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# Lutheran Liturgies from Martin Luther to Wilhelm Löhe

Vernon P. Kleinig

Edward Gibbon once remarked that we are surprised by the timidity, rather than scandalized by the freedom, of the first Protestant Reformers. Perhaps more than anywhere else, it is in Luther's attitude toward the liturgy that we see the conservative and constructive nature of his Reformation. Thus it is more accurate to speak of Luther's modification, rather than his abolition of traditional worship. Luther's practice in this area is more conservative than his theory, for he never put into practice some of his more imaginative ideas. He never used iconoclastic methods, preferring to instruct people on the reasons for change before altering anything. His reluctance to change things here is significant, since normally he was quick to act. Because of his pastoral concern not to upset and unnecessarily confuse the faith and piety of the common people, he shrank from innovation and sensationalism. As late as 1523 he was content simply to use sermons to wean people from unevangelical attitudes toward worship.

As early as his pre-Reformation days, in a sermon on the Third Commandment, Luther emphasized hearing the Word of God as the most important part of worship. Here he made his famous distinction between the sacramental and sacrificial parts of worship—a distinction that has proven decisive for Lutheran liturgical theory ever since. In 1518-1519, in his writings on the Lord's Supper, Luther developed some of his positive thoughts about the importance of the *koinonia* (fellowship) aspects of the sacrament: "This is a sacrament of love. As love and support are given you here, so you must in turn render support and love to Christ in his needy ones."<sup>1</sup> Many of his statements are

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods," in *Luther's Works*, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut J. Lehmann, (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing

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reminiscent of the *Didache* and the writings of the early fathers of the Church.

In his *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), he criticizes the Medieval Mass. Of particular note are his violent attacks on the Mass as a sacrifice and good work, private masses, and the silent recitation of the canon. Here he articulates a fundamental principle, which was a logical outcome of his strong view of the Eucharist as a feast of fellowship with Christ and one's fellow communicants: no celebration of the Lord's Supper without communicants.<sup>2</sup>

Luther particularly reacted against taking Communion lightly, that is, without confession. And so in sermons in the following years, he stresses the prerequisites for worthy and proper reception of the Sacrament. Next to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, the Lord's Supper is the theme on which Luther spends most of his time writing, because the sacrament *is* the Gospel. His lifelong defense of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in Holy Communion is a defense of the Gospel. In all his liturgical work, Luther is concerned with theology as right praise of God. He understands orthodoxy as correct worship of the triune God. Correct theology is the true praise of God. This ties in with his contention that there always be a unity and congruity between *form* and *content*. This congruity, which he especially tried to achieve in his hymns, is part of the reason for their success. Luther felt that the question of doctrine must always remain in the center, and that the best way of doing so was by relating it to worship. The dogma of the church is to be made concrete in its liturgy. Worship is theocentric. God and worship belong inseparably together. God is in the center of Christian worship, with His acting, giving and

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House and Fortress Press, 1955-72), 35:54. Further references to Luther will be to this edition and will abbreviated *LW*.

<sup>2</sup>In order to understand Luther's violent reaction to the abuses of the late Medieval Mass, it is perhaps worthwhile to consider the Council of Trent's own list of its abuses: too many priests speaking simultaneously, too few communions being made, rival Corpus Christi processions, and the difficulty of hearing what was being said above the noise of the peasants' animals inside the church.

speaking. Faith is not something internal, but expresses itself in worship.

Luther's criticism of existing ceremonies stems not from indifference to liturgical forms, but from a pastoral desire for consciences cramped and burdened by excess. He sees forms as indispensable; the only choice is between a good or bad liturgy. Luther states that ceremonies are added to worship, for spiritual matters cannot be administered without external ceremonies. The five senses and the whole body have their gestures and rituals, under which the body must live as though under some sort of mask. We would call Luther's approach an evangelical-catholic one.<sup>3</sup> He believes that unless God should provide a better liturgy, the Church must stick as closely as is evangelically possible to the liturgies of its past. Worship can and must express some continuity with the Church of the past, since the Gospel had never completely vanished from it. In short, Luther always remained closer to Rome than to the more radical reformers who wanted to discard the historic church: "Sooner than mere wine with the fanatics, I would agree with the pope that there is only blood."<sup>4</sup>

