heels of His baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Jesus came preaching the good news that in Him, in His flesh, the kingdom of God had appeared to men. In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus rolled the scroll open to the prophet Isaiah and applied the passage to Himself: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk 4:18–19). This, Jesus declared, was fulfilled that very day in the ears of His hearers. When John the Baptizer inquired from Herod's prison whether they had the right messiah, or should they start searching for another, Jesus again reports the preaching agenda: “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news preached to them (Lk 7:22).

Jesus sent His disciples to preach, preparing His way with the promise, “He who hears you, hears me” (Lk 10:16). He binds His words to their words, His mouth to their mouths. In His resurrection, Jesus mandated that repentance unto the forgiveness of sins be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem (Lk 24:47),

that the good news of His atoning death be preached to all creation (Mk 16:15). And so the apostles proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Christ, the crucified, risen, reigning Savior of the world, exhorting their hearers to trust in His completed work of salvation and be baptized in His name (Acts 2:38). They preached in the temple, the synagogue, the marketplace, and in their divine services. When scattered by persecution, they preached. When imprisoned, they preached. When put on trial before kings, they preached. Some, like Philip, were known as εὐαγγελί στα, Gospel preachers, heralds of good news (Acts 21:8).

St. Paul's apostolic ambition was to preach Christ where the name of Christ had not yet been heard, recognizing that faith comes by hearing (Rom 10:17; 15:20). He viewed his work of preaching to the Gentiles as a priestly service of the Gospel of God (Rom 15:16). Confronted with religious Jews, who demanded miraculous signs, and intellectual Greeks, who were impressed by rhetoric and wisdom, Paul preached the foolish weakness of the dead Jew on a cross—a stumbling block to the religious, and foolishness to the academics, but to the ear of faith the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18–25).

Paul saw himself as a steward of the mysteries of God, a pot-ratting, short-order cook, dishing out the meat and potatoes of Jesus' death and resurrection (1 Cor 4:1). He was a cracked pot concealing the heavenly treasures of Christ beneath the humble clay of the preacher (2 Cor 4:7). Paul called his work an ambassadorship, God was making His reconciling appeal to the world through the word of preaching (2 Cor 5:20). He said that he was under orders to preach the Gospel, and woe to him if he didn't. Paul often refused rightful pay for his preaching, not wishing to be a burden as he proclaimed the free grace of God in Christ (1 Cor 9:16–18). His parting exhortation to a young pastor named Timothy: "Preach the Word, in season and out of season" (2 Tm 4:2).

Only in the Revelation does preaching ultimately give way to praise. The Revelation is more for the eye than it is for the ear, revealing in picture-words the victory of the Lamb now hidden from our eyes. Now we see dimly, through the cataracts of sin and death. Now the cloud envelopes Jesus in His glory and buries Him under water, words, bread and wine. We may not yet look on Him. And so we must, as Kenneth Korby is so fond of saying, "stick our eyes in our ears and listen." Faith comes by hearing the preached Word of Christ (Rom 10:17).

The Place of Preaching in the Lutheran Confessions

The Lutheran Confessions acknowledge the centrality of the preached Word. Not only did the Reformation restore Gospel preaching to the pulpit, it restored the preached Word to the center of theology and worship.

In the Augsburg Confession, the preaching of the Gospel flows directly from the article of justification. "To obtain such faith, God established the preaching office (*Predigtamt*), gave Gospel and Sacrament, through which He, as through

The Good Shepherd Institute

means, gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith where and when He wills, in those who hear the Gospel” (AC 5.1, German text). Behind this article lies Luther’s understanding of the external Word as the means through which the Holy Spirit works. In the seventh Schwabach article Luther speaks of the preaching office (*Predigtamt*) or “mouthed Word” (*mündliches Wort*) of the Gospel (*Bekenntnisschriften*, 59). The Gospel is an earthy, incarnate, creaturely Word delivered from mouth to ear.

In the Smalcald articles, Luther enumerated the preaching of the Gospel first among the manifold means by which the richness of God’s grace in Jesus is revealed (SA IV). “Apart from this external Word, God will not deal with us,” Luther says, and any dealing with us apart from the external Word is of the devil (SA VIII.10–11). We don’t wait for inner voices, and we wouldn’t trust one if we heard one. In fact, we know that nothing good dwells in us, so there’s no use listening to what goes on inside our hearts anyway. The Gospel comes from outside of us, an external Word from mouth to ear. The church is “sheep who hearken to the voice of their Shepherd,” as any seven-year-old knows (at least the seven-year olds in Luther’s day) (SA XII.1–2). May God so raise up such wise seven-year-olds among us also.

The preached Word is the abiding content of the Sabbath. Though the form of the Sabbath as seventh day rest is fulfilled in the death of Christ, the content of the Sabbath in the Word remains. “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise his Word and the preaching of the same, but deem it holy and gladly hear and learn it” (Small Catechism I, 5–6, Tappert, 342).

In the Third article of the Creed in the Large Catechism, Luther notes that without the preached Word, the work of Christ would remain a hidden treasure buried in your backyard, unused and unenjoyed:

Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed, Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by His sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden and no one knew of it, it would have been all in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not be buried but put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation. (LC III.38, Tappert 415)

The Word seeks faith, and it creates the faith that it seeks. Faith is a creature of the Word, and therefore, so is the Church that is called, gathered, enlightened, sanctified, and kept with Jesus Christ in the one, true faith by the Spirit who works

through the Word.

The creative and redemptive Word operates in divine freedom. The Spirit works “when and where He pleases in those who hear the Gospel.” This is no magical word, no incantation. The sower sows the seed, and while he eats, sleeps, or drinks Wittenberg beer, the seed does its seedy thing automatically, the sower knows not how. The when and where of faith is God’s business; the speaking and hearing of the Word, that’s the business of preaching.

Because faith is a creature of the Word, the preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the Sacraments are the definitive, visible marks by which the church can be recognized. The church is essentially hidden from view but revealed by the Word of Baptism, sermon, and Supper. Likewise, the true and essential unity of the church in Christ, which is also a hidden mystery of faith, is revealed in the pure proclamation of the Gospel and the right administration of the Sacraments according to the institution of Jesus as Augsburg article 7 confesses (AC 7 and 8).

In Article 15 of the Augsburg Confession, Philipp Melancthon states that the chief worship of God is to preach the Gospel. He carries this idea forward into Article 24 on the sacrifice of the Mass, where he states that the Divine Service was instituted precisely for the purpose of proclaiming the Lord’s death. Melancthon counts the proclamation of the Gospel along with faith, prayer, and thanksgiving as “eucharistic sacrifices” or “sacrifices of praise.” In this way, the Mass can rightly be called a “sacrifice,” not to atone for sin or merit forgiveness but in thankful response for Christ’s sacrifice. Preaching is the “new and pure sacrifice” of the sons of Levi (Ap 24.34), the daily sacrifice of the New Testament. In a bit of creative allegorizing, Melancthon identifies preaching with the drink offering of the Old Testament sacrifices. As the people of the Old Testament were sprinkled by the blood of the sacrifice, so now the people of the New Testament are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of God through the preaching of the Gospel (Ap 24.36–37).

In the twenty-eighth article of the Augsburg Confession, and also in the Tractate, preaching the Gospel is the proper use and exercise of the authority of the keys, that is, pastoral authority. The primary task of the preaching office is preaching. Eternal gifts and treasures are imparted through preaching, namely the righteousness of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, gifts that can be received by no other means (AC 28.8). To preach is to properly exercise pastoral authority with the promise of Jesus Christ, “He who hears you, hears me” (Ap 28.19).

The Formula states that preaching reveals the mystery of our election in Jesus Christ. The Book of Life is laid open to faith by the preached Word (Ep XI.13). God is present and active in preaching to make known and audible our redemption in Jesus Christ, working repentance and faith, killing and making alive, calling men to eternal salvation, drawing all to Himself, converting them, begetting them anew, and sanctifying them through His holy Word (SD II.56). The preaching and the hearing of God’s Word are the Spirit’s instrument in, with, and through which He

The Good Shepherd Institute

wills to act efficaciously, to convert men to God, and to work in them both to will and to achieve (SD II.53).

The Place of Preaching in the Divine Service

The Divine Service in the Lutheran tradition bears this understanding of the preached Word as a sacramental and incarnate Word in, with, under, and through which the Holy Spirit works. In a broad sense, the entire liturgy, from Invocation to Benediction, is a sermon of Christ. The Absolution is nothing other than a distilled proclamation of the Gospel. The reading of the Scriptures is already proclamation. The Words of Institution are words of proclamation, as Luther so keenly noted in his 1526 German Mass. Even the so-called “sacrificial” elements of the Divine Service, the hymns and prayers, are proclamation. The Word that conceived faith also bears the fruit of faith in prayer and praise. What was laid on our ears and believed in our hearts is now echoed on our lips and lived in our lives. Hence God’s holy name is hallowed among us.

But when we think of preaching in the Divine Service, we usually think in the narrower sense of the sermon, that ever-shrinking spot in the Divine Service where the preacher climbs into the pulpit and does what he’s been called and ordained to do. Preaching is authorized speech, an official act. Our Lutheran Confessions locate the task of preaching in the preaching office (*Predigtamt*). We’re adamant in our insistence, on paper if not always in practice, that no one preaches or presides in our churches unless he is authorized (that is, examined, called, and ordained) to do so.

Office and authority go together. To bear an office is to be authorized to do something in an official capacity. Ordination is the authorization to preach and preside officially, in the stead and by the command of Jesus Christ as His authorized representative before His congregation. Vestments are visible symbols of authority, which is probably why some are so quick to shed them for business suits and power ties. We tend to be uncomfortable with authority in the church. We have a tendency to think of Law when we hear that word “authority.” (“I’ll call the authorities on you.”) But the word “authority” (ἐξουσία) means “permission” granted one by another ἐξουσία (TDNT 2:562). Jesus holds all authority in heaven and on earth, an authority granted Him by the Father, and exercised in His taking away the sin of the world. The preacher stands in the pulpit as one authorized by the Triune God through the church to preach forgiveness in the name of Jesus.

Pulpits are symbols of authority. Now I realize that the early church had only a table from which one both preached and presided. And that’s a nice visible unity of Word and Sacrament. But our churches build pulpits, and we would do well to get into them and stay put in them, even if we have to nail our feet to the floor. Furniture is functional. Tables are for eating, beds for sleeping, pulpits for preaching. Chancel-prancing preachers may be an interesting diversion for a

Sunday or two, but in the end the novelty quickly wears thin. Pulpits, like vestments, provide cover, the mantel of office and authority. “Don’t blame me if you don’t like what you hear. I only work here.” Preachers of the Gospel need all the cover they can get.

Liturgically, the sermon is located between Invocation and Benediction, bracketed by the Name of God. Preaching is a proper use of God’s Name, calling upon it, invoking God’s promises, pleading His mercy, with the promise that where even as few as two or three are gathered in the Name, there Jesus will be manifest in our midst. (We pastors of small congregations are grateful that Jesus had such low expectations for church growth. In our congregation we have an attendance of about 120 on a good Sunday, which is about as many as the entire holy, catholic Church on earth on the eve of Pentecost. We take a small measure of comfort in that.) Preaching is baptismal, immersing the baptized in their Baptism and urging the unbaptized to Holy Baptism. The question as to whether or not the sermon, or for that matter the entire Divine Service, is “evangelistic,” misses the point. The church is as much in need of evangelization as is the world at large. The Gospel should never be a presupposition.

The sermon has its sacramental place between Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The preacher in the Divine Service preaches with a kind of peripheral vision. Front and center is the cross of Jesus. On one side is our baptismal burial in Jesus’ death; on the other, our communion in Jesus’ Body and Blood. The sermon recalls us to our baptismal identity as the children of God and prepares us to dine at the family table of Christ’s Body and Blood. We get an explicit sense for that when the “Our Father” is prayed twice in a Divine Service that has a Baptism, objections of redundancy notwithstanding. The prayer of our baptismal birth is the family table prayer.

Preaching within the greater context of the Divine Service is table talk. The pastor is the *paterfamilias*, the father of the family, presiding over the thanksgiving table with the family gathered around it. And it’s the *whole* family that’s gathered. The kids may toss mashed potatoes at each other on occasion, but we don’t send them off to another room to eat on folding card tables. The whole family is gathered at the table of Word and Sacrament. The liturgical atmosphere is festive, formal informality or informal formality.

The sermon is part of a Word complex together with the readings and the Creed. We first hear from Moses and the prophets all the glorious ways in which Christ is pictured in the Old Testament. We next hear from the apostles, proclaiming Jesus the Messiah, crucified, risen, and reigning. We then hear from the evangelists, delivering to our ears the words and works of Jesus. In the traditional Lutheran order, we then hear from the catholic tradition of the Church in her baptismal creeds. And finally, last and least, if not lost and dead, as from one untimely born, we hear from the preacher, whose speech is normed by the Scriptures and the

The Good Shepherd Institute

Church's confession. (I am indebted to Rev. Peter Bender for this insight). I would also point out that the offering typically follows the sermon, making it a kind of Nielsen rating for the preacher. "Great offering this week, Pastor. Preach that sermon again next week."

The liturgical preacher is under the salutary discipline of the lectionary, which frees both him and his hearers from the tyranny of the immediate and urgent. Our grim relevencies are buried under the foolishness of a God who drops dead. The lectionary seems irrelevant to the pragmatic and programmatic. Who wants to hear about the two natures of Christ when the world is going to hell in a hand basket? Then again, what better thing to hear! Admittedly, there are times when the assigned readings appear to be chopped from the Scriptures with a dull pick-axe, all those numbers in parentheses and dashes, making the citation look like an exercise in matrix algebra or Grandma's kino card. But on the whole, the lectionaries, whether one- or three-year, take your pick, serve us well. To be sure, topical sermons have a place—at weddings, at funerals, and at other topical occasions when the church gathers. In September 2001 a few exceptions were made in our congregation in view of our national crisis. But we were happy to return to the lectionary. It was a healing return to the normal. On the main, I must agree with Robert Capon who says with his usual dry wit, "Topical sermons are like topical anesthetics: they don't go deep" ¹

The sermon has a momentary existence in place and time. It is a singular moment (καί ποῦ) of salvation, in which the eternal gifts of Christ are revealed within the creaturely confines of chronology and geography. What God purposed from all eternity and accomplished once for all time (ἐφ' ὅ παντός in the death of His Son is here revealed and delivered in this place and moment. "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). This salvific moment is utterly unique and unrepeatable. So are sermons. I've heard that Bach used the parts of Sunday's cantatas to wrap Monday's fish. The backside of Sunday's sermon makes good scratch paper for next Sunday's preaching.

The sermon precipitates a crisis (κρίσις) within the Divine Service, as the double-edged Word of Law and Gospel is brought to bear upon the hearer in an explicit way. Liturgical speech tends to be implicit speech. That's what makes liturgy so subversive. Sermons are usually more explicit. That's probably one reason people feel they have to endure them. Sin is exposed, named, confronted. Death is diagnosed. Salvation is revealed, named, applied. This is the "for you" of the Gospel. As at Pentecost, so in the sermon, the good news of salvation in Jesus is delivered to the hearers, and each one hears it in his or her own language and dialect.

The Point of Preaching: Death in Life

"For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26). Death? That's right. *Death*. That's the

point. The surgeon turned author Richard Selzer calls death “the surprise at the center” of the surgeon’s work.”² Death is the surprise in the center of the Gospel. We’re busy trying to have a life; God gives us a death. We want rehab, God gives resurrection. When Jesus said, “Take up your cross and follow me,” He didn’t mean put up with your ingrown toenails and your diverticulitis and do what I tell you. Crosses kill—inevitably, inexorably. To take up your cross and follow Jesus is to take up your death and to follow Him where He has already taken you in Him—through death to resurrection.

Death and resurrection is God’s *modus operandi*. *The Lord kills, and He makes alive. He brings down to Sheol, and He raises up* (2 Sm 2:6). There’s the surprise. This is what makes God’s work strange and alien. His ways aren’t our ways; His thoughts confound our thoughts. We want a God who interferes, intervenes, and fixes our problems. But God deals with us by dying and rising, killing us and making us alive in Him.

One occasionally hears our culture described as “death-oriented.” Some call it a “culture of death.” I beg to differ. We’re a culture of death-denial. We deny death at every turn, washing the gray right out of our hair. Nipping, tucking, and sucking the marks of age from our bodies. We cover death over with mortician’s make-up, and say, “She sure looks good.” In truth, she looks awful, not herself. She’s dead, after all. We drape Astroturf over the mound of real dirt around a real grave. We don’t even wait for the coffin to lower, much less hang around to get our own hands dirty. It might distress the children. Our euphemisms of death betray the denial—”He passed on,” “she passed away,” “she’s an angel now”—talk more appropriate to the Bhagavad Gita than the Gospel of Jesus. “She went to a better place,” we hear at Grandma’s funeral, as though Grandma left Fort Wayne to go on a little trip to Fort Lauderdale.³

When confronted by a head-on collision with death, as we were on September 11, 2001, we don’t know what to do with it. We get religious and try to bribe God and butter Him up. We “face death all day long” and don’t have a clue as to how to deal with it. “In the very midst of life, death has us surrounded” (*Lutheran Worship* 265). Few seem willing or able to say, “Drop dead and repent.” Go and have a μετανοία, a re-cognition, a change of mind. Drop dead to your life and trust Jesus. Be baptized into His death. Feed on His death. You are dead in yourself and alive in Jesus. In Him there is no condemnation, for in Him there is no one to condemn. In Him you are justified. In Him you live and nothing can harm you, including Death itself.”

The Gospel preacher needs to cultivate a nose for death, like a pig sniffing out truffles in the French forest. That’s why most pastors I know prefer funerals to weddings ten to one. At weddings you have people trying to have a life, never mind this business about “‘til death us do part.” No one wants to hear death-talk at a wedding, regardless of what Paul says about wives dropping dead to themselves to

The Good Shepherd Institute

be images of the Church in subordination to their husbands, and husbands dropping dead to themselves to be images of Christ to their wives. But at a funeral everything is different. You have a corpse, nicely dead, all laid out. “The wages of sin is death,” and that point couldn’t be made more powerfully. No Power Point visuals needed. The evidence is laid out for you, dead as dead can be. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Ah, now that’s not so obvious, is it? In fact, it can’t be known at all by your reason or strength. It must be preached, revealed by the Word. And the outrage of it all is that the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is given precisely in the midst of death. Not around or in spite of it. *In death*. Jesus raises the dead, not the living.

When someone tells me that the Lutheran church is a dead church, I like to say, “Good! There’s hope for us yet. Jesus loves to raise the dead. It’s the living that He has a hard time with.” The deader the better, I say.

Look for death in the Scriptures, because that’s where the action is. From Genesis chapter 3 and the moment Adam and Eve took a bite from the sacrament of death until the death of the cosmos at the end of the Revelation, the whole of Scripture is all about life in the midst of death. Not life in spite of death, or around death, but *in, with*, and six feet *under* death. The first note of Gospel, the *proto-evangelium*, is the death of the Promised Seed. The second note of good news is the death of whatever it is that died, (I like to think it was a lamb), that supplied skins to cover Adam and Eve in the shame of their nakedness.

Even the diet reflects life in death. The food of Genesis 2 is embryonic life—fruits and nuts. Nothing dies. The apple tree doesn’t die to feed you. Nor does the almond tree. But the food in Genesis 3 is cultivated plants and ultimately bread. “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread” (Gn 3:19). Everything dies. The grain dies. The wheat dies. The yeast dies. The farmer, the miller, the baker, and the eater all drop dead. “Dust you are and to dust you shall return.” And what does Adam call his new bride in the midst of all this death talk? חַיָּה...Eve. Life! For she is the mother of all the living. Adam trusts the Promise, that in the midst of death, cut off from the tree of life, God will nevertheless work חַיָּה, life in death. Good news indeed!

Life in death is the theme of the Scriptures. Let me give you a quick synopsis: The genealogies of Genesis, which are a litany of life in the midst of death. All the deaths and near-deaths of the Old Testament: dead Abel, entombed Noah in the ark, good as dead Abraham, even closer to dead Isaac, dead lambs, a dead and exiled Israel, a dead and destroyed temple, a prophet in the belly of a fish, to name but a few of the many. The first book of the Torah ends with the death of Joseph in Egypt. The last book of the Torah ends with the death of Moses and a whole generation of dead Israelites in the wilderness. The Hebrew Scriptures end with an Israel that might as well have been dead, awaiting the Messiah and resurrection.

In the New Testament we have almost dead Zechariah and Elizabeth. And right on

the heels of Jesus' birth, to put the damper of death on our Christmas joy, all the baby boys of Bethlehem who died so Jesus could live to grow up and die for them. There is Simeon in the temple, embracing his death as he holds the baby Messiah in his arms. "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace" (Lk 2:29). There is John in Herod's prison, soon to lose his head in death. The forerunner of the Christ is also a forerunner in death. There are the martyrs of Acts—James and Stephen, out of whose death rises Saul otherwise known as Paul, in a remarkable turn of events that underscores this theme of life in death. The book of Acts ends on a death-like note, with the foremost apostle to the Gentiles under house arrest. The New Testament canon ends with one whopping cosmic death, culminating in the heavenly city and the marriage supper of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end.

Presiding over all of this death is the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world, the creative Word Incarnate, who drops dead to any notion of religious respectability and gets baptized like a sinner. He is the life of the world—healing the sick, driving out the demons, raising the dead, yet always with an undercurrent of death running through each and every miracle.