Luther did not rush in with his own liturgy, because it would too easily become the slogan and badge of a particular group. He wanted each region to draw up its own worship order according to its local needs, rather than have every region uniformly use one dictated by him. Luther argued that forms are beneficial precisely if they are not made totally essential. One's decision regarding which form to use is to be determined by the needs of weaker church members.<sup>5</sup>

Karlstadt and Muntzer's hastily produced and theologically flawed revisions compelled Luther to act. The result was the

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<sup>3</sup>The American theologian, Paul Tillich, uses the terms "catholic substance" and "protestant principle" to explain Luther's approach here.

<sup>4</sup>"Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," *LW*37:317.

<sup>5</sup>In this way Luther was more traditional than either the "high" or "low" church positions of today. Both groups strongly believe that the present practices in their church are unsatisfactory.

*Formula Missae* (1523), which was far more influential than others because it was both more conservative and more creative.

Luther viewed the *Formula Missae* as an experimental, interim work. It shows that he found room for some experimentation in worship, though at times it is not well thought through. Yet, as he himself admits: "we must dare something in the name of Christ!" He continues: "It has never been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely, but rather to purify the one that is now in use. . ."<sup>6</sup> He does not even view it necessary to work on any other than the rite being used at Saint Mary, Wittenberg, since his reform is intended only for his region.

Luther expresses an uneasiness about a "moralistic" bias in the pericopal selections of the ancient church. He continues to use them, however, including most of the ancient introits, collects, and prayers. He holds that the sermon can correct any deficiencies in the lectionary (he generally preached on the standard gospel for the day). The whole service is to be over within an hour (so as not to strain people too much). Graduals longer than two verses are to be sung at home, so as not to quench the spirit of the faithful with tedium. For the Introit, Luther suggests using the whole Psalm; for the Kyrie, the various different melodies of the church year are to be retained; the *Gloria in Excelsis* may be omitted on non-festal days, or a hymnic version substituted. Of the collects, only one is to be used each service. The lessons are to be chanted, and the use of gospel candles and incense is made optional. The Creed is to be sung. The "Alleluia," since it is the perpetual voice of the church, is not to be omitted during Lent. Concerning the sermon, Luther suggests it may be preached before the whole service, since the Gospel is a voice crying in the wilderness, calling unbelievers to faith. Regarding the preparation of the elements for the celebration of Holy Communion, Luther prefers pure wine, because it symbolizes the purity of the Gospel.

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<sup>6</sup>"An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg," *LW* 53:20.

Luther's recension of the Canon of the Mass is more controversial. How much Luther can be held responsible for breaking up the unity of the eucharistic prayer and how much late medieval additions had already destroyed its unity is debatable. Luther admitted there were sacrificial aspects of the Eucharist. However, he judges Roman Catholicism's stress on the Eucharist as "a good work we offer to God" to be totally wrong.<sup>7</sup> In his *Treatise on the New Testament*, Luther states: "it is not we who offer Christ, but Christ who offers us. . . . We offer ourselves as a sacrifice along with Christ . . . he takes up our cause . . . and offers himself for us in heaven. . . . We offer our whole selves, our need, praise and thanks in Christ and through Christ; and thereby (through faith) we offer Christ to God, that is, we move Christ and give him occasion to offer himself for us and to offer us with himself."<sup>8</sup> Because it was offered silently, Luther could omit most of the Canon of the Mass without upsetting the people.

Luther did not remove as many of the sacrificial elements from the Mass as it is sometimes stated.<sup>9</sup> From this point on, however, the Words of Institution become the center of focus, and the emphasis in the Lord's Supper shifts from what the church does, to what God gives to the recipient. Luther Reed gives a lengthy analysis of Luther's recension and sums up the present attitude of the Lutheran Church regarding a Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>10</sup> One can only conclude that Luther was inconsistent in wanting, at this point, to have only the bare literal words of Christ, when he could so freely and often, paraphrase the Our Father. What he failed to see is that Christ's words here are more a formula for distribution than a consecration, and that Christ's "blessing" and "giving thanks" does seem to require

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<sup>7</sup>Noteworthy in connection with the Sacraments, is the fact that the Council of Trent itself used the word *sacrifice* with thirteen different meanings.