After Jesus' transfiguration, the Gospel takes a decidedly deathward turn, as does Jesus' preaching. He comes not to bring peace but division and a sword. You must hate your own life. Get off your religious high horse and drop dead in the ditch with the least, the lost, the dead. Three times He tells His disciples that He will be rejected, betrayed, crucified, and raised to life on the third day. He makes the road kill of His death the definitive mark of the kingdom: "Where the carcass is, there the vultures gather" (Mt 24:28). He speaks of the death of Jerusalem and of the cosmos in a single breath—wars and rumors of war, nation against nation, famine, plague, pestilence, false messiahs, false religions. Sound familiar? He calls these things "the birth pangs" (Mt 24:8), *not death throes*, but birth pangs, the labor contractions of the new creation that comes in His own dying and rising flesh. Finally one good Friday, the sixth day of the week, the day man was made from the dust, between noon and three, He hangs dead in the darkness between two terrorists and calls the whole business of salvation finished. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Into His death you are baptized. With His death you are fed. His body is your bread; His life's blood your wine—200-proof forgiveness. We proclaim His death until He appears. We process behind a crucifix, a depiction of one very dead Jesus on a cross. This is His hour of glory and power, when He is lifted up from the earth and draws all to Himself (Jn 12:32), canceling the written code that stood between us, and reconciling the whole world to God. Luther rightly called Christian theology the theology of the cross because it's the theology of life in the death of the Son of God.

Preaching the Gospel is submersion in the death of Jesus. It really doesn't matter what the topic *du jour* may be—marriage, prayer, judgment, sacrament, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the beheading of John the Baptist, Mother's day! It all

The Good Shepherd Institute

winds up in the death of Jesus, if it's Christian preaching. Paul resolved to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. We could do worse than to become know-nothings in the pulpit, burying all the addictions, abortions, anthrax, bad marriages, broken lives, failed vocations, successes and failures, profits and losses, the terrors, the diseases, the demons—burying it all in the death that swallowed up Death, the death of Jesus. We don't need moralizing or motivation or inspiration. Morals you can get in the synagogue; motivation in the mosque; inspiration in the movie house. But life only in the death of Jesus.

That is the point of preaching in the liturgy. And its power—a crucified power, made perfect in the utter weakness of death. In Jesus you are justified, forgiven, raised up, glorified.

Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.
Teach me to die that so I may
Rise glorious at the awesome Day.
(*Lutheran Worship* 484)

You're safe in the death of Jesus. Trust Him.

Notes

1 Robert Farrar Capon, *The Foolishness of Preaching*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 63.

2 Richard Seltzer, *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 39.

3 For a brilliant exercise in confronting death-denial, see Robert Farrar Capon, *Exit 36: A Fictional Chronicle*. (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 28–30.

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

John T. Pless

“The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended the fruits of this service in all who believe” (*LW* 247). Omer Westendorf’s popular hymn accents the linkage between the Lord’s Supper and our life in the world. The words of the hymn are echoed in the Introduction to *Lutheran Worship* where we are told: “Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink. Finally his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition.”¹ Indeed, this is “the liturgy after the liturgy,” to use the helpful phrase that Carter Lindberg borrowed from the Eastern tradition.²

With the advent of *Lutheran Worship* in 1982, we have rediscovered something of the richness of the Evangelical Lutheran understanding of *Gottesdienst*, Divine Service. The liturgy is not about our cultic activity; it is God who is giving His gifts in sermon and Sacrament to the people that He has gathered together in His name. Oswald Bayer notes: “Worship is first and last God’s service to us, his sacrifice which took place for us, which he bestows in specific worship—‘Take and eat! I am here for you’ (cf. I Cor. 11.24 with Gen. 2.16). This feature of worship is lost if we want to do as a work what we may receive as a gift.”³ Here Bayer reflects Article IV of the *Apology* as it confesses: “Faith is that worship which receives the benefits that God offers; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. God wants to be honored by faith so that we receive from him those things that he promises and offers.”⁴ In Lutheran liturgical theology God is the subject rather than the object. Christ is the donor and benefactor. He gives His gifts to be received by faith alone.

Rome had reversed the flow, making the Supper into a sacrifice to be offered, a work to be performed, rather than a gift to be received. Lutheran theology distinguishes between God’s *beneficium* and man’s *sacrificium*. To confuse the two is to muddle Law and Gospel. This is at the heart of the critique of the Roman Mass in the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Apology*. Luther and the Confessions understood liturgy not as the work of the priest or the people but the very work of God Himself as He comes to serve His church with the gifts of redemption won on the cross and now distributed in Word and Sacrament.

Salvation’s accomplishment on Calvary and its delivery—from font, pulpit, and altar—are the work of God. This Luther confesses in the *Large Catechism*:

The Good Shepherd Institute

Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe in him and receive him as Lord, unless these were offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed; Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden so that no one knew of it, it would have been all in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure, this redemption.⁵

All of this is *beneficium*—gift. Faith clings to the gift, drawing its life from the bounty of God’s mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. He is the servant, the liturgist, in the Divine Service.

Sacrificium, on the other hand, is the work of man. Luther rejected the Roman understanding of the Mass as sacrifice because it was built on a presumption that God could be placated by man’s efforts. This Luther deemed to be idolatrous. In the *Large Catechism*, he writes:

This is the greatest idolatry that we have practiced up until now, and it is still rampant in the world. All the religious orders are founded upon it. It involves only that conscience that seeks help, comfort, and salvation in its own works and presumes to wrest heaven from God. It keeps track of how often it has made endowments, fasted, celebrated Mass, etc. It relies on such things and boasts of them, unwilling to receive anything as a gift of God, but desiring to earn everything by itself or to merit everything by works of supererogation, just as if God were in our service or debt and we were his liege lords.⁶

It was this conviction that compelled Luther to reform the Mass canon so that God’s speaking and giving were clearly distinct from the church’s praying.

Luther has not been without his critics. Yngve Brilioth judged Luther to be one-sided in his focus on the gift of the forgiveness of sins, while ignoring or downplaying such themes as thanksgiving, communion, commemoration, eucharistic sacrifice, and mystery.⁷ More recently, Eugene Brand opined that Luther’s liturgical surgery left the patient disfigured.⁸ It took an Anglican scholar, Bryan Spinks, to save Luther from the Lutherans, as he demonstrated that Luther’s revisions were a thoughtful unfolding of the liturgical implications of the doctrine of justification.⁹

The faithful come to church not to give but to receive. Luther gives doxological expression to this in stanza four of his catechetical hymn, “Here is the Tenfold Sure Command” (LW 331):

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

And put aside the work you do,
So God may work in you. Have mercy, Lord!

Vilmos Vajta explains:

In no sense is this worship a preparatory stage which faith could ultimately leave behind. Rather faith might be defined as the passive cult (*cultus passivus*) because in this life it will always depend on the worship by which God imparts himself—a gift granted to the believing congregation.

This is confirmed in Luther's explanation of the Third Commandment. To him, sabbath rest meant more than a pause from work. It should be an opportunity for God to do his work on man. God wants to distract man from his daily toil and so open him to God's gifts. To observe the sabbath is not a good work which man could offer to God. On the contrary, it means pausing from all our works and letting God do his work in and for us.

Thus Luther's picture of the sabbath is marked by the passivity of man and the activity of God. And it applies not only to certain holy days of the calendar, but to the Christian life in its entirety, testifying to man's existence as a creature of God who waits by faith for the life to come. Through God's activity in Christ, man is drawn into the death and resurrection of the Redeemer and so recreated a new man in Christ. The Third Commandment lays on us no obligation for specific works of any sort (not even spiritual or cultic works) but rather directs us to the work of God. And we do not come into contact with the latter except in the service, where Christ meets us in the means of grace.¹⁰

Lutherans are rightly uncomfortable with the slogan made popular after the Second Vatican Council that "liturgy is the work of the people." Liturgy does not consist in our action, but in the work of God, who stoops down to give us gifts that we cannot obtain for ourselves. Does the passivity of the Lutheran definition leave no room for worship? Does not the *Small Catechism* bid us to "thank, praise, serve, and obey" God? If God serves us sacramentally, do we not also serve Him sacrificially?

To address these questions, we turn to the Post-Communion Collect that Luther included in his 1526 *Deutsche Messe*: "We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever."¹¹

The Good Shepherd Institute

In this Collect, Luther gives doxological expression to a theological proposition that he had made six years earlier in “The Freedom of the Christian,” where he argued “. . . that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. . . . He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love.”¹² The existence of the old Adam is focused on self. The old Adam is curved in on himself, to use the imagery of Luther. This egocentric existence stands in contrast to the life of the new man in Christ. The new man lives outside of himself, for his calling is to faith in Christ and love for the neighbor. Thus Luther continues: “By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.”¹³ Faith is active in love and so takes on flesh and blood in service to the neighbor just as Christ became incarnate not to be served, but to give Himself in service to the world.

The Post-Communion Collect has a pivotal place in the liturgy. It is the hinge that connects God’s service to us in the Sacrament with our service to the neighbor in the world. This thought is also demonstrated in Luther’s hymnody. In his hymn on the Lord’s Supper, “O Lord, We Praise You” (*LW* 238), Luther confesses the blessings bestowed by God in the body and blood of His Son in the first two stanzas. The final stanza is a prayer that the Sacrament might be fruitful in the lives of those who have received the Lord’s testament:

May God bestow on us his grace and favor
To please him with our behavior
And live together here in love and union
Nor repent this blest communion.
O Lord, have mercy!
Let not your good Spirit forsake us,
But that heavenly minded he make us;
Give your Church, Lord, to see
Days of peace and unity.
O Lord, have mercy!

Luther also translated and revised a fifteenth-century hymn generally attributed to John Hus, “Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior” (*LW* 236/237).¹⁴ The ninth stanza of his hymn expresses the thought that the Sacrament both nourishes faith and causes love to flourish:

Let this food your faith so nourish
That by love its fruits may flourish
And your neighbor learn from you
How much God’s wondrous love can do.

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

Luther's understanding of vocation is consistent with his liturgical theology. God serves us sacramentally in the Divine Service as we receive His benefactions by faith, and we serve God sacrificially as we give ourselves to the neighbor in love. The *communio* of the Sacrament exhibits both faith and love according to Luther. "This fellowship is twofold: on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints; on the other hand we permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they and we are able," writes Luther in 1519.¹⁵ In his 1526 treatise, "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—Against the Fanatics," Luther is more pointed:

For it is necessary for each one to know that Christ has given his body, flesh, and blood on the cross to be our treasure and to help us to receive the forgiveness of sins, that is, that we may be saved, redeemed from death and hell.

That is the first principle of Christian doctrine. It is presented to us in the words, and his body and blood are given to us to be received corporeally as a token and confirmation of this fact. To be sure, he did this only once, carrying it out and achieving it on the cross; but he causes it each day anew to be set before us, distributed and poured out through preaching, and he orders us to remember him always and never forget him.

The second principle is love. . . . **As he gives himself for us with his body and blood in order to redeem us from all misery, so we too are to give ourselves with might and main for our neighbor"** (emphasis added).¹⁶

For Luther, the distinction between faith and love is necessary both in liturgy and vocation. In the liturgy faith receives the gifts of Christ. In vocation love gives to the neighbor even as Christ has given Himself to us. The distinction between faith and love lies behind the discussion of sacrifice in Article XXIV of the *Apology*. The *Apology* notes that there are two kinds of sacrifice. First, there is the atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice of propitiation whereby Christ made satisfaction for the sins of the world. This sacrifice has achieved reconciliation between God and humanity and so merits the forgiveness of sins. The other type of sacrifice is the eucharistic sacrifice. It does not merit forgiveness of sins nor does it procure reconciliation with God but is rather a sacrifice of thanksgiving. According to Article XXIV of the *Apology*, eucharistic sacrifices include "the preaching of the gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, indeed, all the good works of the saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those who offer them, nor can they be applied to others so as to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation for others *ex opere operato*. They are performed by those who are already reconciled."¹⁷

The Good Shepherd Institute

Luther and the early Lutherans did not do away with the category of sacrifice. Luther relocated sacrifice. He removed it from the altar and repositioned it in the world. Sacrifice was offered to God indirectly through service to the neighbor. This is “the liturgy after the liturgy.” God’s gifts given us sacramentally in the Divine Service now bear fruit sacrificially as we go back into the world to thank, praise, serve, and obey the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. “The whole of a Christian’s life is liturgical life,” writes William Willimon.¹⁸

This understanding of sacrifice reflects Romans 12, where Paul writes: “I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom 12:1). In the ancient world everyone knew that a sacrifice was dead. The sacrificial victim was slaughtered. To the ears of those who first heard the Apostle’s letter the term “living sacrifice” would have seemed strange, as an oxymoron. Yet Paul is purposeful in his use of this imagery. The body of the Christian is rendered unto God as a living sacrifice, for the Christian has been joined to the death of Jesus in Baptism. Plunged into Jesus’ saving death in Baptism, we now share in His Resurrection from the grave (cf. Rom 6:11). Baptism is the foundation for the Christian life of sacrifice.

Vilmos Vajta writes: “The Christian brings his sacrifice as he renders the obedience, offers the service, and proves the love which his work and calling require of him. The old man dies as he spends himself for his fellow-men. But in this surrender of self, he is joined to Christ and obtains a new life. The work of the Christian in his calling becomes a function of his priesthood, his bodily sacrifice. His work in the calling is a work of faith, the worship of the kingdom of the world.”¹⁹ The sacrifices offered by the royal priesthood are the “spiritual sacrifices” noted in I Peter 2:5: “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” These spiritual sacrifices are what the *Apology* calls “eucharistic sacrifices,” and they embrace all that the believer does in love toward the neighbor flowing from faith in Christ.

Spiritual sacrifices are rendered in the bodily life of the believer as his life is a channel of God’s love and care for the neighbor in need. These sacrifices do not merit salvation or make a person righteous, but rather express love for the neighbor. God is not in need of our good works, but the neighbor is in need of our work. Freed from the notion that he must make himself good in order to earn eternal life, the Christian is directed toward the neighbor’s well-being. In “The Freedom of the Christian,” Luther writes: “Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him.”²⁰

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

Here the Christian is the *larvae dei*, the mask of God, by which God gives daily bread to the inhabitants of the world. In this sense, the Christian is a “little Christ” to his neighbor. Again in “The Freedom of a Christian,” Luther writes: “Just as our neighbor is in need and lacks that in which we abound, so we were in need before God and lacked his mercy. Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another. . . .”²¹ Just as Christ sacrificed Himself for us on the cross, we give ourselves sacrificially to the neighbor in love. This is expressed by Luther in the seventh of his “Invocavit sermons” preached at Wittenberg on March 15, 1522: “We shall now speak of the fruit of this sacrament, which is love; that is, that we should treat our neighbor as God has treated us. Now we have received from God nothing but love and favor, for Christ has pledged and given us his righteousness and everything he has; he has poured out upon us all his treasures, which no man can measure and no angel can understand or fathom, for God is a glowing furnace of love, reaching even from the earth to the heavens. Love, I say, is a fruit of the sacrament.”²² In his 1530 treatise, “Admonition Concerning the Sacrament,” Luther makes a similar point: “Where such faith is thus continually refreshed and renewed, there the heart is also at the same time refreshed anew in its love of the neighbor and is made strong and equipped to do all good works and to resist sin and all temptations of the devil. Since faith cannot be idle, it must demonstrate the fruits of love by doing good and avoiding evil.”²³

Luther’s teaching on the dual existence of the Christian in faith and love leads us to observe a connection with the teaching of the two governments or two kingdoms. Leif Grane points out that for Luther “the place where the two kingdoms are held together is the calling.”²⁴ This calling is lived within the structures of creation. Luther identified these structures as the three “hierarchies” of “the ministry, marriage, and government.” It is within these structures of congregation, political order, and family life (which, for Luther, included the economic realm) that one exercises “the liturgy after the liturgy.” The Christian does not seek to escape or withdraw from the world as in monasticism, but rather he lives out his calling in the particular place where God has located him.

In his “Table of Duties” included in the *Small Catechism*, Luther identifies these duties as “holy orders,” in an obvious play on words over against monastic teaching. Holy people do holy work. Sacrifice is relocated. No doubt Ernst Käsemann was influenced by the older liberalism that pitted “priestly religion” against “prophetic religion”; nevertheless, he does echo a Lutheran theme in his exposition of Romans 12 as he states: “Christian worship does not consist of what is practiced at sacred sites, at sacred times, and with sacred acts (Schlatter). It is the offering of bodily existence in the otherwise profane sphere.”²⁵ In a less polemic tone, Carter Lindberg makes a similar point: “Daily work is a form of worship

The Good Shepherd Institute

within the world (*weltlicher Gottesdienst*) through service to the neighbor.”²⁶ The “thank, praise, serve, and obey” in the conclusion of the Explanation of the First Article find their fulfillment in the Table of Duties.

Luther identifies this service to the neighbor as a genuine *Gottesdienst*. “Now there is no greater service of God than Christian love which helps and serves the needy, as Christ himself will judge and testify at the Last Day. . . ,” says Luther in his 1523 writing, “Ordinance of a Common Chest.”²⁷

The Christian then lives the life of worship in the realm of creation, in the terrain of God’s left-handed regime. This is affirmed in Article XVI of the *Augustana* as the point is made that the Gospel does not undercut secular government, marriage, or occupations within the world “but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person’s calling.”²⁸ Contrary to Rome’s teaching that holiness is to be found in religious pursuits, and the Anabaptist contention that discipleship means disengagement from the world, the *Augsburg Confession* maintains that evangelical perfection is to be found in the fear of God and faith, not in the abandonment of earthly responsibilities.

To flee from the demands that come to us by way of these earthly responsibilities is to flee from the cross that God lays upon us in order to put to death the old man. It is one of the enduring strengths of Gustaf Wingren’s classic study, *Luther on Vocation*, that he demonstrates that in the place of our calling, God destroys the self-confidence of the old Adam who seeks to justify his existence by his own works:

In one’s vocation there is a cross—for prince, husband, father, daughter, for everyone—and on this cross the old human nature is to be crucified. Here the side of baptism which is concerned with death is fulfilled. Christ died on the cross, and one who is baptized unto death with Christ must be put to death by the cross. To understand what is meant by the cross of vocation, we need only remember that vocation is ordained by God to benefit, not him who fulfils the vocation, but the neighbor who, standing alongside, bears his own cross for the sake of others.²⁹

The cross of vocation drives the baptized back to Christ as He enlivens us with His body and blood, so renewing and strengthening us in faith and love. Einar Billing describes the Christian life going on between the two poles of the forgiveness of sins and our calling: “the forgiveness of sins continually restores us to our calling, and our calling . . . continually refers us to the forgiveness of sins.”³⁰ Thus, we see an ongoing rhythm between liturgy and vocation. Served with Christ’s gifts in the liturgy we are sent back into the world to live sacrificially as His royal priesthood. This is not a life that is lived by our own energies or resources

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

but by the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone. It is a life that is lived by the daily return to Baptism in repentance and faith. It is a life sustained by Jesus' words and nourished with His body and blood. In a Maundy Thursday sermon of 1529 Luther exhorted the congregation to use the Sacrament as God's remedy against the world, the flesh, and the devil:

For this reason, because Christ saw all this, he commanded us to pray and instituted the Sacrament for us to administer often, so that we are protected against the devil, world, and flesh. When the devil attacks, come for strength to the dear Word so that you may know Christ and long for the Sacrament! A soldier has his rations and must have food and drink to be strong. In the same way here: those who want to be Christians should not throw the Sacrament to the winds as if they did not need it.³¹

God's holy people live an embattled existence in their various callings in the world. They are ever in need of comfort and refreshment. Therefore the royal priesthood is constantly drawn back to the Divine Service to receive forgiveness of sins over and over again until that day when our Baptism will be completed in the resurrection of the body and our earthly callings will be fulfilled in the eternal Sabbath of the heavenly kingdom.

We conclude by asking the ultimate Lutheran question, "What does this mean" for faithful pastoral practice and the life of the church in our own day? The evangelical understanding of the liturgy might help us recover the robust reality of the doctrine of vocation that has, in large part, been lost in contemporary American Lutheranism. Vocation has been collapsed into what Marc Kolden refers to as "occupationalism."³² Vocation is thought of only in terms of what a person does for a job. By contrast, Luther understood that the Christian is genuinely bi-vocational. He is called first through the Gospel to faith in Jesus Christ, and he is called to occupy a particular station or place in life. The second sense of this calling embraces all that the Christian does in service to the neighbor, not only in a particular occupation but also as a member of the church, a citizen, a spouse, parent, child, or worker. Here the Christian lives in love toward other human beings and is the instrument by which God does His work in the world.

Luther abhorred self-chosen works both in liturgy and daily life. In his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, he writes: "Reason is the devil's bride, which plans some particular course because it does not know what may please God. . . . The best and highest station in life is to love God and one's neighbor. Indeed that station is filled by the ordinary manservant or maidservant who cleans the meanest pot."³³

Medieval Roman Catholicism presupposed a dichotomy between life in the religious orders and life in ordinary callings. It was assumed that the monastic life

The Good Shepherd Institute

guided by the evangelical counsels (i.e., the Sermon on the Mount) provided a more certain path to salvation than secular life regulated by the decalog. American Evangelicalism has spawned what may be referred to as “neo-monasticism.” Like its medieval counterpart, neo-monasticism gives the impression that religious work is more God-pleasing than other tasks and duties associated with life in the world. According to this mindset the believer who makes an evangelism call, serves on a congregational committee, or reads a lesson in the church service is performing more spiritually significant work than the Christian mother who tends to her children, or the Christian who works with integrity in a factory. For the believer all work is holy because he or she is holy and righteous through faith in Christ.

Similar to neo-monasticism is the neo-clericalism that lurks behind the slogan, “Everyone a minister.” This phrase implies that work is worthwhile only insofar as it resembles the work done by pastors. Lay readers are called “Assisting Ministers,” and this practice is advocated on the grounds that it will involve others in the church, as though the faithful reception of Christ’s gifts was insufficient. It is no longer enough to think of your daily life and work as your vocation, now it must be called “your ministry.” When this happens “the vocation of the baptized is no longer the liturgy after the liturgy, but a substitute liturgy.”³⁴

First things first. First God serves us with His gifts in Word and Sacrament. Then we serve God as we live in the freedom of the forgiveness of sins attending to the neighbors that God has put into our world. It is the way of grace and works, faith and love, sacrament and sacrifice. That is how the liturgy is extended into the week.