<sup>8</sup>"*Treatise on the New Testament, That Is the Holy Mass*," *LW*35:99.

<sup>9</sup>For example, he retained the Gloria, prayers, Sanctus, Benedictus, Hosanna, Agnus Dei, and Nunc Dimitis.

<sup>10</sup>Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 317-337. It must be noted that versions of *The Lutheran Liturgy*, though having the same copyright date, vary in pagination.

some further expansion and elaboration. But such was Luther's influence that until recently the majority of Lutheran liturgies have followed his recension. It certainly invested the eucharistic words of Jesus with an altogether new and solemn dignity. But it led the Lutheran laity to see the saying of the Words of Institution as the precise moment of change.<sup>11</sup>

Luther retained the Preface and Propers appropriate to the season of the church year, but differed from the traditional order by placing the Sanctus after the Words of Institution. The reason for the shift is that the Sanctus (with Benedictus) suggests that the Real Presence has already occurred.<sup>12</sup> During the Sanctus the bread and wine is to be elevated according to the rite in use. Unlike the more radical reformers, Luther retains the elevation, but gives it an evangelical interpretation: it is elevated towards us, not God, to remind us of His Covenant, and to incite us to faith in the Sacrament. In terms of Romans 12, it reminds us that we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. It was only in 1542 that the elevation was finally omitted in Wittenberg. The "Peace" is said facing the people after praying the Our Father. During the singing of the Agnus Dei, the minister communes himself, and then the people.<sup>13</sup> After the Distribution, the Benedicamus and seasonal alleluia is sung, and the service closes with the Aaronic Blessing or Psalm 67:6—"God, our God, has blessed us."

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<sup>11</sup>Reed notes (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, 334): "Luther at first regarded the Verba as an announcement to the congregation. This idea is also frequently expressed in the Formula of Concord and the writings of the later dogmaticians. After 1523, however, Luther certainly viewed the Verba as words of consecration, referring to them as *Benedictio* (blessing) in the *Formula Missae* of that year and as *das Amt und Dermung* (Consecration) in the German Mass of 1526. In a letter to Carlstadt in 1527 Luther expresses his belief that the recitation of the Verba over the elements marks the consummation of the sacramental union."

<sup>12</sup>There is some tension, for according to his thinking this happened only with the Words of Institution.

<sup>13</sup>On Luther's views of pastoral self communion, one may see Toivo Harjunpaa, "The Pastor's Communion," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 52 (April-July 1988): 149-167.



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Luther insists that Holy Communion not be distributed indiscriminately. Those desiring communion must personally request to receive it, so that the pastor can ascertain their understanding and the state of their daily relationships with others. Luther wants those communing to come forward into the chancel, before the Preface, as a witness to everyone. Participation in Holy Communion is an act of Christian confession. In conclusion, Luther believes that once a new order is adopted, changes in it should be kept to a minimum, to avoid confusing people unnecessarily.

All the choir parts of Luther's 1523 Mass were in Latin. Over time pressure induced Luther to produce a totally vernacular rite. He was slow in writing a fully vernacular liturgy because he was musically astute enough and linguistically sensitive enough to know that more is involved than just translating texts. German requires a totally different melody. Luther spent the next years preparing music and texts with his musicians, Walter and Rupsch, working especially on chants for the lessons. Because the final note is monosyllabic in German, the final notes in the Introit need to differ from Latin. Luther suggests using the eighth tone for the epistle, since St. Paul is serious, but the sixth tone for the gospel, since Christ's sayings are pleasant. The Words of Institution are to be chanted in the same tone, to impress on people that these are sheer Gospel. There is a great difference between the syllabic song of the Germans, and the melismatic song of the Mediterranean peoples. Gregorian chant can, for example, be sung with more notes on one syllable. Luther tried to stay as close as possible to the German folk-song form. His meticulous work paid off, so much so that even Walter was amazed at the agreement of text and tune, form and content in Luther's efforts. The rhymes are good, none are forced; there is no unnecessary or sentimental word. All breathes an air of freedom and confidence. The music at the "and was made man" in the Nicene Creed is to facilitate kneeling, a practice Luther is particularly keen to see retained.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Sermons on the Gospel of St. John," *LW*22:105: "The following tale is told about a coarse and brutal lout. While the words 'And was made man' were being sung in church, he remained standing, neither genuflecting nor

In his musical and linguistic adaptations, we see Luther's genius at its best. Even here, however, continuity with the past is retained. Thirty-two of his thirty-six hymns are adaptations of pre-Reformation hymns. They are grounded in the church year, Luther having written hymns for every season except Lent (though many of his Easter hymns are rich with Lenten passion motifs).

In *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1524), Luther develops his *via media* principles of liturgical reform. While opposing rigid uniformity, he wants at the same time to encourage a decent regard for tradition. Here he shows his freedom from a narrow rigidity, and why he is slow in producing a vernacular liturgy.<sup>15</sup> It is not necessary to do everything as Christ did. Here he interprets the elevation as an affirmation of the Real Presence against its deniers. Luther states:

We, however, take the middle course and say: There is to be neither commanding or forbidding, neither to the right nor to the left. We are neither papistic nor Karlstadtian, but free and Christian regarding elevation. . . . In the parish church we still have the chasuble, alb, altar and elevate [the host] as long as it pleases us. . . . The pope and Dr. Karlstadt are true cousins in teaching, for they both teach, one the doing, the other the refraining. We, however, teach neither and do both!<sup>16</sup>

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removing his hat. He showed no reverence, but just stood there like a clod. All the others dropped to their knees when the Nicene Creed was prayed and chanted devoutly. Then the devil stepped up to him and hit him so hard it made his head spin. He cursed him gruesomely and said: 'May hell consume you, you boorish ass! If God had become an angel like me and the congregation sang: "God was made an angel," I would bend not only my knees but my whole body to the ground! Yes, I would crawl ten ells down into the ground. And you vile human creature, you stand there like a stick or a stone. You hear that God did not become an angel but a man like you, and you just stand there like a stick of wood!' Whether this story is true or not, it is nevertheless in accordance with the faith (Rom 12:6)."

<sup>15</sup>"*Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*," *LW*40:141.

<sup>16</sup>"*Against the Heavenly Prophets*," *LW*40:130.

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On October 29, 1525, Luther's *Deutsche Messe* was celebrated for the first time. After the service, Luther said to the congregation: "the Mass is as you know the most important public office (*Hauptgottesdienst*) prescribed for the comfort of the Christian." Only in 1528 was it recommended for statewide usage, and then only for congregations where the majority no longer understood Latin. Luther specifically states in his introduction that it is not good for worship to be said only in the vernacular, but should be said in other languages to aid understanding others, to affirm ecumenicity and catholicity. He would even like to have it done in Greek and Hebrew, if only they had as many good tunes as Latin! Luther came out with this Mass, which could be called his "folk mass," to minimize the proliferation of rites.<sup>17</sup> The Reformer argued that as far as is possible, each major region should use a common liturgy to minimize chaos and confusion. Such a practice could act as a stabilizing and unifying force. For the sake of the education of the young, Luther wanted his *Formula Missae* to continue being used, as it was in some regions until the early nineteenth century.

He suggests that lessons could be read by several persons, one chanting the Evangelist's words, and another Christ's, and other speakers by another. After the Gospel, the congregation shall sing the versified setting of the Creed: "We all believe in One True God." Unless the preacher is competent, Luther advises using pre-written homilies. Then follows a lengthy and somewhat clumsy paraphrase of the Our Father, and a eucharistic admonition and exhortation. Luther prefers celebration facing the people, and for the host and the cup to be distributed immediately after their consecration. He retains the elevation because it goes well with the German Sanctus, a version that tries to create a sense of mystery and awe. The elevation both reminds us that Christ daily offers His blood before God to obtain grace for us and signifies that Christ has commanded us to remember Him. Luther is anxious that private confession be maintained, and states that services should be

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<sup>17</sup>"The German Mass and Order of Service," LW53:61.

planned in the interest of the young and unlearned. Latin is to be used on Feasts until there are enough German hymns for these occasions. Luther calls for a common standard to assess and control the profusion of rites. He concludes that when an Order is abused, it becomes a disorder.