Notes

1 Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.

2 Carter Lindberg, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 164.

3 Oswald Bayer, “Worship and Theology” in *Worship and Ethics: Lutherans and Anglicans in Dialogue* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 154.

4 *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* [IV:49], in *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 128. [This edition of the *Book of Concord* henceforth indicated as “Kolb/Wengert”.]

5 *The Large Catechism* [II:38], Kolb/Wengert, 436.

6 *The Large Catechism* [I:22], Kolb/Wengert, 388–89.

7 Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1963), 94–152, 276–88.

8 Eugene Brand, “Luther’s Liturgical Surgery,” in *Interpreting Luther’s Legacy: Essays in Honor of Edward C. Fendt*, ed. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 108–19.

9 Bryan Spinks, *Luther’s Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon*

Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation

of the Mass, Grove Liturgical Study, 30 (Bramcote Notts: Grove Books, 1982), 21–37.

10 Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship: An Interpretation*, trans. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 130, 132.

11 *Lutheran Worship*, 153. See also Martin Luther, *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, Martin Luther's Works, vol. 53 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 137–38, and *Works of Martin Luther VI* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), 329–32 for material on background and usage of this collect.

12 Martin Luther, *Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Harold J. Grimm, Luther's Works, vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 371.

13 Ibid.

14 See Robin A. Leaver, "Luther's Catechism Hymns 7. Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1998): 303–12 for an argument that Luther, in fact, substantially re-writes this hymn so that it reflects more clearly his teaching that the body and blood of Christ are present and received in the Sacrament. Leaver also notes the parallel between stanza nine and the post-communion collect (p. 309).

15 Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, Luther's Works, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 67.

16 Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Abdel Ross Wentz, Luther's Works, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 352.

17 *Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV:24*, Kolb/Wengert, 262.

18 William H. Willimon, *The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics are Related* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 18.

19 Vajta, 168–69.

20 Luther's Works, vol. 31, 366.

21 Ibid., 367–68.

22 Martin Luther, *Sermons I*, ed. John W. Doberstein, Luther's Works, vol. 51 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 95.

23 Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament IV*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Martin E. Lehmann, Luther's Works, vol. 38 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 126.

24 Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 174.

25 Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 329. Also note the comment of Paul Rorem: "Forgiven and renewed, we offer ourselves once again to God, not in mystery and ritual at the altar but in the gritty realities of the poor and the mission fields of our neighborhoods and work places" (in "The End of All Offertory Processions," *dialog* 35 [Fall 1996]: 249). Luther speaks in the same way when in a 1527 letter to John Hess, he describes how Christians are to go to the aid of the sick: ". . . I know for certain that this work is pleasing to God and all angels when

The Good Shepherd Institute

I do it in obedience to his will and as a divine service. . . . Godliness is nothing but divine service, and divine service is service to one's neighbor" (in *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert [London: SCM Press, 1955], 238–39).

26 Lindberg, 108.

27 Martin Luther, *Christian in Society II*, ed. Walther I. Brandt, Luther's Works, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 172.

28 *The Augsburg Confession* XVI:5, Kolb/Wengert, 50.

29 Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 29.

30 Einar Billing, *Our Calling*, trans. Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 38.

31 Martin Luther, *The 1529 Holy Week and Easter Sermons of Dr. Martin Luther*, trans. Irving L. Sandberg (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 78.

32 Marc Kolden, "Luther on Vocation," *Word & World* 3 (Fall 1983): 385.

33 Wingren, 88.

34 Carter Lindberg, "The Ministry and Vocation of the Baptized," *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (Winter 1992): 396.

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

Barbara J. Resch

It is a great joy for us Fort Wayne residents to be able to welcome so many of you who have come for this Institute as it convenes for a second time. How appropriate that this second Good Shepherd Institute coincides with the Festival of All Saints. Sunday morning always affords me a foretaste of heaven, but yesterday's service was even more heavenlike as I spotted many of you saints who have come from the east and the west to feast together. We have gathered because of our eagerness to learn about these gifts Christ freely gives to His people of all ages.

In this session we will focus on the reception of these gifts by the children in our congregations, because, unlike this assembly, the Divine Service is offered to an intergenerational community. In contemporary American culture, individuals whose age ranges from newborn to elderly, perhaps a span of close to a century, seldom gather at any other time. All of the influences of our secular lives—restaurants, movies, clothing stores, concerts, radio stations, network television—identify and target age-specific audiences whose needs and preferences are well-known. So the television ads during football games are for beer and trucks, those during the Lawrence Welk Show are for assisted-living facilities and audiologists, and those during the Saturday morning cartoons are for Lucky Charms cereal and Toys R Us. By contrast, the message and intention of the Divine Service are very different. The gifts that we have already heard described in this conference—the gifts of ordinary words, ordinary water, bread and wine made extraordinary for us—are given for all of God's people. There is truly “something for everyone” in this community, including children.

There are some who disagree with this statement and would insist that the Divine Service as conducted according to one of our synodical hymnals, following those rubrics and using a hymnic and choral practice described as “traditional,” is geared toward adults and has neither interest nor relevance for children or teenagers. I will make the point in this paper that, quite to the contrary, a liturgical service provides much of what is developmentally appropriate for children, far more than a newly created and free-form order of service.

I think that this disagreement comes from two misconceptions: the first is one I address every semester when I teach a university course in music methods for the elementary school. Many college students attach so much value to the ability to

The Good Shepherd Institute

read both music and words that they perceive children still in the pre-literate state to be somehow inferior and of lesser intelligence than those who can tell you “Every good boy does fine.” They tend to think that learning isn’t taking place if it can’t be summarized in words and written down. But there are many kinds of learning, and many ways of knowing, some of which cannot (perhaps should not) be summarized in words. Children learn more in their first three years of life than they do in all of their years in school. Some of this learning is cognitive, but they also learn attitudes, behaviors, ways of processing, strategies for solving problems, and a lot about who they are in relation to the world around them. They don’t learn from reading about something, or having someone explain the underlying details. They learn by doing, by being there, watching others do it, and imitating them. The explanations will come later.

The second misconception that leads to the judgment that the Divine Service is not appropriate for children or teenagers may grow from the idea that faith is an intellectual matter and that the Divine Service is an intellectual exercise. Clearly, each person in the gathered congregation is not at the same level of intellectual development and training. My own congregation has members at every educational level, including college graduates, high school students, many who have not yet started school, and an inordinate number of members with advanced degrees in theology. Yet when the pastor sings or speaks “The Lord be with you,” we all respond “And with your spirit.” We all pray together the Lord’s Prayer, we all stand and say together “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” And each Sunday I see little children in their parents’ arms, raising their sleepy heads to sing “Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest” when we sing the Sanctus. The words God has given us to say back to Him in the Divine Service are words we can all say, regardless of whether we understand the fullness of their meaning or are even able to read them off a page.

Among the several theories on how a child’s faith develops, John Westerhoff of Duke University Divinity School describes the formation of a child’s faith as a process like the emergence of the rings of a tree, moving from the heart of the tree outward as the tree grows.¹ The center of the trunk, from which all of the concentric rings develop, is called “experienced faith.” This is the basis for the development of faith and grows not from intellectual knowledge, not from theological understanding, but from experience; not from knowing about, but from doing. In Westerhoff’s words, we act our way into new ways of thinking and feeling. Growth is formation, shaping. In that sense, we include children in the Divine Service because it is a place in which to grow.

Throughout this paper I will use the terms “teach” and “learn” to describe children’s growth as it is shaped in the Divine Service. I use those terms in this sense of nurturing growth, and developing habits, attitudes, and behaviors, not strictly as cognitive activities having to do with thinking and acquiring

information. As we explore the ways in which the Divine Service shapes and encourages this growth, we will look at how children learn, what they learn, and what they learn to be through their participation in the Divine Service.

The Divine Service Teaches Children in the Mode in Which They Naturally Learn

Children, especially preschoolers and those in the early elementary grades, learn through their senses. Their attention is caught by visual images, bright colors, unique sounds and smells, interesting textures to touch. They are fascinated by small details that adults may consider unimportant, and they focus on and remember aspects of a given situation that often escape the attention of adults.

A young father once described to me the way his son played church at age two and one-half. The little boy draped a scarf around his neck with the ends hanging down in front, put in his tape of the St. Paul's Children's Choir singing hymns, and got a broom, which he held upright in front of himself as he processed into the living room. Other parents have told me that their very young children will call that compact disc their "church songs" or will recognize the hymnal at home and call it "the church book." I was standing on the sidewalk outside St. Paul's one Wednesday morning talking with a woman and her three-year-old when the church bells began to chime the hour. The little boy tugged on her hand and tried to pull her toward the big doors, saying "Church! Church!"

Notice how all of these children have remembered non-verbal sensory experiences and associated them with their presence in the Divine Service. The little boy who played church had noticed the colorful stole the pastor was wearing, the movement of the processional cross, the sound of the organ and the voices singing. Having observed this child at various events, I was especially struck by the fact that he had taken in so much, since he was a very active child who seemed always to be running in high gear. The key may be that the attention of preschool children is caught by non-verbal images, at least in part because they are not worrying about processing verbal messages. Many words are spoken from the chancel, words that represent concepts and abstract thoughts that are beyond the understanding of such concrete thinkers and learners. Adults who spend their time speaking, reading, hearing, and reacting to words are much better at dealing with verbal messages, but may also miss some of the sensory ones.

I once distributed a new piece of music to one of my children's choirs at St. Paul's. On the cover was a drawing of a lamb bearing a flag with a cross on it. When I began to tell the children about it, they interrupted me and told me that they had seen this picture before, in one of the stained glass windows in the church. I was skeptical but they insisted: it was the top of the second window from the back on the south side of the balcony, near where they sit when the choir sings. And, of course, they were right. In fifteen years I had not seen this window, but they, when

The Good Shepherd Institute

their attention wandered during the sermon, had seen and remembered that and all of the other windows in their view. This is, of course, an early function of stained glass windows: to present Biblical stories in pictures for the illiterate members of the church. They serve the same function for the preliterate and can be a wonderful reminder of stories learned as well as an example of the visual arts supporting the proclamation of the service, just as the musical arts do.

Architectural design and placement of important objects also communicate nonverbal messages. Moving the baptismal font to a place of prominence at the entrance of the nave reminds children and adults that Baptism is our entrance into God's family, the physical placement of the font telling children that it is important. Physical movement of all of the participants in the service also makes an impression on nonverbal learners. The purposeful movement of a pastor in the chancel from lectern to pulpit to altar, facing the congregation or facing the altar, lifting the elements high, making the sign of the cross—all of this activity is meaningful, and it is perceived as such even before its meaning is understood. For children who move constantly, the physical movement of the worshippers is also significant. Kneeling or assuming a seated prayer posture, standing at important times like the reading of the Gospel or a doxological hymn stanza, turning to face the processional cross are all physical gestures that we do for a reason. I would encourage parents and other caregivers who are with children in church to foster children's participation in all of these physical gestures. They can color and eat Cheerios during long periods of sitting, but opportunities for movement are opportunities for participation with adults in the ritual behaviors of the service.

Many of these points are supported by a recent research project sponsored by Concordia University, River Forest. Entitled "Children in Worship," the study was grounded in Westerhoff's previously-noted theory of faith formation growing from a child's experience.² It investigated what they refer to as "worship" (what we have been referring to as "the Divine Service") as an important source for children's moral, ethical, and spiritual development. In their words, "the Children in Worship project is focusing on the formative aspects of a child's worship experience and the impact of corporate worship on a child's spiritual development." The researchers looked at the environmental features and worship practices of one hundred Lutheran congregations in eleven different locations across the country. By design, 62 were Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 27 were Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and 11 were Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The main researchers were distinguished professors of early childhood education, sociology, and theology. As experts in child development, their environmental checklist of architectural components and chancel appointments that would speak to children through nonverbal messages included: the altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, crucifix, paraments, vestments, candles, eternal light, incense, banners, statues, stained glass windows, and kneelers. Their initial

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

study has not done much more than enumerate the presence or absence of these elements and their correlation with the self-described “worship styles” of the congregations visited. They did find the main physical features of pulpit, altar, and font present in over 90 percent of all churches. They noted that churches that described their services as “traditional” were much more likely to place the baptismal font in a more prominent location, and that newer buildings and those self-described as “contemporary” were less likely to have the physical and iconic features on their list. Services described as “blended” or “mixed” were more likely to have banners hanging in the nave, and over 80 percent of the banners had words as well as symbols. One of the more surprising findings was that eleven of the one hundred churches in the study did not have the most obvious and important symbol of the Christian faith, a cross or crucifix, in the chancel.

Some of the other recommendations made by the researchers include seating families with young children in places where the children can clearly see the activity in the chancel (a practice we follow when we attend sports events and concerts with children), thus in the front of the church rather than the last two pews. I don’t necessarily agree with their recommendation of booster seats for children, but I think sitting on a parent’s lap can provide both a clearer line of sight and a comfortable time for parent and child to be together. And neither they nor I would support ignoring the needs of the other members of the congregation to see and hear. We would all expect that consideration would abound and that allowing the presence of noisy or restless children to destroy the reverence of the Divine Service is not an option either. But as an intergenerational gathering the Divine Service is for believers of all ages and the inclusion of all needs to be encouraged.

The Children in Worship researchers preceded their study with extensive discussion of Westerhoff’s theory of faith formation. In their book *Liturgy and Learning through the Life Cycle*, Westerhoff and co-author William Willimon uphold the value of ritual acts and communal rites that not only form a believing community but also reinforce and rejuvenate it on a regular basis. For children who are experiencing and sorting out new stimuli every day, the rituals of a liturgical service serve to strengthen their growing understandings. The presence of the cross, the tolling of the bell during the Lord’s Prayer, the candles and paraments are not special decorations that are brought out for particular programs. They are always present, constant reminders of the things that are important and that distinguish this time and place. One of the Children in Worship authors said in an interview that an unexpected outcome of the project was that she emerged from it with a new and enormous respect for liturgical worship.

Perhaps as I have enumerated these physical and sensory experiences through which children learn you have thought about the church where you lead or attend worship. Perhaps you have thought “Hmm, we have that, we do that.” And since we may have some preaching to the choir here at The Good Shepherd Institute, it

The Good Shepherd Institute

is likely that you do: if you are a liturgical church, following the rubrics set out for such a church, you may have scored 100 percent on the environmental checklist. But you can continue to do them knowing that they are developmentally appropriate for children.

To summarize thus far: the entry point for learning among young children is through their senses. Until they are adept at processing written and spoken words, they are learning through the nonverbal stimuli they see, hear, smell, and touch. But they are still learning! They are beginning to build intellectual concepts, attitudes, and beliefs based on the regular reiteration of these sensory experiences.

The Divine Service Teaches Children *What They Need to Learn*

Every week I see young children in my parish singing the liturgical responses in the service. I don't know if their parents spend time teaching these during the week. It is possible that they have learned to sing the Kyrie just by being there each week, in the same way that they learn to sing "Happy Birthday," or the theme from *Sesame Street*, or commercials they hear on the radio. Once again, through the regular repetition of these words and melodies, children have, without understanding, come to know the rhythm of Confession and Absolution. They learn the words of the pastor and the words of the congregation, and more than once I have been with children who sang them all.

One Sunday morning at St. Paul's, sitting with my Youth Choir, I heard a voice quietly speaking along with the pastor "Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have had mercy on us children of men and given your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Later I asked him "Andrew, how on earth did you know that by heart?" The boy gave me one of those early adolescent withering looks and said, "Well, I'm here every week, you know."

Listening to the lessons and sermons are effective ways for adults to learn, but I don't know of a better source of our church's doctrine expressed in a way that is memorable for children than the church's hymnbook. Hymns are memorable because music is memorable; music sticks in our minds, whether we like it or not. Hymns are memorable because we are not just listening to them; we are *singing* them. We speak words easily, cheaply; singing words, putting a word on the right note at the right time, takes more effort, and that extra effort makes us remember the words more easily. In addition, it takes longer to move through a sung text, so we have longer to think about the words. And singing is nicer than speaking; as a child told me once when we had spoken rather than sung the Psalm in Matins: "The Psalms are much more beautiful when we sing them."

Especially as children become better able to read and understand words, hymns can give them a succinct child-sized version of their Lutheran Christian belief. In addition to the liturgical responses, think of a hymn like *LW* 212, the hymnic form of the Apostles' Creed. Other hymns are narratives, story-tellers:

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

LW 149, “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing,” which tells the story of Christ’s Ascension into heaven and offers a prayer that we might join Him there.

LW 130, “O Sons and Daughters of the King,” which tells the story of the first Easter day and night and concludes “How blest are they who have not seen and yet whose faith has constant been, for they eternal life shall win. Alleluia.”

LW 275, “Oh Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High,” which traces the life of Christ from his Incarnation to his Ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Children in a Lutheran school or Sunday School, or singing at home with their parents can learn these stanzas one at a time, over several weeks if necessary, as they reconstruct the story.

Many hymns will teach themselves to children because of the hymn’s structure. Some hymns have refrains: the Alleluias in so many Easter hymns, the “Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel” in “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Last Sunday I was able to observe a family of five as we sang “For All the Saints.” The father and sixth-grade daughter shared a hymnal, the mother had her arm around the wiggly second grader and pointed their way through the hymn to help him read the words, and the four-year-old just sat there and looked around. After about the third stanza she seemed to figure out that the last line of Alleluias was going to be the same each time. The next time she tried it out, and after that she sang it each time it appeared in the remaining four stanzas. I don’t think the rest of the family knew this was going on, and the child did not make an issue of it; she simply participated in a small, natural, and developmentally appropriate way.

A lot of Lutheran hymnody has a reputation for being difficult—melodically, textually, and theologically. I have recently undertaken the teaching of *LW* 407, “If God Himself Be for Me I May a Host Defy,” to the third and fourth graders at St. Paul’s.

If God himself be for me, I may a host defy,
For when I pray, before me my foes, confounded, fly.
If Christ, my head and master, befriend me from above,
What foe or what disaster can drive me from his love?

I have seldom heard them sing so robustly as they do in singing this sturdy tune, which they learned very quickly. I realized that there were several words that would need clarification. They already knew what “defy” meant, likewise someone knew “confounded,” “befriend,” “foe,” and “disaster”—they all knew “disaster.” In the third week I checked to see if they all knew what “host” meant. Lots of hands went up: “A host is the guy who gives the party.” The next, also legitimate definition, was “If you have a parasite, you’re the host.” One child, the son of a seminarian from another country, held up his hands reverently, as if they contained the communion host. Eventually I got their attention back (there was a lot of “Ew

The Good Shepherd Institute

yuck” at the parasite definition) and asked if they remembered the multitude of the heavenly host; this was the use of the word “host” in this case. It was a good lesson for me, and a sobering one to think that they had been singing this hymn for two weeks with a flawed understanding.

Clearly it is crucial for parents and teachers to spend time teaching children the meanings of these words. When this is done well hymns can, in fact, be rich sources of expanding vocabularies. They also put into children’s minds and mouths the things that they, as Lutheran Christians, believe. They may not be very good yet at putting into words themselves the things they believe. As they work at that, it is helpful for them to have statements of belief formulated for them.

A friend of mine who teaches Sunday School at First Missionary Church told me that prior to a discussion on faith, he asked his sixth graders to write down how they knew that Christ died and rose from the dead for their sake. He was amazed to see that of his entire class, nearly all had written one of two exact phrases: either “He lives within my heart” or “The Bible tells me so.” He soon realized that both of these (somewhat conflicting) answers were direct quotes from songs; the first from the gospel chorus “He Lives” (“you ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart”) and the second from “Jesus Loves Me” (“Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.”) Perhaps you too have had the experience of having a phrase come into your memory and not being sure if it is a quote from Scripture or from a hymn. What better recommendation for teaching children hymns that are true and accurate statements of what they believe!

I have often made the point in speaking on this subject that we don’t know when any of us will have need of those words that we have placed into our memories. So we teach hymns in advance, preparing not for “if” but “when” we will need them. Every year I teach my children’s choirs a hymn on Baptism and one about death and heaven. They may sing the Baptism hymn on the Baptism of Jesus Sunday or another Sunday in which the lessons refer to our Baptism, or they will be ready if there is a Baptism on a Sunday they are scheduled to sing. Last year the Youth Choir’s hymn about heaven was “And There’s Another Country,” the wonderful pairing of text with the tune THAXTED, which we sang here on Sunday night. They sang it on the Last Sunday of the Church Year, and they sang it at the funeral of the wife of a St. Paul’s faculty member, and again at the memorial service for President Alvin Barry.

One of my university music education majors directs a children’s choir in an Assemblies of God church. Recently she was telling me about how upset she had been by what we are all calling “the events of September 11.” In addition to the uncertainty and sadness felt by nearly every American, she said there was an impact on her church choir in that she had to change all of the music she’d originally chosen for her children’s choir; it all seemed just “too upbeat” now. Perhaps my choices for my choirs would not have been characterized as “upbeat,”

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

but I haven't changed a thing. On September 12 the Youth Choir was working on their music for Reformation, including an anthem that combined "Lord Keep us Steadfast" with Luther's "Grant Peace We Pray in Mercy Lord" (*LW* 219).

Grant peace, we pray, in mercy, Lord; peace in our time, oh send us!
For there is none on earth but you, none other to defend us.
You only, Lord, can fight for us.

After they sang that on Reformation someone told me how appropriate it was, given these times of the uncertainties of war. Of course it was, but it would have been appropriate on September 9 when life seemed much more carefree, and it was appropriate when Luther wrote it in the sixteenth century. And I hope and expect that when these adolescents are in their fifties they may call on this hymn again to give expression to a prayer they may be helpless to frame themselves.