Scholarly assessment of Luther's *Deutsche Messe* is mixed. Lutheran liturgical scholars, however, generally characterize it as a less rich liturgy, which follows less closely to the ancient Order of the Eucharist than his 1523 Mass did.

Broadly speaking, those Lutheran liturgies modeled on the *Formula Missae* are richer in form and content than those that take the German Mass as their model. The German Mass is a simplification of the liturgy for uneducated laity. It seeks to retain as much of the historic order for those villages that lacked a capable choir. Luther was disappointed that certain German states legislated the *Deutsche Messe* as the only main service for their areas. He believed, and history has shown him right, that this would lead to a great liturgical impoverishment. Brilioth argues that the restoration of the congregation's role in worship, the high place given to vernacular hymns, and Luther's view of the Lord's Supper as fellowship are worth more than all his liturgical criticisms.<sup>18</sup> Luther's problem was that the Augustinian model on which he based his German Mass was by no means the best of models.

The Lutheran liturgical orders of Germany and Sweden were the first complete vernacular ones in Europe—ten years before any similar developments in England. The liturgical scholars Gasquet and Bishop call the first English Prayer Book of 1549 a "Lutheran" liturgy.<sup>19</sup> This Book of Common Prayer is based on the Cologne version of Luther's liturgy. It uses fourteen of the petitions in the Litany, and is very similar to Cologne's Matins

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<sup>18</sup>Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, translated by A. C. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 97.

<sup>19</sup>F.A. Gasquet and F. Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (Hodges, 1890), 224. For the original text see *The First Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI. And the Ordinal of 1549 together with the Order of the Communion, 1548* (London: Rivingstons, 1869).

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and Vespers. Its prescription of a whole Psalm instead of the short Introit follows Luther's suggestion. Other borrowings include expressions in the Confession, the prayer for the whole state of the church, the "Comfortable Words," and the second half of the Benediction. The Words of Institution are based on a German harmony.

The baptismal and burial orders show Lutheran influence. The relationship between Germany and England became reciprocal when Lutherans in North America used the Book of Common Prayer in wording their English liturgies. Generally though, Lutheran liturgies retained more of the ancient liturgical propers than did English ones. In Lutheranism, even non-eucharistic services were mostly ante-Communions, and so Lutherans always received more of the eucharistic propers than Anglicans did. By retaining the Introit and Gradual, Lutheranism provided more liturgical material for choral composition. Anglican worship developed more of a sacrificial worship than Lutheranism did. The irony, though, is that Lutheranism, which emphasized *faith* and *doctrine*, produced church orders, while Anglicanism, which emphasized *order*, produced a Book of Prayer (though the Lutheran liturgical orders were of course administered with considerable freedom). Perhaps the Swedish history parallels the English more closely.

The Scandinavian liturgies offer us another picture of Lutheran liturgical practice. While Germany has been taken as the norm and standard for Lutheranism, generally speaking, many Lutheran scholars believe that Lutheran worship is better represented in the Scandinavian lands.

At the time of the Reformation, Olavus Petri, a Deacon, was studying in Wittenberg. In 1518 he returned to Sweden to disseminate the ideas of the Reformation. Denmark ruled Sweden at the time, with papal support. Sweden revolted against Denmark in 1520, and the new Swedish king asked the pope to reform his church. Not satisfied with the result, he appointed Petri as reformer. Olavus's brother, Laurentius, who also studied at Wittenberg, was consecrated first Lutheran Archbishop of Sweden in 1531. He assisted a gradual and

constructive reform during his forty-two-year rule. In 1526, he published a Swedish New Testament and hymn book, and, in 1529, the *Manual of Things of Use for Swedish Priests*, containing the Occasional and Minor Offices.<sup>20</sup> The Swedish King insisted on a thorough educational program before any major liturgical changes were made official.