I do not intend to suggest that children should only sing the hymns of which they have full semantic and theological understanding. After all, there are many things we insist that children do without understanding the reasoning behind the deed: buckling their seat belts, washing their hands. We also have them memorize the Lord's Prayer before we begin to guide them in understanding the fullness of meaning. Many hymns of substance will also unfold with meaning over time, and we as adults end up singing hymns whose depths we have not yet plumbed. I know that many of you have experienced life under the cross, suffering in some perhaps unexpected way an illness, abandonment, betrayal, or physical need, and that when the cross is lifted you are the stronger for it. Not the least of this strengthening is a deeper understanding of God's will and faithfulness to us. Whenever I have made this cycle I have emerged with hymns that mean more to me—words that made sense intellectually before this but now describe my own experience. A hymn that says "Great woes may overtake me, yet he will not forsake me. It is his love that sends them; at his best time he ends them" isn't sung the same if you have never had great woes. Who can sing "Behold a Host Arrayed in White" with dry eyes? We can sing about theoretical saints in heaven but then we start to see faces among them: my father-in-law; Robert Preus; my Uncle Hank, the butcher; Al Barry—all with palms in hand singing before the throne. What an awesome picture! My point is that the intellectual and emotional meanings of our substantial hymns will grow with life's every turn, and although a ten-year-old may not yet have experienced great woe, he will someday, and these hymns will become even richer for him.

Is there a place for hymnody that is not so serious and didactic? I think that there is, for both adults and children. But the longer I teach children, the more I realize that we have so little time with them and that we have no time to teach them things that they can throw away because they are forgettable. There is hardly enough time to teach them the things they must remember.

The Good Shepherd Institute

The Divine Service Teaches Children Who They Are

Westerhoff's theory of faith formation states that children move beyond experienced faith to affiliative faith, a stage that includes the sense of belonging and identification with a community. At this stage children will identify themselves as Lutherans or Baptists, or as members of St. John's. Children will also have formed a sense of what that means, of what makes them different from Roman Catholics, or from children who are unchurched. These marks of identity are still grounded in the child's experience and may still be more affective than intellectual at this point. In other words, the child knows that there are things he and his family value, celebrate, and participate in that may be different from those of his friend's family, but he may not be able to explain why they value and do these things differently.

One basic difference is that Christians operate in another time zone. Children learn this in the Divine Service because the big rhythm of the church year transcends that of the natural seasons. Institutions are known by the days and events they consider special; families sustain their identity through the celebrations they observe. Everybody comes home for Grandma's birthday. We always open up the lake cottage on Memorial Day. Likewise the church has accents in its rhythm that mark particular observances it considers important: events in the life of Christ, saints days, and the countdown to the last Sunday of the church year. Parents and teachers may have to be especially diligent in remembering their Christian identity during a time like Advent, when the rest of the world is having Christmas parties during the entire month of December and when Hallmark sells an Advent calendar with a picture of Santa's workshop and a toy to be opened each day until Christmas. God's time is not the same as the world's time, and coming into the Divine Service is indeed arriving in a different time zone.

Just as this planned repetition of the church year provides a structure to the child's emerging sense of large-scale time, the reiteration of the liturgy provides a structure to the child's perception of the Divine Service. Again, the value of ritual behaviors in the service are many: the familiar cues to stand, sit, sing, listen, and speak give an order to this time and a sense of comforting familiarity. In our postmodern era ritual is considered restrictive, and we have seen this notion carried out in innumerable "creative" attempts to restructure, or de-structure, the service. That lack of order is unsettling to a developing child who needs order and structure to feel comfortable. I have taken my Youth Choir to several other churches to sing, and have noted that they relax noticeably when it is clear that the liturgy is one they know. They will not have to find a lot of pages, to follow new words, to fear making a mistake. The liturgy is liberating!

Another life pattern that is carried out in the Divine Service is the ordering principle of repetition and contrast. I was discussing this with one of my university classes recently as we found similarities between the musical principle of theme

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

and variation and the artistic principle of unity and variety. In each case something stayed the same, but not so much the same that it was boring; something was also different. The students came up with other examples in their lives: eating the same breakfast every day (too much repetition) or going on a month-long road trip (too much variety.) They talked about attaining a satisfying balance in one's life; one winsome student pointed out that they came to my class every Tuesday and Thursday at 2:30 p.m. but that class was always new and different.

The use of the Ordinary and the Propers is a perfect example of the balance of unity and variety. Many of the elements of the Divine Service remain in place, but others change according to the church year. This structure is very comfortable for children: we always sing the Psalm in Matins, but it's a different Psalm each time. There are always paraments on the altar, but the color of the paraments will change. We always stand to hear the pastor read the Gospel lesson, but the lesson will be different each week. We always sing the main parts of the Ordinary, except perhaps in Lent. This pattern is satisfying mentally and emotionally and gives children a pattern for corporate worship that is stable as well as interesting.

This patterning means that as they grow children also develop a sense of what is appropriate for a given context, a judgment built on what they have experienced in that context. I heard my own adult offspring referring to a song as "roller dome music." When I asked what that was, they replied that it was the music they had heard and skated to at the Roller Dome, songs that forever after, even when heard in another context, were classified as belonging to the genre of "roller dome music."

A fascinating book called *Songs in Their Heads* is a collection of interviews and observations about the meaning of music in children's lives.³ One child spoke with the interviewer about her love for the tambouritza music played by a small group of instruments from her native Croatia. When the interviewer asked if the group ever played at the girl's school she replied, "It wouldn't be right here (in school.) Each music belongs somewhere: the songs in music class, band room music, tambouritza music, church songs, and the radio songs. For me, they are all right—in the right place, at the right time."

They would all be "right" or acceptable to this child, but each was right in its own place. I have detected the same attitude from my young choir members. If we are singing a silly song as a warm-up or to develop a musical skill, someone will invariably ask, "Are we singing this in church?!" and someone else will always respond icily, "Of course not!" I am currently teaching the younger children a Christmas song, a Spanish carol whose refrain is simply "fa la la." I often teach the children a difficult melody using a neutral syllable or solfege syllables, so they are not surprised to be singing this one on "fa la la." As they left last week someone asked me when they would learn the words to that part and I replied, somewhat sheepishly, that those were the words. They looked at me with great distrust. At the

The Good Shepherd Institute

end of the day a child returned, a child who takes church choir very seriously, with the suggestion that instead of “fa la la” we could sing “Christ is born, yes Christ is born, Christ is born, yes Christ is born,” *or* “Gloria O gloria, gloria o gloria.” In her own very perceptive way she is trying to realign the characteristics of something that seems out of sync to her. If she is concerned, it seems to me that there may be a larger impact of the “fa la la’s.” Kantor Resch spoke about the importance of making musical choices, and this may be one of those difficult times.

Regular participation in the ritual grows into the sense that this is the appropriate way to do things. In other words, what children do and hear in the service becomes their idea of what should be done and heard in the service. Westerhoff and Willimon write about acting our way into new ways of thinking and feeling. So a weekly experience with a service that begins with a pastor booming out “Good morning! Oh, you can do better than that: GOOD MORNING” indoctrinates the child into a perception about formality in church as well as who is issuing the greeting here. The singers in my Youth Choir have grown up in a context where the service begins with a Trinitarian invocation or the words “O Lord, open my lips.” When I took them to another church to sing one Sunday, the pastor began with a quiet and dignified “Good morning” and most of them looked at each other and started to giggle. This isn’t how church starts!

On the other hand, a different hymnic tradition or a boisterous informality might be the standard for another child. The research I did for my dissertation in the mid-90s indicated that attitudes are born out of experience, and that norms for appropriateness last into the teenage years.⁴

Finally, realize that the words and actions children and adults perform in the Divine Service identify them as part of a larger group. This season of patriotic fervor in our country brought to my attention an interesting example of the importance of identification with a community. In my teacher education classes I have always made the point that songs for children must be developmentally appropriate: the child should be able to handle the pitch range and melodic shape, should understand the meaning of the words, should grasp the emotional import of the text. We have always reviewed the array of patriotic songs and decided which ones might be suitable for which grade level. For example, in kindergarten and first grade, “This Land is Your Land,” which is repetitive, has a narrow pitch range, and talks about concrete geographical features of the country. For slightly older children, “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” then later “America the Beautiful.” What about “The Star Spangled Banner,” our national anthem? Well, it spans an octave and a fifth, is either too high or too low, it has a lot of difficult words, it talks about cannons and rockets being fired at our country during a battle, so it is clearly more appropriate for older elementary students. A few weeks ago I had a visit from a former student, now a teacher. She began with “I know you said we shouldn’t teach the national anthem to first graders,” and related that her school was now holding

Children in Worship: A Place to Grow

weekly assemblies that began with the “Pledge of Allegiance” and the singing of the national anthem. After the first week the first and second graders came to music class with an agenda: teach us “The Star Spangled Banner.” When she protested that it was a very hard song, a child reportedly told her “We want to stand up and be Americans just like the bigger kids.” So she is teaching it, although she knows they won’t understand or master all the words or sing well on the high notes or the low notes. They will, however, sing as part of a united community.

This is precisely why we include children in the Divine Service—so they can stand and be part of a community. This community spans national and ideological boundaries, intellectual status, and generational guidelines. It extends behind us for centuries and ahead of us for no one knows how long. Our children are a part of it now and will continue to be. At this point they will not understand or pronounce all of the words correctly, nor may they sing all of the notes right. But they are learning about their relationship to their God, they are saying the words He has given them to say, and they are beginning to practice a lifelong habit that will grow in richness as they grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically. So please welcome them into this place in which they will grow, be attentive to the ways in which they learn, and help them through support and example to be the people God intends.

Notes

1 John H. Westerhoff and William H. Willimon, *Liturgy and Learning through the Life Cycle* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).

2 Shirley K. Morgenthaler, Peter M. Becker, and Gary L. Bertels, *Children in Worship: Lessons from Research* (River Forest, Ill.: Pillars Press, 1999).

3 Patricia Shehan Campbell, *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children’s Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

4 Barbara J. Resch, “Adolescents’ Attitudes Toward the Appropriateness of Religious Music” (D.Mus.Ed. diss., Indiana University, 1996).

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

Paul W. Hofreiter

Bach gives us hope when we are afraid;
he gives us courage when we despair;
he comforts us when we are tired;
he makes us pray when we are sad;
and he makes us sing when we are full of joy.¹

This quote from Uwe Siemon-Netto's article, "J. S. Bach in Japan," aptly introduces the subject of Bach and the Divine Service, for indeed, many of those gifts offered humankind in the Divine Service are alluded to in this quote: hope, courage, comfort, prayer, and song. If Bach's music, particularly his cantatas, passions, masses, and other church music, has this remarkable effect on the listener in these modern times, it may be deduced that there is something more profound occurring than simply one being "moved" by a composer from the past. One of Bach's final statements of faith offers one "with ears to hear" a reflection through word and music of the Divine Service.

In terms of the emphasis here on the Divine Service from a Lutheran perspective, a quote from David P. Scaer comes to mind: "Bach is the only person who keeps me a Lutheran."² This is a radical statement! Why does Bach have such a remarkable impact on atheists, agnostics, laypersons, musicians, and theologians alike? This "fifth evangelist," a term that has been applied to Bach, seems to have a universal effect on believers and non-believers alike. This universality may be understood best in connection with Bach's confessional Lutheran orthodoxy. Scaer indicates that Bach's theology is consistent with that of Luther. If that is the case, then a serious investigation of the B-Minor Mass in connection with the Divine Service is warranted.

Until the not-too-distant past, musicologists believed that Johann Sebastian Bach was mainly focused on his so-called abstract works—the *Musical Offering* and the *Art of Fugue*—during his final years. The assumption was that Bach no longer felt inclined to compose church music or other music that might have related to his Christian faith. In recent times, however, scholars have concluded that Bach was likewise preoccupied with the completion of his B-Minor Mass during and after this period of experimentation.³ The *Thomaskantor*, today known

The Good Shepherd Institute

world-wide for his cycles of cantatas for the liturgical year, appears to have devoted himself to a summary of all he believed and represented as a Lutheran and musician by completing a setting of the Latin Mass he had begun in 1724.⁴ The irony is, of course, that it is now no longer possible to support the claim that the aging composer lost interest in expressions of faith as he concentrated on more “esoteric” matters of mathematical and abstract forms. The B-Minor Mass, BWV 232, thus became for Bach and for all of humanity his *magnum opus*, for the B-Minor Mass transcends the potential limitations of functional church music and is, in essence, a living, breathing proclamation of the Gospel of Christ.

Why did old Bach spend his final energies⁵ on a musical statement of faith that adheres solely to the Latin text of the Mass rather than reaching into the treasure of extrabiblical poetry he had used in his earlier compositions dealing with the things of Christ? After all, his cantatas and passions abound with such texts. It is from these works that one may become intimately acquainted with Bach as an expositor and interpreter of Scripture as one observes the manner in which he frequently utilized poetry to offer explication of Scripture.⁶ However, in the B-Minor Mass we still find Bach offering commentary and explication, but through different means. In this monumental work, the musical and compositional devices employed supplant the roles previously afforded by commentary in the “libretti” for the cantatas. The music itself offers the commentary on the Word as contained in the Latin text as Bach presents movement after movement of momentum via the various stylistic compositional idioms available to him. His genius, in an entirely unselfconscious manner, summed up the era in which he composed while simultaneously opening the doors to a new era of musical thought as he concentrated on a solely confessional, orthodox Lutheran interpretation of the Latin text.⁷ The “high Baroque” cannot get higher than this extraordinary work with its comprehensive statement of faith. Perhaps this is one reason why the impact of the B-Minor Mass was and is still so profound; perhaps “abstract” may still be applied in describing this work in terms of the transcendental realm; and perhaps the composer’s *Musical Offering* and *Art of Fugue* were, besides remarkable compositions unto themselves, the groundwork necessary for Bach’s completion of his Mass as the summation of his musical art. While Bach had always used his remarkably skillful technique as a composer in his church cantatas and passions to offer musical depiction of the meaning in the text, in this last work one discovers that it is purely and solely his compositional technique that offers such clarity to the doctrinal positions he believed and confessed. Even in the dawn of the twenty-first century, there is still no doubt as to what Bach believed. If nothing remained of his corpus of musical compositions but the B-Minor Mass, Bach would most likely still be perceived today as a Lutheran and a musical genius.

The B-Minor Mass, even in this so-called “post-Christian” era, still resonates among Christians and non-Christians alike. Our Lord is using this work as a “means of grace,” if one may be permitted to place a musical composition so wedded with the Word as this in the realm of grace. I am not for one moment

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

suggesting that the work itself is a sacrament. But grace there is in this Mass as the composer skillfully weaves into the fabric of the work by means of compositional techniques the various distinctive theological emphases found in Lutheranism, such as a high Christology, justification and sanctification,⁸ Law and Gospel,⁹ the Sacraments, *theologia crucis*, *simul iustus et peccator*, the *finitum capax infiniti*, and eschatological hope. It is Bach's emphasis on the *eschatos* that most remarkably reflects the Divine Service.

Thus, the question arises, what did this work mean to Bach himself, and why does this work have such a profound effect on performers and listeners even today, including those who are not Christians? Bach scholar Christoph Wolff explains it from one viewpoint:

. . . as he grew older, the Mass in B minor must have seemed to him to be a bequest to his successors and to the future; the concern to complete and perfect it preoccupied him virtually till his dying breath.¹⁰

Wolff applies this statement to Bach's preoccupation with his place in history, particularly, as he states, "in the microcosm of his own family."¹¹

But perhaps a more compelling case may be made theologically in discovering an emphasis on eschatological hope as infused throughout this monumental work. Bach, in his autumn years, found solace in finishing what he had begun in 1724. Thus Bach, in his valedictory statement of faith,¹² offers the listener the whole of the objectivity of orthodox Lutheran theology by means of the use of compositional gestures and techniques. As we shall see, for Bach the *eschatos* was a central emphasis in his setting of the Mass, and Bach appropriates this emphasis as a component of the Divine Service, connected specifically with the "Gratias tibi" ("We give thanks to You") and the "Dona nobis pacem" ("Grant us peace").

The Genesis and Chronology of the B-Minor Mass

The earliest music that eventually found its way into the completed Mass actually dates from 1714. Bach's Cantata BWV 12, *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, was composed for the Third Sunday after Easter while Bach was at Weimar.¹³ While this music would be transformed into the "Crucifixus" for the B-Minor Mass as reworked sometime between 1747–1749, Bach certainly did not intend, at the time of the composition of BWV 12, that this chorus would become the music utilized for a future *Missa tota*. The significance of this transformation will be discussed below in connection with Bach's use of parody as theological statement.

Thus it is not until 1724 in Leipzig that we discover Bach creating a musical setting of a portion of the Latin text that would eventually be incorporated into the B-Minor Mass. This Sanctus movement was composed for Christmas Day of that

The Good Shepherd Institute

year.¹⁴ In terms of the Ordinary of the Latin Mass, Bach was aware of the eucharistic significance and use of the text. One may surmise that the 1724 setting was intended for liturgical use.

In 1733, Bach composed a setting of the *Missa* (that is, the Kyrie and Gloria from the Ordinary) in hopes of receiving an appointment to the Dresden court.¹⁵ It appears that Bach was restless at Leipzig as he poured his creative energies into a dedicatory composition for Friedrich August II. Perhaps Luther's term, *anfechtungen*,¹⁶ could be applied to the composition of the Kyrie. One can only speculate. But history produced what we know as the Kyrie and Gloria settings of the B-Minor Mass, though Bach did make subtle changes in certain parts of the Gloria when he later reworked the material into the larger *Missa tota*. It is likely that the *Missa* was performed at Dresden. However, despite the substantial scope and expansive nature of the music Bach composed for the *Missa*, it appears the composer was still not thinking of this music as part of a potential complete Mass setting.¹⁷

For the next fourteen years there seems to be little indication that Bach continued work on the Mass. In terms of rethinking the work as a *Missa tota*, it is not until 1747, three years before his death, that Bach began work on the Credo. It appears that this is the period in Bach's life where he became preoccupied with offering a theological statement that would represent the culmination of his life's work. In the Credo section of the Mass, which Bach titled *Symbolum Nicenum*, much of the musical material is derived from earlier compositions, though in such a fashion that the compositional unity of the completed Mass is never compromised. It was also within the years 1747–1749 that Bach assembled the final movements of the Mass: the “Osanna in excelsis,” the “Benedictus,” the *Agnus Dei*, and the “Dona nobis pacem.”

Thus it is clear that the period in which Bach was contributing music to the work that would become the B-Minor Mass spanned from 1714 (if one includes the music from Cantata BWV 12) through 1749. It appears that the tension between the “not yet” and the “now” may apply not only to theology, but the act of musical composition as well. Perhaps Bach was acutely aware of this connection as he sought to complete this work “to the glory of God alone.”¹⁸ Conceivably, the comfort offered through the text of the sections of the Mass he completed in his final years likewise provided eschatological hope for the composer.

Bach's Use of Parody as Theological Statement

During the Baroque period it was standard practice to borrow music from one's own output as well as that of other composers. There were no concerns of copyright infringement. On the contrary, the use of another composer's material arranged or transcribed for other musical purposes was even viewed as eulogistic. For Bach this technique of musical composition was no exception as he arranged

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

the music of other composers for his own purposes on occasion.¹⁹ This principle was also one method of learning the craft of musical composition.²⁰

With the constraints frequently placed on Bach with his weekly production of cantatas and other music, it is not uncommon to discover Bach borrowing from earlier pieces. This technique, most skillful in Bach's usage, is referred to as "parody," a compositional technique that was prevalent during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and one that Bach utilized to perfection.

However, the use of parody in the B-Minor Mass was not a shortcut for Bach. In the case of the B-Minor Mass, Bach's use of parody sheds light on the deeper theological emphases contained and encountered in the final version. The music he borrowed from earlier works was originally wedded to a Biblical or literary text, and in a singular way, conjoined with the meaning the composer wished to convey in the relevant section of the Mass where the music was applied anew. Hence, the theological meaning inherent in the original version found its manifestation in the final version employed in the Mass. With this one instance, one may perhaps apply the saying to this process for Bach that is usually reserved solely for theology: "that which is hidden shall be revealed."²¹ With Bach's prudent attention to detail regarding his Christological articulation through musical expression, with a particular emphasis on the *theologia crucis*, this application of the Scripture may not be totally inappropriate. Here are a few examples of parody that may help shed some light in viewing the B-Minor Mass as a reflection of the Divine Service.

The first instance of parody may be found in the "Gratias agimus tibi" movement of the Gloria. The original version was a setting of the chorus, *Wir danken dir, Gott* from Cantata BWV 29, composed in 1731. The original text in German is nearly identical to the "Gratias" in the Mass:

BWV 29

*Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir,
Und verkündigen deine Wunder.
We thank Thee, Lord, we thank Thee,
And we marvel at all Thy wonders.*²²

BWV 232

*Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.*²³

While there are subtle changes, the essence of the original remains the same. It is necessary to consider the manner in which "thanksgiving" fits into the scheme of the *Missa tota*, particularly as Bach interprets this "thanksgiving" eschatologically, and in the context of the Divine Service. This will be addressed later, for one may discern the significance of Bach's utilization of this same music for the "Dona

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nobis pacem” in concluding the Mass.

Another significant instance of parody also occurs within the Gloria in the “Qui tollis.” Here Bach looks back to his Leipzig Cantata BWV 46 of 1723, *Schauet doch und sehet, ob irgend ein Schmerz sei*. The mood of the original chorus translates placidly, as Bach infuses his music into the Latin text:

BWV 46

*Schauet doch und sehet, ob irgend ein Schmerz sei
Mein Schmerz, der mich getroffen hat. Denn der Herr
hat mich voll Jammers gemacht am Tage seines grimmigen Zorns.*

Look ye then and see if there be any sorrow like to
that which is done to me. Wherewith God
hath afflicted my soul, the day that knew His terrible wrath.²⁴

BWV 232

*Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Suscipe deprecationem nostram.*

Thou who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou who takest away the sins of the world,
Receive our prayer.

Christ could well have stated the text found in BWV 46 as He approached, was nailed to, and lifted upon the cross. Thus as Jesus Christ is raised so that the sins of the world may be forgiven, Bach perceptively observes the association between the original text of BWV 46 and the Latin “Qui tollis,” replete with the original instrumentation that includes two flutes. As suggested by Robin Leaver,²⁵ flutes in the New Testament²⁶ indicate mourning and sorrow,²⁷ thus the connection of Christ’s sorrow with the sorrow of humanity, though Christ’s sorrow is a sorrow unto death that the world might have life. Herein is no “mourner’s bench,” but an objective reality expressed via objective means such as a falling triad motif. What other device but a descending triad would make sense? The “Divine Triad” is active throughout eternity for the sake of salvation, and Bach’s masterful understanding offers the listener entry into the realm of objective truth.

It is believed that the opening Credo of the *Symbolum Nicenum* was taken from a chorus, “Credo in unum Deum” in G, composed circa 1747–1748. While there are no supporting documents for proof, one must trust the scholars on this.²⁸ Certainly Bach was considering at this point in his life an extensive confessional proclamation.

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

The opening chorus of Cantata BWV 171, *Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm*, was transmuted as the second movement of the *Symbolum Nicenum*. This movement of the cantata, written for New Year's Day 1729, was already based on an earlier work about which little is known.²⁹ The texts of the original and the Latin are as follows:

BWV 171

Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm bis an der Welt Ende.

God, as Thy Name is, so is Thy praise to where the earth doth end.³⁰

BWV 232

Credo in unum Deum, Pater omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

The text of the opening chorus of BWV 171, significantly, is followed by this aria:

Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen,

Gehet deines Namens Ruhm.

Alles, was die Lippen rührt,

Alles, was noch Odem führt,

Wird dich in der Macht erhöhen.

Lord, as far as clouds in Heaven

Spreads Thy glory and Thy Name.

Ev'ry creature drawing breath,

Ev'ry soul from birth to death,

God Almighty magnifieth.³¹

When viewed together, the texts from BWV 171 discuss God's creation; thus, the First Article of the Nicene Creed is inferred in the 1729 setting. This New Year's Day cantata makes reference to new things. Could Bach have made a connection between the First Article as beginning or creating anew? The almighty Maker "magnifieth" all aspects of His creation from birth to death. Could Christ, the first-born of all creation (begotten, not made) here be viewed by Bach as well, making central the Second Article in terms of Christological significance? That Bach favors the use of this material for the second movement of the Credo may be determinative.

Sketches for the duet "Ich bin deine, du bist meine" ("I am yours, you are mine"), BWV 213, from 1733, are not extant. However, George Stauffer and John Butt agree that this music was incorporated into the Second Article, the "Et in

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unum Dominum” section of the *Symbolum Nicenum*.³² The significance of this Butt considers

instructive. Its close imitation is ideally suited to the paired text of the love duet and it was clearly this element—it’s ‘two-in-oneness’—that also rendered it appropriate for a text dealing with the second element of the Trinity, Jesus Christ.³³

Of course, the title of BWV 213 is derived from the Song of Songs 2:16 and 6:3. Without offering detailed analysis of how various theologians have viewed this Old Testament book, it cannot be argued that the intimacy inherent in these verses serves as appropriate expression of the intimacy of the Father and the Son. Christ, who is the image of the invisible God³⁴ is depicted in this duet by means of canonic imitation, a brilliant touch on Bach’s part in terms of the text of the entire movement:

*Et in unum dominum, Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum.
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia secula unigenitum. Et ex Patre
natum ante omnia secula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui, propter nos homines, et propter nostram
salutem, descendit de coelis.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages. God of God, light of light,
true God of true God; begotten not made; consubstantial with the Father;
by Whom all things were made. Who for us men, and our salvation,
came down from heaven.

One of the most fascinating utilizations of parody may be found in examining Cantata BWV 12. The music of the opening chorus of the cantata, *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, was infused into the “Crucifixus” text of the *Symbolum Nicenum*. Chromaticism during the Baroque period could represent death, Satan, evil, and the like. The technique of “ground bass” or “chaconne” drives the point home even further. It is the repetition of this bass line with its harmonic implications that may represent the aspects of temporality and eternity on the cross. The eternal sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world,³⁵ is made more poignant by each repetition. The prophets prophesied the event. No theology of glory could interrupt the divine will of God.

The texts are interconnected not only by the elements of emotion, but also by the “sign of Jesus,” the cross itself:

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

BWV 12

Weinen, Klagen,

Sorgen, Zagen,

Angst und Not

Sind der Christen Tränenbrot,

Die das Zeichen Jesu tragen.

Weeping, lamenting,

Worrying, fearing,

Anxiety and distress

Are the tearful bread of Christians

Who bear the *sign of Jesus*. (italics added)

BWV 232

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato

passus et sepultus est.

He was crucified also for us, suffered under

Pontius Pilate, and was buried.

While the earlier cantata was describing the disciples' sadness at Jesus' departure, as indicated in the Gospel reading (Jn 16:16–23), the tears and sighing (as musical motif) become an important characteristic in the ensuing "Crucifixus." In addition to the chromatic ground bass, the death of Christ is depicted through the use of falling vocal lines and the reappearance of the flutes.

The "Et expecto" movement of the *Symbolum Nicenum* is derived from the second movement of Cantata BWV 120, *Gott, man lobet dich in der Stille*. The music in this instance goes through a less subtle transformation than is the case with the other parodies. The texts for the original cantata and the "Et expecto" are as follows:

BWV 120

Jauchzet, ihr erfreuten Stimmen,

Steiget bis zum Himmel 'nauf!

Lobet Gott im Heiligtum

Und rehebet seinen Ruhm;

Seine Güte,

Sein erbarmendes Gemüte

Hört zu keinen Zeiten auf!

Shout ye, all ye joyful voices,

Mounting up to Heaven climb.

Praise ye God on high enthroned,

Let your song be full entoned;

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His compassion,
Show to us in richest fashion,
Ceases not through endless time.³⁶

BWV 232

Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum.

Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

And I await the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the world to come. Amen.

Connections abound between the earlier text and the Latin: “Mounting up to heaven climb” (BWV 120) “the resurrection of the dead” (BWV 232), “Ceases not thru endless time” (BWV 120), “life of the world to come” (BWV 232). The final section of the Third Article of the Nicene Creed offers the “shouts” from the earlier text by use of the trumpets and drums. Here Bach creates a more succinct music than is the case with the earlier version while expanding the inner harmonic movement. The waiting for the life to come has hints of realized eschatology from a Christological perspective, even though the Christian is still in the mode of inaugurated eschatology.

There is an important hermeneutical element present in this transition from cantata to Mass as well. One of the texts used for this cantata is Psalm 65:1, which states: “Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; and to You the vow shall be performed.” Though Psalm 65:2 does not appear in the cantata proper, still one reads (as surely did Bach): “O You who hear prayer, to You all flesh will come.” There is no uncertainty as to Bach’s understanding of this psalm text in terms of eschatological hope. In the original cantata, Psalm 65:1 is sung meditatively as a solo aria rather than joyful exposition with chorus and orchestra. It is only through an understanding of the destiny of “all flesh” in terms of the *eschatos* that one would offer such a unique setting of this text.

It is also possible that other sections of the Mass found their origin in earlier music. However, the issue is not how much music Bach “borrowed” from himself in setting the *Missa tota*. Considering the multifarious styles available to Bach, it appears the *Thomaskantor* was able to create an extensive work with thematic and stylistic unity despite the fact he chose ancient and modern compositional techniques in his application of the texts. The stylistic and compositional unity was never compromised in this work as his musical genius and proclivity for theological statement were undeniably sparked in completing the B-Minor Mass.³⁷

Excursus—Music: Not as Sacrament, but Sacramental

Without Christ there is no salvation. Christ comes to His own through Word and Sacrament. It is through these means that grace is imparted. Scaer has stated:

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

The Father is the Lover, Jesus is the Loved One—the Beloved. When Love hits the cross, Love moves through the cross into grace. Through the sacraments we participate in Jesus.³⁸

During the Reformation the Lutheran Church split with Rome’s doctrine of seven sacraments, confessing Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as means of grace. The origin of the sacraments is indicated further by Scaer:

The sacraments have their origin in Christ’s death. With two angels at his side, one angel holds the Baptismal font to catch the water flowing from His pierced side as the other collects the blood.³⁹

If salvation is God’s activity in our life through these means of grace, there can be no salvation apart from them.

However, the premise of the remaining section of this excursus is that the B-Minor Mass is the Word set to music, music of absolutely transcendental character; while one could not presume to say that the notes of Bach are “God-breathed” in the sense the Scriptures are, they are certainly inspired. St. Paul proclaims, “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”⁴⁰ Law and Gospel are inherent in the Latin text as well as in Bach’s setting. (All one needs to know is the translation of the Latin in one’s own language!)

Is it not possible that the yearning even unregenerate humanity senses in the B-Minor Mass is eschatological hope, the “not yet” in which Christians hope and believe? Is it not possible that the unregenerate person could hear this Mass and proclaim, “I must be baptized!”?

from *Symbolum Nicenum*:

Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

This is not to infer that music is a sacrament. Jesus did not institute music or singing as a sacrament, though he did participate in the singing of a hymn (or hymns) on the night in which he was betrayed.⁴¹ It is possible that one of the texts he sang might have been Psalm 118, which contains Martin Luther’s favorite verse, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.”⁴²

However, Luther called music “Frau Musica,”⁴³ and in his preface to Johann Walter’s 1538 “Glory and Praise of the Laudable Art of Music,” Luther penned this preface in the form of a poem, putting “his words on the lips of ‘Frau Musica.’”⁴⁴ The following excerpt offers insight into Luther’s understanding of music:

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But thanks be first to God, our Lord,
Who created her [music] by his Word
To be his own beloved songstress
And of *musica* a mistress.
For our dear Lord she sings her song
In praise of him the whole day long;
To him I give my melody
And thanks in all eternity.⁴⁵

Luther obviously viewed music with high regard. His statement, “I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise,” is one of his most famous. The reformer composed hymns and motets. He saw inherent in the craft of musical composition the connection with Law and Gospel.⁴⁶ In praising Josquin’s music he stated:

What is law doesn’t make progress, but what is gospel does. God has preached the gospel through music, too, as may be seen in Josquin, all of whose compositions flow freely, gently, and cheerfully, are not forced or cramped by rules, and are like the song of the finch.⁴⁷

As related to the Latin text of the Mass, Peter Brunner’s statement might apply, particularly in correlation to Bach’s setting:

The word form of this poetry would be incomplete if the words were merely spoken; they insist on being sung. The word’s real essence is first attained when it is seized by the musically animated tone. Since “a song involves a being native to two worlds,” this composition first achieves completion when its text is clad in melody.⁴⁸

Bach’s B-Minor Mass more than meets the criteria Luther, Brunner, and other theologians demand of music. While this work was not composed for liturgical use in its final form, it is a picture or portrayal of the liturgy, and the listener is even drawn to the never-ending heavenly liturgy. The “not yet” of eternity is present in this work, but so too is the “now” of the human condition. Thus theological counterpoint is interlaced throughout the Mass, offering the listener glimpses of both inaugurated and realized eschatology.

Music, just as in all aspects of human existence, is brimming with emotional/intellectual contrast and paradox.⁴⁹ Major and minor keys, so-called masculine and feminine themes, contrapuntal textures and techniques, faster and slower tempi, all reflect the tensions and resolutions of our human condition. The *sense* of stern warning inherent in the Law and the *sense* of comforting grace

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

inherent in the Gospel are mirrored in music, whether the composer is aware of this or not. While music *itself* is not salvific in the purely biblical sense, nonetheless the created order reflects the glory of God. Certainly the created work of His created ones reflects the judgment and mercy paradox, just as nature mirrors those same dichotomies. As Paul Gerhardt states in one of his hymns:

Evening and morning,
Sunset and dawning,
Wealth, peace, and gladness,
Comfort in sadness
These are your works and bring glory to you . . .

Ills that still grieve me
Soon are to leave me;
Though billows tower
And winds gain power,
After the storm the fair sun shows its face . . .⁵⁰

It is most probable that all human beings, at some point in their lives, have heard a piece of music and responded by way of tears, contrition, renewed strength, repentance, or joy. While there may be a multitude of techniques that a composer might employ (albeit subconsciously in most cases) to symbolize this sense of “Law and Gospel,” most composers are likely unaware of these unique traits inherent in their music. There is the instinctive aspect of creativity to consider, and perhaps this instinct is truly inspiration. Perhaps God is, in some fashion, touching this or that composer. Of one thing one can be assured, the creativity itself is gift from the Creator meant as gift to His creation. In its purest form, the art will glorify the One from whom all creativity originates.

Thus music may be viewed as a *reflection* of theology if not a sacrament. From a compositional perspective, the creative activity of the *Christian*, and, more specifically, Lutheran composer must reflect the activity that has already been revealed through the Word and Sacrament. Surely for Bach this was the case, for one may even observe these characteristics in his instrumental music. Michael Marissen states:

According to Lutherans, especially seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Lutherans, the true purpose of music, including instrumental music, even apart from its liturgical uses, was to glorify God and to uplift people spiritually by turning their minds to heavenly matters.⁵¹

And of course, more specifically, Bach’s church music has inspired Christians and

The Good Shepherd Institute

those outside of the faith since his death in 1750. One need only mention the case of Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) who, upon rediscovering Bach, was inspired to reexamine the matter of his own faith. His own oratorio, *St. Paul*, is the fruit of this rumination.

Even the redoubtable Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)—who, despite his poetic genius, did not subscribe to Christianity’s view of redemption—could hardly contain himself in response to his initial exposure to Bach’s music. Goethe states:

I said to myself, it is as if the eternal harmony were conversing within itself as it may have done in the bosom of God just before the creation of the world. So likewise did it move my inmost soul, and it seemed as if I neither possessed nor needed ears, nor any other sense—least of all the eyes.⁵²

Uwe Siemon-Netto cites a startling but fathomable phenomenon:

Twenty-five years ago when there was still a Communist East Germany, I interviewed several boys from Leipzig’s *Thomanerchor*, the choir once led by Johann Sebastian Bach. Many of those children came from atheistic homes. “Is it possible to sing Bach without faith?” I asked them. “Probably not,” they replied, “but we do have faith. Bach has worked as a missionary among all of us.”⁵³

More incredulous is what Siemon-Netto states next, though through the eyes of faith all things are possible. He states:

During a recent journey to Japan I discovered that 250 years after his death Bach is now playing a key role in evangelizing that country, one of the most secularized nations in the developed world.⁵⁴

Bach as evangelist indeed! But while the B-Minor Mass is not a sacrament, it has imparted and will continue to impart grace by hearing if one has ears to hear. Bach certainly did. If one desires to be baptized upon hearing this work, or if a Christian remembers his Baptism, the work could thus be termed “sacramental” with a lower case “s.” Perhaps one could be so bold as to proclaim, “through the B-Minor Mass we participate in Jesus,” not because the Mass is a sacrament, but because Christ is truly present through His Word as presented in Bach’s Mass. Bach the preacher offers his “congregation” a perfect sermon and, better yet, a fully developed liturgy that reflects the Divine Service and causes one to reflect on the eternal heavenly liturgy. The listener can reject God’s grace, but one cannot earn it. If Bach’s music is responsible for the salvation of any human being, it is due to the

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

work of the Holy Spirit in drawing the person to Christ through the Word. Thus Bach could proclaim, “To God alone be the glory.”

Eschatological Hope in the Mass as Discerned in Its Final Formal Structure

Some scholars and musicologists classify Bach’s B-Minor Mass as “church” music. This is not true in the utilitarian sense, for Bach certainly never conceived of the entire work for liturgical use nor could the Mass serve well in that capacity. While sections of the composition may be befitting for liturgical use, the scope of the work is utterly too imposing for use in the Divine Service. If the work was not intended to function in a utilitarian sense, then what is its *raison d’être*? Laurence Dreyfus has stated:

... for Bach, thinking in music was a necessary consequence of a belief in its divine origins. Since his innovative powers of invention expanded rather than rejected music’s traditional forms of representation, Bach’s compositional stance was entirely consonant with theological orthodoxy, at the same time that no available theoretical language within theology or music could adequately come to terms with it.⁵⁵

Bach’s creative process in the composing and assembling of the B-Minor Mass focused on the central Christology in the Latin text. Scaer writes:

The One who comes to us as a humble babe in Bethlehem invites us to believe that He has come from above.⁵⁶

Contained in the Latin text is this very essence of truth. The various movements of the Mass each convey Christ’s presence among us in one way or another. This discourse will now focus on specific areas of the B-Minor Mass that point to an eschatological reality⁵⁷ as contained in the Divine Service.

Use of Major and Minor Modes as Means of Theological Interpretation

Bach’s use of major and minor keys is informative. While one cannot offer a systematic explanation of this shifting of modes, suffice it to say that those sections of the work that depict the *Christus Redemptor* theme and inaugurated eschatology are generally in a minor key⁵⁸ while those that represent the *Christus Victor* theme and realized eschatology are generally in a major key.⁵⁹ This is not to imply that the *Christus* and eschatological themes are always convergent, however.

Nevertheless, it is not that simple, for Bach the theologian intuitively understands the tension between the “now” and the “not yet,” as may be discerned in the “*Qui sedes ad dextram Patris*” solo from the Gloria. This, too, is in the key of human suffering, b-minor. Why did Bach assign this key and mode to this text? This question

The Good Shepherd Institute

cannot be approached unless the focus is Christological. In His Ascension, Christ takes our flesh to the right hand of the Father, though we are still awaiting the glory to come. Thus redeemed humanity is torn between two worlds, and it is only in the Holy Supper that we have this glimpse of the glory that is to come at the last day. Those who are not Christian are also torn between two worlds: the world of sin and that of redemption. In terms of those who are members of the Body of Christ, Bach's theological interpretation suggests that we have been raised with Christ as He takes His seat at the right hand of the Father, for in the "Et Resurrexit" Bach creates a D-major "dance" inherited from the earlier Gloria and "Cum Sancto Spiritu." But b-minor makes its way back into the central portion of the "Et Resurrexit" as Bach arrives at the text "sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris." This is consistent with Bach's Christological perspective. Christ is true God and true man.

The other minor-key sections of the Mass depict the reality of human existence in awaiting the consummation of the age. For example, in the opening "Kyrie eleison," one cannot help but be drawn into, and even participate in, the angst-filled cry for mercy in the introduction. This introduction is immersed in the "now," yearning for the "not yet"; however, the peace that is promised in Christ inaugurates the eschatological reality. Bach then succeeds these universal, primal shouts, with controlled expressions of mercy by means of five-part contrapuntal texture. (The second "Kyrie eleison," in a strictly polyphonic ancient style and also in a minor key, is then constrained because of the gentle and lyrical "Christe eleison" that precedes it. The plea for mercy is thus less active and more passive as one awaits the "arrival" of the Gospel within the context of the Divine Service, and in terms of the B-Minor Mass, the knowledge of Christ through the Word contained in the text.)

The three duets that sing of Christ's presence and mercy⁶⁰ are in major keys. High Christology in these gentle movements is represented by use of occasional parallel thirds and sixths (symbols of the Trinity and man, respectively). As well, in the first version⁶¹ of "Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum" we perceive the violins "coming down from heaven" (on a descending dominant seventh chord, creating the momentum—built on thirds—whereby the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us) where the text reads "descendit de coelis," thus representing not only the Incarnation but the eventuality of the Real Presence in the Holy Supper. This same gesture of descending violins is again offered at the phrase, "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine et homo factus est." In the second version, with a text revision due to the later addition of the separate "Et incarnatus est," Bach's assignment of the text coordinates with the descending violins at the phrases, "(Deum) de Deo vero," and "et qui propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis." As well, within the context of this major-key duet, these two instances, representing the necessity of divine intervention for the sake of the sin of the world, Bach modulates to minor keys. B-minor makes a reappearance with the texts ("ex

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

Patre natum) ante omnia saecula” and the first pronouncement of “Deum de Deo.” Thus, Christ’s Incarnation is a “minor-key” event, though a “major-key” event for the sake of humanity.

The most intense solo in the entire work is the Agnus Dei in G-minor. This angular music makes strong use of imitation between the alto voice and the violins, creating a bridge between humanity and divinity as Christ offers His body and blood for the salvation of humankind. The jagged and chromatic nature of the music in the aria demonstrates the profound reality that Christ has, indeed, participated in our humanity in all its anguish and death. The pause in measure 34 on the word “sin” is a reflection on the moment of death in the midst of Jesus’ thirty-fourth year. There is no mistake for Bach in the understanding of purpose and reason for Christ’s death. But as this music is both angular and dissonant, the rising and falling of the voice and violin parts in antiphonal imitation occur on “qui tollis peccata mundi” and “miserere nobis.” The interval relationships of these rising and falling motifs revolve around sevenths, real or implied by harmonic means. Could these sevenths represent God’s perfect sacrifice by which all are made new, or that there is nothing a person can do to earn salvation (a sixth would connote the number of man)? Why else embrace these two textual phrases with such intervallic consistency? As well, these rising and falling motifs occur repeatedly, perhaps depicting the matter of confusion as to which state the listener really finds himself. Are we in the past, present, or future regarding the matter of salvation? In terms of the liturgical moment in the Divine Service, we have received, or are receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord as an eschatological moment. In terms of the Mass as a work unto itself, the listener is aware of the reason for Christ’s Incarnation. This is a *present* moment. While liturgical connections should not be taken lightly, for Bach, in offering final touches on this major opus, presents his most expressive music in this movement preceding the final “Dona nobis pacem.”

Perhaps this music is so powerful because this moment of death seems to have a correlation to our own impending death. Joseph Ratzinger states:

But now the relevance of the Christological question begins to become apparent. The God who personally died in Jesus Christ fulfilled the pattern of love beyond all expectation, and in so doing justified that human confidence which in the last resort is the only alternative to self-destruction. The Christian dies into the death of Christ himself . . . Man’s enemy, death, that would waylay him to steal his life, is conquered at the point where one meets the thievery of death with the attitude of trusting love, and so transforms the theft into increase of life. The sting of death is extinguished in Christ in whom the victory was gained through the plenary power of love unlimited. Death is vanquished where people die with Christ and into him.⁶²

The Good Shepherd Institute

Time and Timelessness—the Temporal and the Eternal

There are moments in hearing Bach's work when the listener is simply awestruck by the sheer majesty of the movements of exaltation in the Mass.⁶³ This type of response creates an element of timelessness because the sounds Bach has produced are so remarkably transcendental that one is not thinking of the "here and now," but is focusing on the "not yet," or at least the hope for realized eschatology. Why does this occur?

The answer might be derived from an understanding of the nature of time and eternity in the Christological event. Herman Sasse states:

The death of Christ is indeed a unique historical event. As with every actual event in earthly history, it is unrepeatable. But at the same time, like the exodus from Egypt commemorated in the Passover, it is also God's redemptive act, something that stands outside of earthly time, which does not exist for God. Rev. 13:8 calls Christ "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" [KJV]. He is the Crucified not simply as *staurōtheis* (aorist, which signifies a single event) but as the *estaurōmenos* (perfect, which means that what happened continues in effect). . . . From this we may see that with God a "temporal" event can be "eternal."⁶⁴

The celebration of the Lord's Supper as the church's divine service has become the counterpart of the divine service that takes place in heaven . . . Thus in the Lord's Supper the boundaries of space and time are overcome: Heaven and earth become one, the incalculable interval that separates the present moment of the church from the future kingdom of God is bridged.⁶⁵

I do not suggest that the hearing of the B-Minor Mass is efficacious in the manner in which Sasse is discussing the Sacrament. However, Bach's work is an illustration, reflection, and representation of the earthly and heavenly liturgy. In that sense, the matter of timelessness inherent in the process of hearing the work might be understood. Once again, if the central emphasis in Bach's musical gesture is Christ, then one may proclaim with Sasse:

We may never forget that the presence of Christ, His divine and human nature, is always an eschatological miracle in which time and eternity meet.⁶⁶

Do time and eternity meet in the hearing of the B-Minor Mass? Without sounding like a Schleiermacherian Pietist(!)⁶⁷ this writer would like to proclaim "yes" in the sense of inaugurated eschatology. Luther stated:

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

For here one must put time out of one's mind and know that in that world there is neither time nor hour, but that everything is an eternal moment.⁶⁸

The yearning for eternity is certainly present in the music, if not eternity itself. Bach portrays eternity with such grandeur that the earthly things of our temporal existence are supplanted. However, the theology of the cross is an ever-present factor as well, reminding each listener that our existence on this planet is both contrapuntal and paradoxical. Thus, as we experience Bach's setting of the Gospel of Christ, we are pulled via the contrapuntal tension both musically and theologically.

The Connection between the "Gratias" and the "Dona Nobis Pacem"

The most significant connection between the Divine Service and the B-Minor Mass may be discerned in these two movements. With the "Dona nobis pacem," Bach chose to conclude the entire B-Minor Mass with the same music he had parodied from *Wir danken dir* in the "Gratias agimus tibi." This connection is the most salient of theological emphases in Bach's theological mind, for the connection between the theology of Bach's early work on his Mass and his culminating activity may be discerned as two separate texts relate to one another and to the eschatological themes in the Mass . . . the opening of the Gloria and the concluding "Dona nobis pacem," respectively:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra **pax** hominibus bonae voluntatis.*
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*Dona nobis **pacem**.*
Grant us peace.
(emphases added)

Bach most certainly viewed these texts both in their historical and liturgical contexts. For Bach, the announcement of peace in the proclamation of the heavenly host in Luke 2:14 was the same peace contained in the eucharistic activity of Christ in the Sacrament. The source of peace and reconciliation prayed in the conclusion of the Mass is the same as that announced at Christ's birth. The atoning work of Christ on the cross, the undisputed core of Bach's theology, was seen as the source of peace—that is, the forgiveness of sins—in the angelic proclamation to the shepherds on the night in which Christ was born in Bethlehem. Heaven and earth were joined through the Incarnation in the womb of Mary, and continue to be joined throughout the ages because of God's salvific activity through Jesus Christ.

Bach devotes one-hundred measures of music to the opening textual phrase of

the Gloria—"Gloria in excelsis Deo"—in a royal and celebrative D major Vivace, 3/8 meter dance. However, the crux of the movement occurs as the choir devotes seventy-six measures in a serene but confident 4/4 meter stating the reason for singing this glory to God—"et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis." Bach develops this material, interweaving the text and thematic motif contrapuntally, and crescendos to a climactic and pronounced conclusion. This glory to God and peace on earth are interpreted by the composer as the foremost revelation of reconciliation and peace.

Bach creates a profound musical connection between the birth announcement of Christ and the invocation of peace at the conclusion of the Mass in his choice of musical material for the latter of the two. Contained within the Gloria section of the Mass is the choral movement, "Gratias agimus tibi":

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.

The connections of the glory of God, peace, and thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία), are made evident through Bach's use of precisely the same musical material employed in the "Gratias agimus tibi" in the concluding "Dona nobis pacem," thus, another parody, but the most significant in the entire Mass. The opening assured but reflective ascending bass line of this choral fugato, also in D major, is transformed within a brief forty-six measures into a regal, majestic, and confident statement—of thanksgiving the first time, and peace in concluding the entire work—which is not only imperative in tone, but actualized. For Bach specifically, the theological emphasis may be discerned as *Christus pro me*, a personal reconciliation between God and the human being Johann Sebastian Bach. While the *Christus pro nobis* is most certainly the Church's corporate proclamation of and response to that which has been proclaimed to us by God through His Word, Bach discerns a personal appropriation to every Christian. For this study, the significance is also applicable, potentially, to those outside of the faith, for "God with us" is a reality, the knowledge of which is dependent on the activity of the Holy Spirit in the midst of faithful preaching of His Word and reception of His Sacraments. Baptism is available to all that have ears to hear, as is the Holy Supper, the knowledge and meanings of which are present in this Mass in its very musical explication.

One may unambiguously observe in Bach a theology of reconciliation and peace between God and humanity—and that at a personal level—because of Christ's Atonement. While Bach's peace is indeed a "here and now" actuality by means of inaugurated eschatology, chiefly through Christ's activity in the church's liturgy and Eucharist, he is, in his compositional gesture, awaiting a "new heavens and new earth"⁶⁹ when eschatology will be realized in all its fullness and when "we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn 3:1–3).

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

For Bach, the main focus in the Mass appears to be the “peace which passes all understanding” through the Incarnation. Through the liturgical service of the Eucharist, God continues to offer the forgiveness of sins, faith, and peace to human beings. The forgiveness of sins, the peace from above, the reconciliation of God and sinful humanity, are all present in the Mass. While the Lutheran emphasis on the two tables of the Law—love of God and neighbor—is a natural interpretive component in all of Bach’s music, Bach expends his interpretive compositional energies in this late work on a redirection of the statement of corporate forgiveness in Christ, *Christus pro nobis*, to that of the individual in Christ, *Christus pro me*. The moment of Christ’s birth, which the angels announced, continues in heralding to us this good news of salvation, forgiveness, and peace. The final statement of peace in the Mass is made with the understanding that this peace comes through the Body and Blood of our Lord in His Holy Supper. The thanksgiving implied in the “Gratias” is directly applied to the peace which *has* come in the Eucharist, the peace that gives hope in the anticipation of the “not yet.” This is the very glory of God in the “now.”

Thus the meaning inherent in the “Et in terra pax,” “Gratias agimus tibi,” and “Dona nobis pacem” all relates to the inaugurated eschatological realm where Christ dwells among His people through the Incarnation and the Real Presence in the Holy Supper even as the hope for realized eschatology is reinforced.

Et Expecto

Our greatest Christian hope in the Mass occurs in the “Et expecto” section of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, for it is here that eschatology is artlessly represented in the text, which, when wedded to Bach’s music, propounds a resplendent aural depiction of this Christian hope. This chorus is accompanied by the usual forces with the addition of trumpets and timpani. While this is not the first time Bach has utilized this instrumentation, it is the first time that the trumpets act as heralds of the “resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (though one may find a corollary in the opening of the “Gloria in excelsis,” which certainly has a connection with the hope for the Resurrection). It is here that Bach shows his greatest ebullient self. Is it possible that for Bach this section of the Creed had the most meaning in terms of his own perspective on the Divine Service?

Sanctus

Bach’s first actual textual/compositional contribution to the B-Minor Mass was the towering Sanctus written for Christmas Day in 1724. The text for the Sanctus from Isaiah 6:1–4 and its liturgical connection as announcement of Christ’s presence was certainly understood by the composer in relationship to Luther’s setting of “Isaiah, Mighty Seer, in Days of Old” from his *German Mass*:

The Good Shepherd Institute

Isaiah, mighty seer, in days of old
The Lord of all in spirit did behold
High on a lofty throne, in splendor bright,
With flowing train that filled the Temple quite.
Above the throne were stately seraphim;
Six wings had they, these messengers of Him.
With twain they veiled their faces, as was meet,
With twain in rev'rent awe they hid their feet,
And with the other twain aloft they soared,
One to the other called and praised the Lord:

“Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Behold, His glory filleth all the earth!”

The beams and lintels trembled at the cry,
And clouds of smoke enwrapped the throne on high.⁷⁰

The significance of Bach setting the Latin Sanctus for Christmas Day cannot be overstated. The angelic hosts, so important to the announcement of Christ's birth in Luke 2:13–14, are portrayed with an unprecedented majesty not encountered again in Bach's output until the opening chorus of the Gloria composed in 1733. This joyful dance connects significantly with the “pleni sunt coeli” section of the Sanctus (same key, meter [3/8], and tempo). The incarnational reference from the Christmas story cannot be mistaken. Scaer states:

In Lutheran theology God is not remote but is rather so close to man that the Incarnation is understood as a real expression of what God is like.⁷¹

However, the glorified Christ seated at the right hand of the Father is in view as well when examining Revelation 4:8–9 and its similarity to the above-mentioned Isaiah passage:

And the four living beings, one by one of them having each six wings,
Around and within are full of eyes, and they have not rest day or night saying,
Holy holy holy
Lord (the) God (the) Almighty,
The [one who] was and (the) is and the coming one.

This picture of worship in heaven includes all Christians . . . those in their temporal

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

state and those in eternity.⁷² In both the Isaiah and Revelation accounts the

Seers view angelic creatures celebrating and proclaiming the holiness of the Trinitarian God. Holy is the Father, Holy is the Son, Holy is the Spirit. In John's vision the creatures "have not rest day or night" as they declare the glory of God. However, the Church of God on earth has the opportunity to join the praises of the hosts of heaven in singing this ceaseless *Sanctus* hymn! Participation in this hymn assures the body of Christ its participation in the praises of heaven, and therefore the participation in eternity itself. As well, it behooves one to recall that while Isaiah's vision of the Divine Presence was in the context of the Temple *cultus*, St. John's vision connotes a cosmic Divine Presence where all of creation will ultimately join in the never-ending hymn. The omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of God are decidedly affirmed within the Christological context.⁷³

In this liturgical act all are singing the same "new song," for Christ as the New Song in His never-ceasing salvific offering comes to us in the Holy Supper as those in eternity are celebrating Christ's "real presence" in the realm of what we—in our current perception—view as realized eschatology. Bach's setting of the Sanctus for Christmas Day reflects the incessant eternal glory of God as expressed by Isaiah and St. John, as well as the "Glory to God in the highest" as announced to the shepherds by the heavenly host. The eternal and the temporal are conjoined in the Incarnation (while inaugurated and realized eschatology are concurrently implied) as Bach's music portrays this conjoining in all its grandeur.⁷⁴ Scaer's statement offers theological rumination on the Incarnation:

Lutherans hold that all of the very Godhead Himself became flesh in Jesus.⁷⁵ On the one hand He rules heaven and earth from His mother's arms, but on the other He is completely dependent upon her for His life and sustenance.⁷⁶

Thus, on Christmas Day of 1724, Bach's Sanctus setting alludes to God's presence in the world through the Incarnation while concurrently serving as liturgical statement of the real presence of Christ through the Sacrament. In terms of what this means eschatologically, John Stephenson states:

the confession of the real presence which culminates in FC SD VII unfolds untrammelled realized eschatology in Jesus Himself and inaugurated eschatology in the communicants nourished by Him: Christ's body and blood, present on His altar throne and given His faithful for the impartation of forgiveness, life, and salvation.⁷⁷

The Good Shepherd Institute

The listener in the “now” yearns for the “not yet” in hearing this effulgent Sanctus; but in a real sense, the “not yet” is being offered when understood in the context of the Divine Service. Thus this earliest contribution to the *Missa tota* is one of the most poignant moments in the entire work.

Summary

Werner Elert once wrote:

The eye of faith will see the beauty of the world as the conquering of demonic darknesses. Its ear will hear inexpressible things in music—things that are of divine origin.⁷⁸

Bach’s ear indeed heard these inexpressible things, things “of divine origin.” It is our privilege to have access not to an antiquated, obsolete piece of music that has no relevance, but to a timeless masterpiece . . . timeless because the very essence is Christ.

Again, Elert:

Just as justification places the individual before the hereafter, so the idea of the kingdom places the world before the hereafter. The world is time—time as flight. Our entire consciousness of being in the world has dissolved in time. “But what crossing over is,” says Luther, “experience teaches us. For we cross over every day.”⁷⁹

Thus Bach could proclaim, in unison with Luther and all who have believed and will believe:

All to the praise of Him who is the Master of all beauty. All praise sung by faith at the present time is but a beginning of the eternal hymn.⁸⁰

This eternal hymn is indeed the liturgy, the Divine Service in all its essence. Just a few years before his death, Bach was compelled to complete a Mass he had begun almost a quarter of a century before because, as a Lutheran, he was conveying through sound a musical representation of the Divine Service. This was not a utilitarian Mass intended, in its complete form, as a vocal and instrumental offering for St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. While some of the movements were performed at various times in his career as a church musician, the entire B-Minor Mass was never performed *in toto* during Bach’s lifetime.

Conclusion: *Eschatos* for Bach

Whether apocryphal or not, it has been transmitted throughout the last 250

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

years that Bach, afflicted by blindness in his last two years, died as he was in the midst of dictating a chorale.⁸¹ While the circumstances are sketchy, and scholars disagree on which hymn text Bach was considering in this final chorale, it is significant in any case in terms of Bach's view of eschatology. The two possible texts are either *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein* or *Vor deinen Thron tret'ich hiermit*. In either case, Bach's final moments, as he dictated—probably from the keyboard⁸²— were focussed clearly on that which he believed and professed throughout his life. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht has stated:

[S]trong evidence of Bach's belief in God, and it is this aspect of the piece that emerges more important than its objective purposes, musical expression, or public intent. The chorale reveals far more than its immediate reason for existence; it also exhibits the strong personal faith behind Bach's life and creative identity. It is as if Bach were saying: "God is the reference point of my Life, and though I am a wretched human being, I am united to Him through the mercy of Christ."⁸³

The first and last stanzas of *Vor deinen Thron tret'ich hiermit*:

*Vor deinen Thron tret'ich hiermit,
O Gott und dich demütig bitt:
Wend dein genädig Angesicht
Von mir betrübtem Sünder nicht.*

*Ein selig Ende mir bescher,
Am jüngsten Tag erwecke mich,
Herr Daß ich dich schau ewiglich:
Amen, amen, erhöre mich!*⁸⁴

Before Thy throne my God, I stand,
Myself, my all, are in Thy hand;
Turn to me Thine approving face,
Nor from me now withhold Thy grace.

Grant that my end may worthy be,
And that I wake Thy face to see,
Thyself for evermore to know!
Amen, amen, God grant it so.⁸⁵

Thus Bach, in his final moments of consciousness,⁸⁶ was in the midst of the "not yet," yet confident that, in his compositional activity, he awaited the "now" in

The Good Shepherd Institute

which he hoped and believed.

In the Bärenreiter edition of the B-Minor Mass, a facsimile of Bach's complete manuscript, Alfred Dürr's commentary begins by offering a publication history of the score. He states:

When the Zurich publisher Hans George Nägeli decided to undertake the first publication of Bach's B minor Mass, he invited subscriptions in the following words:

Announcing
the greatest musical work of art
of all times and peoples.⁸⁷

Today, Nägeli's statement still rings true. The work is the greatest composition in the corpus of Western art music, but it also offers the greatest statement of doctrine and faith in music history.

In examining this facsimile score in Bach's own hand, which represents the *Thomaskantor's* style of manuscript from 1733 through his final years, one may discern the composer's faltering handwriting. However, the one thing that permeates and persists without wavering throughout the 188-page score is the record of Bach's faith. This faith may be discerned in the very compositional process as one observes the inscriptions at the beginning of the 1733 *Missa*, the *Symbolum Nicenum* and the *Osanna/ Benedictus/ Agnus Dei/ Dona nobis pacem* section, the initials, *J. J., Jesu juva* (Jesus help). Inscribed on the final pages of the *Missa* and the "Dona nobis pacem" is *D S Gl, Deo Soli Gloria* (To God alone be the glory).

The B-Minor Mass is a musical testimony to what Christ has done out of His love for us. Bach's experience of the *eschatos* in his liturgical devotion found its expression in this extraordinarily profound work. One who does not believe cannot appreciate the theological wonders contained in this masterpiece, but the appreciation of and love for the work itself can create a yearning for the marvelous things the B-Minor Mass professes. The Christian, while appreciating the wonders, is more deeply drawn into the theological reality it espouses. For the Lutheran, the clear delineation of the Divine Service may be deduced from the opening "Lord, have mercy" to the final exclamation, "Grant us [thy] peace," as Bach offers the listener a musical depiction of the heavenly liturgy. To God alone be the glory!

Notes

1 Uwe Siemon-Netto, "J. S. Bach in Japan," *First Things* (June/July 2000): 17. I am indebted to Dr. David Scaer for bringing this article to my attention.

2 E-mail from David P. Scaer regarding the impact of Bach's musical delineation of Lutheran doctrine.

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

3 “There is general agreement among specialists today that Bach assembled the B-Minor Mass during the last two years of his life. In the most recent scholarly assessment of his late activities, the Mass is assigned to the specific period August 1748–October 1749. . . . In [what is termed as] the ‘new’ chronology of [his] final decade, the Art of Fugue is moved back to the early 1740’s. The B-Minor Mass, by contrast, emerges as one of Bach’s final projects. It may have been his very last.” George B. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 41, 43.

4 The first non-parody music that found its way into the final version of the B-Minor Mass was the Sanctus, composed for Christmas of 1724.

5 It is not the purpose of this study to discuss Bach’s failing health or eyesight, nor is the historical background of the church Mass relevant. The emphasis, instead, is on the fruits of his creative labor as a summative theological and musical statement as connected with Christology and eschatology.

6 Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931) referred to Bach’s music as “the fifth Gospel.”

7 Of course, two areas in the Lutheran version of the Latin text distinguished it from the Roman Catholic version in Bach’s time. In the “Domine Deus” section of the Gloria, the Lutheran text declares “Domine Fili unigenite Jesus Christe *altissime*” (“O Lord God, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, *the most high*”). Rome does not include “*altissime*.” The other area is in the Sanctus where the Latin text is rendered by Lutherans as “Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria *eius*” (“Heaven and earth are full of *His* glory”). The Roman version states “gloria *tua*” (“*Your* glory”). See John Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48, 57.

8 For an understanding of the distinctively Lutheran sense of the terms “justification” and “sanctification,” see Harold Senkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1989).

9 For an understanding of the distinctively Lutheran sense of the terms “Law” and “Gospel,” see C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986).

10 Christoph Wolff, CD liner notes, *J. S. Bach – Mass in B Minor*, Archiv 415 514-2, p. 12.

11 Ibid.

12 The B-Minor Mass may or may not have been Bach’s final composition, but it was, indeed, his final systematic, summative, musical explication of his theological beliefs and was most likely completed after *The Musical Offering* and *The Art of Fugue*.

13 Alfred Dürr, *Das Kantatenwerk, Sacred Cantatas Vol. 1, BWV 1–14, 16–19* (Teldec 4509-91755-2, 1972), CD notes, p. 35.

14 Albeit different allocations of choral parts.

The Good Shepherd Institute

15 For a complete rendering of this story, see Butt, 7–9.

16 “*Anfechtung* is a proper synonym for the life of the Christian lived in faith. It is a bridge that brings the realities of revelation from the Biblical history into the personal life of the Christian.” David P. Scaer, “The Concept of *Anfechtung* in Luther’s Thought,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 47 (January 1983): 28. Bach’s motivation for composing the Kyrie movement, in particular, might have been associated with his dissatisfaction with his Leipzig position. After composing the three Kyrie movements, it is fathomable that the eschatology contained in the Gloria might have ensued.

17 “Quite clearly the *Missa* should be viewed as a complete and independent work with its own proportions and unifying elements.” Butt, 92.

18 Bach’s autograph score at the conclusion of the final movement, the “*Dona nobis pacem*,” indicates *fine* and *DSG* (*Deo Soli Gloria* [“To God Alone the Glory”]). See Stauffer, 46–47.

19 For instance, the three Vivaldi instrumental concertos that Bach arranged for organ.

20 Some writers theorize that the blindness Bach suffered late in life was perhaps due to his copying of scores by other composers as a means of self-instruction when he was a child. This was a frequent nighttime activity performed with inadequate light.

21 Mk 4:22.

22 Dürr, *Das Kantatenwerk, Sacred Cantatas Vol. 2, BWV20–36* (Teldec 4509-91756-2, 1974), CD notes, p. 108.

23 The Latin text is derived from the orchestral score of Bach’s *B Minor Mass* (London: Edition Eulenberg, n.d.); the English translation is derived from *J. S. Bach Messe en Si/H-Moll-Messe*, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe (Harmonia Mundi HMC 901614.15, 1998).

24 Ibid., 116.

25 19 January 2000, Concordia Theological Seminary Symposia on Eschatology.

26 See Mt 11:17.

27 Two other significant instances of flute writing as solos occur in the B-Minor Mass—in the “*Domine Deus*” and the “*Benedictus*.” In the case of the latter, the element of sorrow is evident. However, in the former, one must analyze the movement to understand that the central point of the “*Domine Deus*” is the section in e-minor that explains the purpose of the Incarnation in the title applied to Christ: *Agnus Dei*. Only then may the “*Qui tollis*” ensue.

28 See Stauffer, 48, and Butt, 50–51.

29 Gerhard Schulmacher, *Das Kantatenwerk, Sacred Cantatas Vol. 9. BWV 163–182* (Teldec 4509-91763-2, 1987), CD notes, p. 32

30 Ibid., 94.

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

31 Ibid.

32 See Butt, 52–53, and Stauffer, 48.

33 Butt, 52.

34 See Col 1:15; Heb 1:3.

35 Rv 13:8.

36 *Das Kantatenwerk, Sacred Cantatas Vol. 7, BWV 119–137* (Teldec 4509-91761-2, 1982), p. 76.

37 “. . . Johann Sebastian Bach, in a final flash of inspiration close to the end of his life, had found a decisive way of assuring that posterity would understand that his last and greatest church composition, despite its protracted and sporadic gestation extending over a full quarter-century (virtually the entirety of his career in Leipzig), was indeed an emphatically unified whole: a single, profoundly monumental, yet integral masterpiece.” Robert L Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: The Sources, the Style, the Significance* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 189.

38 David P. Scaer, classnotes transcribed by the author from “Grace and Sacraments,” Spring Quarter 1993, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

39 Ibid.

40 Rom 10:17.

41 See Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26.

42 Ps 118:17.

43 Peter Brunner states, regarding Musica, “Thus the Musica, which lays hold of the word, and the word, which is clad in the Musica, become a sign of that peculiarly uncommon, unworldly, exuberant, overflowing element of Christian worship, which is something stupendous and something extremely lovely at the same time. . . . it is singularly appropriate to this pneumatic presence that the word joins hands with the Musica and the latter becomes the audible form in which the word appears.” *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 273.

44 Carl Schalk, *Luther on Music: Paradigms of Praise* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 35.

45 Ibid., 36.

46 Luther also made this statement of criticism regarding a contemporary organist using the language of theology: “That *lex ira operatur* (the law works wrath) is evidenced by the fact that Joerg Planck plays better when he plays for himself than when he plays for others; for what he does to please others, sounds *ex lege* (from obedience to the law) and where there is *lex* (law) there is lack of joy; where there is *gratia* (grace) there is joy.” Ibid., 23

47 Ibid., 21

48 Brunner, 272.

The Good Shepherd Institute

49 The next several paragraphs of the essay are a paraphrase and development of an earlier, unpublished essay entitled, *Quests for Reconciliation and Peace: Twentieth-Century Music as Reflection of Theology* (1995). The introduction compared Bach's "Gloria in excelsis" and "Dona nobis pacem" with the corresponding sections in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. The formulation of that discussion spawned the idea for the topic of the present essay.

50 Paul Gerhardt, "Evening and Morning," *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), hymn 419 (from stanzas 1 and 3).

51 Michael Marissen, *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 116.

52 Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science, and the Natural Order of the Universe* (New York: Grove Press, 1993), 190.

53 Siemon-Netto, 15.

54 Ibid.

55 Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 243.

56 David P. Scaer, *Christology, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, Vol. VI* (Fort Wayne, Ind: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1989), 9.

57 For a decidedly Reformed interpretation, see Calvin R. Stapert, *My Only Comfort: Death, Deliverance, and Discipleship in the Music of Bach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), especially 42–48, 87–101, and 217–25.

58 See "Qui tollis," "Et incarnatus est," "Crucifixus," Agnus Dei.

59 See Gloria, "Gratias agimus tibi," "Cum Sancto Spiritu," "Et resurrexit," "Et expecto."

60 See "Christe eleison," "Domine Deus," "Et in unum."

61 In Bach's first version of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, the "Incarnatus est" text was subsumed by the "Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum" duet and followed directly by the "Crucifixus." In the original manuscript there is an inserted page with the newly composed choral "Et incarnatus est." This leaf actually interrupts the previous page's four-measure introduction to the "Crucifixus," which is then continued on the leaf following the insert. Bach then reallocated the text for the second version of "Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum." See *Johann Sebastian Bach – Messe in H-Moll* [facsimile of the composer's manuscript] (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1983), 110–13.

62 Johann Auer, Joseph Ratzinger, *Dogmatic Theology: Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 97.

63 See Gloria, "Gratias agimus tibi," "Cum Sancto Spiritu," "Credo in unum Deum" (II), "Et resurrexit," "Et expecto," Sanctus, "Osanna," "Dona nobis pacem."

Bach and the Divine Service: The B-Minor Mass

64 Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Sacraments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 30.

65 Ibid., 92–93.

66 Ibid., 137.

67 Scaer class notes: “The Kingdom of God is . . . Jesus Christ! (not within you!).”

68 Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 515–16.

69 Rv 21:1.

70 *Jesaia, dem Propheten*, Martin Luther (1520). See *The Lutheran Hymnal* [hereafter *TLH*] (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), hymn 249.

71 Scaer, *Christology*, 27.

72 Rv 5:13 f.

73 Unpublished paper by the writer, *The New Song: Music in the Heavenly Liturgy (A Theology of Musical Composition for the Late 20th Century)*, 11–12.

74 Though the humiliation of Christ will be seen below in the “et in terra” portion of the Gloria.

75 Scaer, *Christology*, 49.

76 Ibid., 61.

77 John R. Stephenson, *Eschatology* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: The Luther Academy, 1993), 30.

78 Elert, 461.

79 Ibid., 507.

80 Ibid., 517.

81 For an enlightening article regarding this topic, see Christoph Wolff, “The Deathbed Chorale: Exposing a Myth,” in *Bach: Essays on His Life and Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 282–94.

82 See Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *J. S. Bach's “The Art of Fugue”: The Work and Its Interpretation*, trans. Jeffrey L. Prater (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 30–37.

83 Ibid., 32.

84 Ibid., 33.

85 Peter Washington, *Bach* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 127.

86 Bach suffered a stroke, never recovering, and succumbed six days later.

87 See introduction by Alfred Dürr to the Bärenreiter edition of Bach's manuscript score, p. 10.

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

Mark E. Sell

This topic might be underestimated by many of us who live and breathe Confessional Lutheran theology. Maybe you have found yourself in this situation before: the excitement builds because your congregation has called a pastor, who is solidly biblical and liturgical with a genuine love and appreciation for the church's public confession, or a kantor or musician with such convictions. "This is going to be great!" you say to yourself. But after some time, it doesn't seem to click; something is wrong. These people who are brought together for a theological purpose and are equally committed to Confessional Lutheran theology are having a hard time "making it work."

In spite of all the great theology, they find themselves in a frustrating and aggravating "work" environment. Woven within the exciting fabric of assembling a strong theological team is hidden the reality of sinful people of different personalities and administrative functions, nevertheless, trying to build a team. Often, the pastor, the kantor, or the principal/teacher assume that theological commitment to solid traditional Lutheran theology and practice translates into a great team that works together smoothly. Not so!

The team needs to be built and strengthened. The Christian will ask: "How does God's Word speak to the team situation?" The challenge is to find "team building" in the Bible. Team building often comes under the heading of "leadership" and its wisdom. So where is leadership found in the Bible? It isn't.¹ The task at hand calls for Luther's "two-kingdom" theology, which rightly orders the relationship between the gifts of creation and the gifts of salvation. It brings to us the proper use and interplay of reason and revelation. As all relationships on this earth, whether it be marriage and family, employer and employee, pastors and priests, husbands and wives, parents and children—or the pastor and the church musician—the relationship between the kingdoms of the left and right is foundational. Two-kingdom theology is how a Lutheran works through the organizing and decision-making task at hand. Two-kingdom theology will free up the church worker to get the administrative work done.

Two-Kingdom Theology

Luther's two-kingdom theology is the beginning and end of the life of both the person in the pew and the pastor.² It helps one to understand the relationship

The Good Shepherd Institute

between Sunday morning and the rest of the week. Unfortunately, Reformed sophistry has taken hold of our church body in an attempt to make life practical for pastors and parishioners alike. It manifests itself in the format of “four or six easy steps to being a better Christian” or “Christian Leadership in the Bible.” Such formulations are not the answer.³ For Lutherans, two-kingdom theology is the libation for which Christians thirst to make their Christianity “practical.” It touches the daily life of every believer. It is the medicine that cures moralism, yet places morals as a high priority in daily life. It grants Christians the freedom to live in daily life, yet provides the freedom to become servants. It allows the freedom for Christians to be fully engaged in their communities as good citizens, and recognizing others, even non-Christians, as good citizens, yet to be engaged precisely and freely as Christians in society. It highlights the life of the Christian as one that is immersed in Baptism, repentance, and absolution, and finally ushers one to the Holy Feast for eternal sustenance. Yet, this two-kingdom theology provides the order that a chaotic and terrorist-driven world needs, along with the justice for which our society yearns. The wisdom of two-kingdom theology is found in the *distinction* and *dependence* of the two kingdoms it describes and defines. Two-kingdom theology does not allow order to be confused with salvation. It permits civil leadership and patriotism to reign in its sphere of civil order and just government (*iustitia civilis*). Yet it requires an eternally just God to rule in His church through the submissive Lamb of God in what Lutherans call the theology of the cross. Two-kingdom theology makes a distinction between two very separate kingdoms, both given by God, driven by different purposes, yet dependent upon each other.

Kingdom of the Left

Biblical Foundation

The kingdom of the left is temporal life. Its seeds of truth, biblically defined, are Romans 13:1–7 and Romans 2:14. The kingdom of the left is the civil world in which one lives. God gives rulers their authority; they are his ministers (διδάκοντες). Its purpose is order and civil peace for the protection of temporal life. Its means is reason as it governs civil law (first use—curb).⁵ When well-reasoned law is rejected, force is called upon to maintain order and societal peace. In the kingdom of the left civil righteousness, i.e., morality, is the measure of good citizenship. In the left, good works are tracked, added up, and they do count for righteousness. It is the responsibility of the left to reward good and punish evil.⁶ The kingdom of the left is the structure of society that enables life to carry on. In this kingdom, God requires higher and lower stations. One person is subordinate to another.⁷ In the kingdom of the left, man lives with the lesser of two evils for the purpose of order. The goal is *not* to make the society Christian. A theocracy is not what a Christian desires in his community. That would only give us what Bin

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

Laden seeks.⁸ In the end, however, only the Christian knows that the kingdom of the left exists to serve God's ultimate purpose—the kingdom of the right.⁹

Catechetical Roots

Catechetically, the foundation of the left-hand kingdom comes to us through creation (First Article of the Creed) and is seated in the Fourth Commandment. All earthly authority flows through those who are second in authority only to God—mother and father.¹⁰ From mom and dad, the Christian learns that all good gifts come from the Heavenly Father through the means of creation. It is mother and father whom God calls into service to co-create and bring fruit to the earth in their children. It is through mom and dad that the Christian learns how to use the First-Article gifts of creation wisely and to the glory of God. It is mom and dad who teach the children the two tables of the Law and live them out. It is mom and dad who exemplify the love of neighbor as oneself.¹¹

From parents flows all civil authority. Teachers of children teach on behalf of the parents.¹² Policemen police, rulers rule, and hangmen hang—all on behalf of the authority God gives to parents. Parents cannot possibly do everything so they hand the ordering of society to government. The church, in service of the Gospel, uses this unbreakable relationship between parents and an orderly society. Every congregation must maintain order in her Bible studies, Sunday schools, meetings, and even the Divine Service. The congregation even counts on the simple order that a clock brings to life, so we know when the service is supposed to start.

Building a parish team is as much a matter of the kingdom of the left as it is the kingdom of the right. It is the art of administrative decision-making. Administrative decisiveness and true leadership are reason at her best, i.e., good order, common sense, and civil relationships. These First-Article realities simply allow us to get work done.

Kingdom of the Right

Biblical Foundation

The kingdom of the right is the church. Her seeds of truth are Ephesians 1:22 ff., Romans 8:9 ff., Colossians 1:13 and Ephesians 4:4–6.¹³ The church is the community of all believers gathered by Christ. Christ is the one and only head. He rules through means, namely the Word and Sacraments. They alone are the marks of the kingdom of the right. Through the means come forgiveness and mercy and His presence. When the kingdom of the right uses Law it does so to identify sin (*lex semper accusat!* [second use]) in order to forgive it. It is hidden under the cross (*tecte crucem*). In the kingdom of the right all things are done voluntarily. There is no force to do good things. The weapon in the kingdom of the right is love. The only justice that counts is that of the Father who brought it to bear in Christ, and who declares sinners just by grace. Thus, we confess the article upon which the

The Good Shepherd Institute

church stands or falls (to quote V. E. Loescher's infamous description for): justification. It is a kingdom that is known, understood, and participated in by faith. In the kingdom of the right, sin is sin! There is no place for the lesser of two evils. Spiritual righteousness is what counts. One must be perfect, holy, without blemish or spot. Any claim of one's own morality is the very deed that propels the claimant to hell. Punishment for all evil is total and complete. Justice is not found in making the believers "better Christians." Eternal justice, that is justification, is found in Jesus' punishment of being forsaken by the Father for the world's total sin. The fruits of Christ's work in turn are given to the believer. In this kingdom all are one in Christ by faith. There is no respect of persons. All are knit together as one in the mystical union of Christ. The kingdom of the right is the ultimate purpose of God (*opus proprium*).

Catechetical Roots

The catechetical roots for the reality known as the church are best understood in the Apostles' Creed and the relationship between the Second and Third Articles. It is in the Second Article that we confess the work of Christ for salvation. The Third Article teaches of the work of the Spirit who calls, gathers, and enlightens the church in the Second Article, namely Jesus Christ. In turn, the fruits of faith (Third Article) use the gifts of the First Article wisely—"my reason and all my senses and still preserves them."¹⁴ Thus, it is sanctified or baptized reason that is finally and fully able to use the First-Article gifts. The Christian uses them as means to love. This is the Lutheran view of the daily life of the Christian as worship (Luther frequently speaks of this life of service as *Gottesdienst*, objective genitive) (2 Pt 2:4). This is completely different than worship in the Divine Service (*Gottesdienst*, subjective genitive). The summary work of the Second Table of the Law is put another way when we Lutherans speak of vocation.¹⁵ It is here, in one's vocation, that the Christian moves back into the kingdom of the left. In fact, these two realities in the life of the Christian overlap and interpenetrate (*perechoresis*) something like the two natures of Christ. They are distinct, but not separate.

Left and Right—Separate But Dependent

In the end, both the kingdoms of the left and the right depend on each other's gifts that are brought to bear in this world.¹⁶ They do not "need" each other to fulfill their specific natures within their own realm.¹⁷ However, the right depends on societal order so that she can preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. The left depends upon the goodness of the people that only God's Word can create in the heart. The left, because of its reliance on the law, will only produce hypocrites (that is, when seeking thereby a *justitia divina*). The right does not possess the resources to bring peace into the world ("Not peace, but a sword!"). The left must not maintain order through forgiveness. A "forgiven-driven"

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

government will breed chaos.¹⁸ The right preaches the Word and the citizens learn to love and respect authority as gifts from God. The right uses order. The left needs forgiveness.

The Divine Service

This entire endeavor of a “team” preparing for the Divine Service is shaped completely by one’s theological perspective of the Divine Service. Other presenters are charged with laying out the theology of the Divine Service, so I shall not repeat that topic. It is simply summarized as *Lex orandi lex credendi*. However, one must not underestimate this dictum when it comes to organizing and preparing for the Divine Service. This is the first and most important hurdle a team must overcome.

There are often two obvious reasons for turmoil in a congregation when it comes to Sunday preparation: divergent theologies or bad administration. (The worse scenario combines divergent theologies *and* bad administration.) Those involved in pulling together the hymns, choirs, music, and flow of the service will find tension bubbling to the top if they have different theologies of worship. Immediately the process of building a team will become easier if all involved study and understand the theology, and thus the purpose, of the Divine Service. This takes honesty and commitment by the parties involved. Be prepared, however, for this process takes time! There will not be a sense of teamwork and fulfillment if the team cannot agree on the very purpose of that which they gather to organize. Too often, pastors, teachers, and church musicians jump to the conclusion that people cannot get along, when the real problem is the different theologies of worship within the team. Christians do not need to live in denial. By God’s grace we can face our problems head-on, and through repentance and absolution we can get back to work. Tension, frustration, and finally agony over theology will ruin any team effort in the congregation if there is not a thorough realization of the theology that is driving the decisions. The most important hurdle to jump in a team setting is to identify the theology of the Divine Service and understand how it governs our planning. This takes a great deal of “left-hand” ability.

Building a Parish Team

The second problem, not as serious but equally frustrating, is a lack of administrative oversight and organization. The answers to the former problem are given in God’s Word. Answers to this second problem flow from First-Article gifts. The former is a matter of the kingdom of the right, the latter, the kingdom of the left. The two depend completely on each other.

Identifying one’s theology could very well be the toughest part of building a team in service planning. It is the pastor who must take charge of the process. That does not mean, however, that the pastor is to be a boss and make everyone do what

The Good Shepherd Institute

he wills. That turns the church into a business, and a dictatorial one at that. (For the sake of clarity, notice in what follows the role of the “left hand” kingdom and the “right hand” kingdom.) Rather, the pastor must work on his leadership skills (left hand) to bring the people together (left hand) to work through (left hand) the theology (right hand, catechesis). He must learn about and understand all of the personalities (psychology, sociology—left hand!) at the table. How and why do they respond the way they do (left hand)? Why is this so important? Because all the players must first identify their theological perspectives of the Divine Service and what they do. The temptation is always to assume that we are all on the same theological page, but we know better! The tension will begin and continue to grow unless the pastor can begin to understand what is taking place on a sociological level (left hand) as well as on the theological level (right hand).

Do not underestimate how hard this part of the task truly is. All involved must be committed to the task. The strongly liturgical pastor must be sure to set aside what others might and often do perceive as an orthodox “bazooka” poised to blast anyone who gets something wrong in the service. (Of course, I’m exaggerating ... slightly.) However, the pastor must be willing to talk all of this through, openly and honestly. The musician or teacher must be willing to do the same and set out his understanding of the theology of worship. The end result of such dialogue will be a thorough education in church and ministry. For that is where the debate over worship takes you. But this is a group of people that the pastor must be able to fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. The tools for assembling that puzzle are not given in God’s Word. The distinct offices are given in God’s Word, but the organizing of them is not. The key to that puzzle is a matter of the kingdom of the left and knowing your fellow church workers, how their personalities respond, and what First-Article gifts they bring to the table (e.g., learned abilities such as: organ playing, choir directing, teaching; administrative, organizational, and people skills; how far they can be “pushed,” when they need positive reinforcement).

This can be, and often is, as dangerous as walking through a minefield. John Maxwell writes that there are generally four reasons why people will stand alone and not become part of the team: ego, insecurity, naivete, and temperament.¹⁹ This list is insulting, offensive, and filled with accusations of sin; however, it is a good “left hand” description of why teams don’t become teams. But this is precisely why churchly wisdom, patience, and forgiveness is the key to walking through this field of land mines without blowing up an individual or the whole team. Why? The kingdom of the left, when used to support the administrative realities of the church is still law. Law always accuses (*lex semper accusat*). (Indeed, Maxwell’s book is titled *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*.) This brings us back to Law and Gospel, sin and grace, Word and Sacraments, and the very life of the holy Christian Church. Administration in the church is very hard because it is still law (first use of the Law), order, civility, and the lesser of two evils—kingdom of the left. Once

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

one introduces law into the church, the church *qua* church employs the second use of the Law—which is to convict people of sin. But the problem is that administration is not about accusing people of sin. It is about organizing people to get some work done. And in the kingdom of the left works do count because they maintain order, civility, and accountability in order to get the work done. Thus the field of land mines. When is the pastor being the administrator? When is he being the pastor? In the church we expect our administrative pastors to be pastoral. That is why it is very hard and takes time, patience, and commitment, all of which must then be placed at the mercy of God.

The pastor must be the example of patience and understanding as he works to identify the theology in the very process of listening. He needs to take it all in and then relax, sit back, and carefully plan and execute a strategy to catechize all involved. Once this process begins, it will take time. And where the pastor's First-Article skills are limited, it will take *more* time.

Here is one example of a clash of the two kingdoms in church work. Pastors and teachers are often frustrated with each other. We are both trained for our primary work to be done in two different kingdoms. The teacher's primary work is kingdom of the left (on behalf of the parents, who are on behalf of God). The pastor's primary work is in the kingdom of the right (called by the congregation on behalf of Christ, AC V). Yet when a pastor is expected to be an administrator he must now realize that he has moved into the left; order, i.e., organization, is now the objective. I don't blame teachers for being frustrated with us. We have a hard time being on time, finishing the lesson plans or objectives for the class, and are not often well prepared and organized when holding people responsible for their sin. We are supposed to forgive it and let it go. When pastors teach we operate with the conviction that we have the rest of your lives to work, and the presence of the Spirit who will convict in His own good time ("when and where he pleases" AC V). On the other hand, when a teacher teaches, he must measure the results at the end of the quarter and assign each child the deserved grade. Pastors just don't organize and see life and daily scheduling as teachers do. Teachers, rightfully so, make use of the left-hand disciplines of psychology and sociology far more than do pastors. The teacher's office requires a clear timetable and keeping the schedule. The pastor's vocations differ in their foundation and implementation. Pastors don't mind being ten minutes late for the next appointment in order to be sure they listened as long as needed to the widow on the phone who is having a crisis of sorrow, doubt, and fear. Pastors *pastor*. To understand this, just consider a time when you felt you needed to speak with your pastor about a challenge, sorrow, question, or difficulty in your life. How would you (or did you) respond if the pastor gave you inadequate attention?

Building a parish team will involve all these issues. The team's work will certainly flow from the theology of the Divine Service. The various offices of the

The Good Shepherd Institute

church bring with them a variety of training, specialties, perspectives on implementation, and mutual expectations. They also bring with them the sinful people who occupy those offices, with their personalities, weaknesses and strengths, etc. Team building must make use of the common sense, order, and communication skills that come from the kingdom of the left. Building a parish team is dependent upon many of the tools of that kingdom.

Team Building

Leadership

This is an area that is misunderstood by many people in Lutheranism. Unfortunately, part of the problem with leadership in the church is that most of the books written about it in an ecclesiastical setting have not made the most important two-kingdom distinction. In fact, within the ecclesiastical context one finds most leadership books written in the Reformed tradition. Reformed theology has a completely different understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation, which simply does not grasp the importance of and the implementation of two-kingdom theology. Leadership is nothing new. It is common sense and First-Article gifts. It may prove helpful to read books that outline leadership philosophies and provide some commonsense ideas, particularly if one has not had “hands-on” experience in a leadership role. There are many good and very readable books on leadership, such as *Leadership for Dummies*.²⁰ In this book leadership is simply defined according to three key skills:

Elicit the cooperation of others;
Listen;
Put others before yourself.²¹

It is in cooperation with others that team building begins. Within the context of church work cooperation begins with theological conviction. In the language of leadership, that means catechizing the team by setting the theological direction or “vision” (the old buzzword for “vision” was “objectives”).

Meetings

Building a parish team begins with meetings as one continues the lifelong process of catechizing. Meet together to communicate, organize, and talk theology. Meeting on a weekly basis is very important, especially if there are more than two people planning the service and your congregation has more than one service on a Sunday morning. Meet even if you have nothing to go over. Show up at the meeting and say: “Nothing much on the plate today. How’s the family?” Much team building takes place when there is “nothing to cover.” Here is where the listening and teamwork of sacrifice will begin.

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

Personalities

Understand the personalities sitting at the table. This takes time and work by everyone. Take advantage of some of the tools of the kingdom of the left when it comes to personality assessment.²² As a tool of reason, however, realize it is *only* a tool. If such tools are used, be aware of how they function as the second use of the Law once they are introduced into the church. Don't push anyone away from the table because of personality! Rather, bring it under Law and Gospel. Use it as the first use of the Law, as an ordering tool for the sake of getting work done. Most church workers simply want respect for what they do and the time they put in. When using these tools one should know when to throw them aside. They cannot overrule the theology. When the church worker makes use of this tool, be very quick to identify its "first-use" implementation. This is important because in the church we are very sensitive and have a full understanding of what it means to reveal sin. We must also realize that it *will* reveal sin. When this happens, forgive it and move on. This is what separates the Lutheran from the Reformed administrator. We don't pretend that we don't sin. We know it, we confess it, we are forgiven, and we move on within our vocation. We use the tools of reason completely differently. Lutherans know when to toss them to the side when using them as a tool of order for the sake of administration. We have a clear theology of ministerial and magisterial use of reason (i.e., reason is used properly when it is used in its sphere and in service to, never master of, the Gospel and Holy Scripture).

Think Ahead

Plan the whole year according to the ecclesiastical calendar. Here is where a great deal of theological teaching can take place. The variation of the liturgy according to the wisdom of the church walks people through the life of Christ and His bride. What do we sing, when, and why? Why do the paraments change colors? What is the theology of the hymns? When do we sing the Alleluias? The team will be pleased because everyone will know what to expect and when. For the church musician the last-minute surprises of insertions into the service will fade away. The musician will know what is coming and therefore have the necessary time to practice.

The Lutheran Grade School

If you have a grade school be sure to include the school calendar in planning. It is amazing how often this oversight creates frustration in a parish team. If you are a pastor with a grade school, the principal of the grade school must become a full member of the parish team. (Often, the musician is one of the teachers.) Communicate with the principal on a weekly basis as well, especially since the school choirs will assist in the Divine Service appropriately.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Conclusion

If you are a pastor, think like a musician and teacher. If your organist is a volunteer who is a single mom, then think like a single mom. If you are a musician or teacher, think like a pastor. The worlds are very different and governed by different schedules and thought processes. In the end, building the parish team is a beautiful balance between the two kingdoms that God has given so that we might live on this earth peacefully. The art of living the baptized life of the Christian on earth involves in large measure balancing one's vocations. This is an art that church workers above all others have a very hard time learning.

The most beautiful balance of the two kingdoms is found in the Divine Service, for even the Divine Service has the structuring of the kingdom of the left. The liturgies, ceremonies, and rites are all wise use of created order so that the gifts of the Kingdom might unfold before the people of God. The left is simply the infrastructure, the scaffolding upon which the church preaches, teaches, absolves, and baptizes, and how Christ calls His sheep to the Eternal Feast. Like any good earthly father, our Heavenly Father uses these created gifts to feed His children.

Notes

1 This is a very important hermeneutical moment for the Lutheran who seeks to develop team building and leadership skills. It is the very difference between a Reformed and a Lutheran hermeneutic to Scriptures. A Reformed worldview of the church would look to Scriptures and try to find a modern day perspective of leadership and in turn attempt to tell the church that this "leadership" is "biblical." The Lutheran, on the other hand, believes that is not the purpose of the Bible. For the Lutheran, team building and leadership fall entirely under the freedom of the Gospel to assert human reason and the wisdom she provides in working with people. Lutherans appropriately understand the Law/Gospel, sin/grace, justification/sanctification, and presence of God on earth theology as the biblical message, not "how to" for administration and organizational structure.

2 The following sources are helpful in summarizing two-kingdom theology: Kurt E. Marquart, "The Two Kingdoms or Governments" in *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (Waverly, Iowa: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990), 174–94; Gustav Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Evansville, Ind.: Ballast Press, 1994); Paul Althaus, "The Two Kingdoms and the Two Governments," in *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 43–82. The footnotes in Althaus's book provide a great start for delving into Luther's writings on this subject. For a thorough study, one must simply immerse oneself in Luther's writings on the Christian in society. For a summary directed more toward laypeople see Gene Edward Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 91–106. Veith's book is an excellent introduction to Lutheran theology for

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

laypeople and a valuable resource for catechizing adults. See also the appended chart entitled “Two-Kingdom Theology.” Certainly one of the finest and most thorough discussions of two-kingdom theology, particularly as it relates to church and state, is Hermann Sasse’s “Church Government and Secular Authority According to Lutheran Doctrine,” in *Hermann Sasse—The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters*, vol. 1, trans. Matthew Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002).

3 I suspect that the rise in popularity of this type of literature in LCMS circles is due in some measure to our controversy in the 1960s and 70s. While the Synod made the correct decision regarding the nature of the Bible as God’s Word, what has ensued in the practical life of the church is often a type of Reformed biblicism that denigrates legitimate “left hand” disciplines, like psychology, sociology, medicine, etc. used ministerially, which is not transgressing or encroaching upon the truth of the Gospel and Holy Scripture.

4 “θεοῦ γὰρ διὰ κῶρος ἐστὶν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν.” *The Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

5 Reason must be understood in its pre-critical perspective. Reason does not mean some sort of modernistic “purely instrumental and content-free, namely logic, ‘I.Q.,’ or the computing function. . . . rather a power of judgment deeply embedded in man’s irreducibly *moral* nature (Rom. 1:20; 2:14.15)” Marquart, 176. When reason is objectified it produces the romantic and naïve conclusions of modernism, which turns science into the deity that will solve all human problems. A modernistic approach to Scripture and creation eventually removes Christ from both. Even exegesis, when it falls into the trap of the objectification of the text to the point of being sterile from humanity and history will lose sight of Christ and His presence. It becomes a form of twentieth-century scholasticism. However, with all of the problems of post-modernism in its extreme forms, one must *not* conclude that Scripture is not objective in the pre-critical sense of the term as Lutheranism has always professed the “external” or objective nature of Scripture to the person.

6 See also I Timothy 2:2 and I Peter 2:13, 14.

7 “He calls men into a variety of stations and offices and into corresponding relationships of dependence and of commanding and obeying. Wherever people live together, there is a top and a bottom, there are higher and lower stations. The equality of all Christians before God in faith and love does not abrogate or invalidate natural differences and relationships of dependence and authority among men. The attempt to eliminate these differences would throw human society into chaotic disorder.” Althaus, 57.

8 This is another very important distinction between Reformed/Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. Both of the former seek to Christianize society. This gross confusion of the two kingdoms leads to terrible confusion on the part of believers as they live out their daily lives. The Christian often seeks to be biblical

The Good Shepherd Institute

in daily life decisions; however, most of the decisions we make are not addressed in God's Word. This is where the Lutheran grasps the freedom of the First-Article gifts of reason. This is why it is so important to understand good reason and proper argumentation when making decisions in one's life.

9 "The whole 'Left Hand' kingdom is but a vast scaffolding for God's ultimate purpose: the eternal salvation of His church." Marquart, 176.

10 "To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it, that he commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them. . . . Thus he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself. . . . Honor includes not only love but also deference, humility, and modesty, directed (so to speak) toward a majesty hidden within them. . . . that we respect them very highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place."

"Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they are, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained them to be our parents. In other respects, indeed, we are all equal in the sight of God, but among ourselves there must be this sort of inequality and proper distinctions. God therefore commands you to be careful to obey me as your father and to acknowledge my authority." *Book of Concord*, trans. by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1959), 379–80. *Large Catechism*, Fourth Commandment, summarized from paragraphs 108–112.

11 Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession speaks clearly about two-kingdom theology: ". . . our teachers have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to point out the difference between spiritual and temporal power, sword, and authority, and they have taught that because of God's command both authorities and powers are to be honored and esteemed with all reverence as the two highest gifts of God on earth" AC XXVIII, 4 (Tappert, 81) and see also 12–14.

12 "Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him. . . . Thus all who are called masters stand in the place of parents and derive from them their power and authority to govern." (Tappert, 384). *Large Catechism*, Fourth Commandment, 141–42.

13 Certainly many more passages could be cited along with the different imagery of Christ's church, i.e., bride, body, temple, heavenly company, communion of saints, etc. At the heart of our theological understanding is the definition of the church as confessed in the Augsburg Confession, Article VII, which is manifested only around the marks. "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered." (AC, VII, 1)

14 Luther's *Small Catechism*. Explanation to the First Article.

Preparing for the Divine Service: Building a Parish Team

15 See Veith, 71–90. Veith eloquently speaks of vocation as the “spirituality of ordinary life.” This “daily divinity” of life helps Christians, especially church workers, to understand their call appropriately in the life of the church. It provides the biblical structure for understanding the relationship between the various auxiliary offices of the church. See also Kenneth A. Cherney, Jr. “Hidden in Plain Sight: Luther’s Doctrine of Vocation,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 78 (Fall 2001): 278–90. Cherney correctly points out that “there is ‘relative silence’ among us on the doctrine of vocation” (288). A good dose of vocation is the medicine that would cure much of the confusion that exists in the area of church and ministry and what is the role of the layperson in the church. We must get back “to elevat[ing] other works of love: the binding of wounds, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked. Playing with a child. Giving my employer or my customer his money’s worth” (289).

16 It is here that one begins to grasp how the order of creation serves the order of salvation. This speaks volumes to the current American culture and how one speaks of women’s ordination. It is this relationship of order serving salvation that puts the order of creation in the proper context. Without this context order is only for the sake of order—a very Calvinistic approach to the problem. However, to understand creation in service to salvation places the subject at the Incarnation.

17 Althaus, 60. This paragraph summarizes much of what Althaus writes in his section “The Two Governments Depend on Each Other” (59–61).

18 The Braunschweig Church Order of 1569, written by Chemnitz, has instructions for pastors visiting those condemned to capital punishment. They are to inform the condemned who have repented and been forgiven that it is now their duty to die as a Christian example and as a warning to others in society so that they not follow in the same path and suffer similar fate. Emil Sehling, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts*, vol. 8 (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1965).

19 John C. Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 6–8.

20 Marshall Loeb and Stephen Kindel, *Leadership for Dummies* (New York: IDG Books, 1999).

21 Ibid., 1.

22 Personality assessments can serve a team very well. They simply generalize many of the personality traits. Often, they will explain why some people in the team are “butting” heads and demonstrate that it is not a theological issue. There are numerous books on this topic along with ways to categorize the personality traits. See, for example, David W. Merrill and Roger H. Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance: Make Your Style Work for You* (New York: CRC Press, 1999).

The Good Shepherd Institute

TWO KINGDOM THEOLOGY

Pastor Mark E. Sell

Kingdom of the Left

Scripture: Romans 13:1–7

Catechism: Fourth Commandment; First Article

- ✠ Purpose: Order, civil peace
- ✠ Governing rulers: Ministers διάκονος
- ✠ Means: Reason as it governs civil law (first use)
When law is rejected, force is used to maintain order.
- ✠ Goal: civil righteousness, morality
- ✠ Reward good; punish evil
- ✠ Order—higher and lower stations in life
- ✠ Lesser of two evils
- ✠ Only the Christian knows that the ultimate purpose
is the kingdom of the right.

Kingdom of the Right

Scripture: Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:13, 14

Catechism: Second Article, Baptism, Keys, and Lord's Supper

- ✠ Purpose: Identify sin and forgive it.
- ✠ Christ rules through means: Word and Sacraments
- ✠ Ecclesiastical use of the Law is the second use.
- ✠ Sin is sin.
- ✠ Spiritual righteousness *by faith*
- ✠ Justification
- ✠ All are one in Christ *by faith*.

The Pastor and the Church Musician: Building a Parish Team

Kevin J. Hildebrand

Worship is about God giving His gifts and the response of His people. The gifts of God are administered by the Church through His servants. Among these servants are pastors and church musicians. As pastors celebrate the Lord's Supper and musicians lead the singing, they facilitate worship, as God's gifts are given and received and the Gospel proclaimed. The work of God's servants requires skills, high standards, and teamwork. What follows are commonsense, practical thoughts on the vocations of pastors and church musicians as they serve God and His people.

Building a Parish Team

A team, by its nature, works together in one accord. This does not mean that each player in the pastor-musician team has to operate identically. The pastor and musician have different responsibilities, gifts, and distinct vocations, but they serve together toward the same goal. The pastor and musician have different perspectives—different, but not separate. Their distinct roles intertwine in worship. For better or for worse, the pastor and musician are the most influential stewards of God's Word and the church's heritage in daily parish life. It should go without saying that church workers with such important responsibilities as pastors and musicians should cooperate with, communicate with, and help each other. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many parishes.

Inside the Relationship

1. The pastor and church musician must be united in theology.

This is the foundation upon which any pastor-musician team is built. If the pastor and musician are not united theologically there is no teamwork. Remember that Martin Franzmann tells us that “theology is doxology.”¹ Our overarching view of worship, down to the nitty-gritty details of what we will sing and say in Sunday's service, are all theological considerations. To paraphrase Robin Leaver, when one considers the teamwork of pastor and church musician, the approach must be through a theological understanding of worship and liturgy, which is but one part of the total of theology.²

If either the pastor or church musician, or both, view worship as a peripheral activity, distraction, or obligation, there is no teamwork; rather, there will be

The Good Shepherd Institute

confusion and apathy. Worship must be the number one priority for both the pastor and church musician. The proclamation of God's Word must be united and consistent from both the pulpit and choir loft.

The pastor makes decisions about music, hymns, and liturgy. He may chant the liturgy or provide other music leadership. In this way, the pastor is also a type of musician. The musician, by nature, must be a theologian. Leaver refers to this relationship as an "intertwining duet of music and theology."³

2. The pastor and church musician must have respect for the distinction of each other's vocation.

Pastors and musicians do different things in their daily work. They have different focuses in their study and professional growth. The musician must respect the pastor as the shepherd of the flock, to which the musician also belongs. The musician should also recognize the pastor's role as theologian and teacher. On the other hand, the pastor must respect the musician for his or her art, study, teaching, need for planning, and time for practice.

In doing so, the goal of using their distinct gifts together as worship leaders is met. Carl Schalk puts it this way: "Team planning [is] an opportunity for greater richness and variety in worship,"⁴ instead of being an encroachment on each others' turfs.

3. The pastor and church musician must have respect for their congregation.

Every parish develops their own traditions and practices. Each congregation has its own corpus of hymns in its repertoire. "Knowing the story" of their congregation is important for the pastor and musician. They must be sensitive to this when planning hymns and liturgy, and deciding when and how to make changes, additions, and deletions in the way things are done. Good teaching, careful explanation, engaging examples, open discussion with the parish, and taking adequate amounts of time to implement changes are good ideas that provide respect for local traditions.

4. The pastor and church musician must do their jobs well.

We know that worship is Gospel-centered, where Christ gives His gifts and He does the work. It is sometimes awkward, therefore, to speak about worship and mention what we ourselves are doing. We know that no matter how talented we are, our work is acceptable to God only by the merits of Christ. But, having our theological foundation established, we also recognize that being a pastor or being a musician is a job that must be done. Sermons require exegetical study, writing, and preparation. Music involves composition, or improvisation, or analysis and practice. There is no excuse for poor performance of our jobs with little or no

The Pastor and the Church Musician: Building a Parish Team

preparation. Whatever your role is, do it well. Then, following our Lord's instructions, "when you have done everything you were told to do, [you] should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Lk 17:10).

5. The pastor and church musician need time to build a team.

This team is about theology and vocation, but it is also about building personal relationships. Just like any other professional partnership, the pastor and musician must learn how each other operates, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and how best to help each other. This does not happen overnight. It takes time to establish trust and respect practices. This relationship never ends; rather, it continues as long as they work together.

6. The pastor and church musician must communicate.

Like other things that should go without saying but must be said, communication is not an option. The pastor and church musician need to meet, discuss, practice, and plan with each other. Whether it's a daily, weekly or monthly meeting, a lengthy phone call, or a quick e-mail, this is just common sense for jobs with such responsibility.

7. The pastor and church musician must do long- and short-term planning.

Like communication, planning is not an option for pastors and church musicians to do their jobs well. Anything worth doing well requires a great deal of planning. Worship and liturgical plans must be made weeks, months, or years in advance. One practical reason is that organists, choirs, and instrumentalists need time to practice. The music must be congruent with the liturgy and propers. Sometimes it takes time and research to find a fitting hymn setting or Gospel motet for a specific day in the church year. Or it may be a challenge to squeeze in an hour of practice time between other responsibilities at work and at home. If we are truly going to have well-ordered church music, the days of the musician not having enough time to learn a new piece due to a lack of planning must stop. The days of the pastor choosing Sunday's hymns on Friday night must stop. With such a great liturgical heritage at our disposal, adequate planning is a must.

8. The pastor and church musician should be far-sighted, beyond the walls of their parish.

In their respective vocations, the pastor and musician serve not only their own flock, but also the entire church. Both pastor and musician participate in the handing down of the faith and the ever expanding musical tradition. Our jobs are bigger than our own congregation's self-perceived needs.

The Good Shepherd Institute

Examples of the Teamwork between Pastor Sell and Kantor Hildebrand

1. Personalities. Both of us have a commitment to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and their manifestation in the church's liturgy. We also have endeavored to know the story of our parish, that is, what is our liturgical history and practice.
2. Meetings. We strive to meet regularly. When Pastor Sell was new at St. Luke, we met consistently on a weekly basis. We needed to analyze and discuss the big picture of the worship life of the church in general and of St. Luke in particular. We continue to meet regularly, usually once a week. We review annually our plans and goals of what we are doing and where we are going liturgically.
3. Hymn planning. We plan hymns for an entire church year each summer. We have carefully looked at our congregation's repertoire of hymnody and strive to be very sensitive in planning "new" hymnody. The hymns people sing become very dear to them, so this is an important job.
4. When a lot of the big picture planning is done, then we can roll along week to week and cover the weekly details at those times (e.g., there's a Baptism this week, the choir is singing here, etc.). Plans are fluid and rarely set in stone. A plan that is made can usually be altered. The complete absence of a plan, however, would create confusion.
5. Respect for letting each other work in freedom. I don't need to look over Pastor Sell's shoulder in fear that he will alter, liven up, or edit the liturgy using his personal judgment. He knows I will train the choirs well, play skillfully, use the wealth of variety within the liturgy. He doesn't need to sign off each composition the choir sings. What a relief it is to work this way.

Conclusion

The teamwork of the pastor and musician is extremely important. The responsibility of their vocations demands cooperation and unity. As the people of God gather for worship each week, they are directly influenced by the ways the pastor and musician do or do not work together. We pastors and musicians must consider this well. A dismissal or, at the very least, ignorance of the intertwining nature of music and theology is a major factor in the ongoing worship discussions in the church. I propose that if there is more theological study among musicians and more study of the ongoing heritage of church music among pastors, more unity will be achieved among pastors and musicians and within the church.

The Pastor and the Church Musician: Building a Parish Team

Notes

1 Martin Franzmann, *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets: Sermons* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 92.

2 Robin A. Leaver, *The Theological Character of Music in Worship*, Church Music Pamphlet Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 7.

3 Ibid., 5.

4 Carl Schalk, *The Pastor and the Church Musician: Thoughts on Aspects of a Common Ministry*, Church Music Pamphlet Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 6.

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Introit
IV



THE GOOD SHEPHERD
I N S T I T U T E

**Pastoral Theology and
Sacred Music for the Church**