Olavus Petri's 1531 rite is a spoken Mass, since it is meant to replace the Low Mass; the High Mass still being sung in Latin.<sup>21</sup> Here the priest's confession is transformed into a congregational confession. Otherwise it follows the historic order with the Nicene Creed as an alternative to the Apostles' Creed. This liturgy, too, omits the Roman Offertory and Canon, and has the *Sursum Corda* followed by a strongly penitential *Vere Dignum* based on a Latin Paschal Preface.<sup>22</sup> This is, in effect, Petri's Eucharistic Prayer. Petri was less upset by the Mass Canon than Luther. As a patristics student, he knew of the existence of other eucharistic Canons than the Roman one. He has the Sanctus after the Words of Institution to stress that Christ's presence is effected by the consecration and reception as an indivisible whole. After the Peace, the priest speaks a brief word encouraging people to commune. Prior to the final Benediction, appear the words: "Bow your *hearts* to God and receive the blessing." The service closes with the Triune Invocation. Latin High Masses survived longer and more widely than even in Germany. Petri's rite was so successful, and suffered less revision than did its German counterparts, and was to become the Lutheran rite with the longest unbroken usage without having to suffer Pietist and Rationalist revisions.

Archbishop Laurentius Petri assisted his brother Olavus in all the various stages of liturgical reform, especially for the other offices. As in the East, his baptismal rite was virtually a rite of

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<sup>20</sup>Olavus Petri, *The Manual of Olavus Petri, 1529* translated by Eric E. Yelverton (London: SPCK for the Church Historical Society, 1953).

<sup>21</sup>Eric Yelverton, *The Mass in Sweden: Its Development from the Latin Rite from 1531-1917* (London: Harrison, 1920); Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 403-413; Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 112-115.

<sup>22</sup>Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 115.

confirmation, accompanied as it was by the laying on of hands. Laurentius restored more of the ancient liturgical elements than his brother did. His crowning work was his 1571 Church Order.<sup>23</sup> The use of Latin was still retained. A hymn was permitted in place of the Introit, Latin graduals could be used on Festival Days, and the Tract during Lent; a Swedish confession and absolution came after the sermon, followed by intercessions and a litany, before the Preface. Elevation, eucharistic vestments, sanctuary lights, and genuflection were retained. This was a superb attempt to combine old and new. The order of development is the reverse to Luther's; Laurentius Petri's 1571 order more closely parallels the approach of Luther's 1523 *Formula Missae* than does Luther's 1526 German Mass.

Less successful, though, was King John III's *Red Book* (1576), with its thorough return to Catholicism.<sup>24</sup> He feared the power and beauty of the eucharistic worship was being weakened by Calvinism, and so he used his patristic knowledge to stem the threat. The priest's preparation and vesting prayers are re-introduced. The Offertory chant is restored and sung while the elements are brought forward. Then follows the *Te Igitur* and *Lavabo*. A modified form of the opening of the Roman Canon is included, as is some of the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. The priest's communion follows the people's, a peculiar feature of the Swedish rite. The Swedish Synod rejected the book, more because of the way the king tried to enforce it, than because of anything that was unLutheran. The people, who were by now used to the robust sound of Luther's liturgy, were likely alienated more by the silent intercessions in the Canon than anything else. Yelverton sees this as an attempt to return to the better things of the pre-Reformation period, which is without parallel in English liturgical history.<sup>25</sup> More than anything else,

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<sup>23</sup>Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 413-418; Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 115-116.

<sup>24</sup>Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 421-441; Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 116-119. The formal title of the liturgy was *Liturgia Svecanae Ecclesiae Catholicae et Orthodoxae conformis*. It was called the "Red Book" because of color of the binding of the earliest copies.

<sup>25</sup>Eric E. Yelverton, *The Mass in Sweden* (London: Harrison, 1920), 73.

though, this attempt simply showed how thoroughly successful the Reformation in Sweden had been, a fact further attested to by the rejection of a Calvinizing campaign on the part of John's successor. Swedish history after this demonstrates a general dissatisfaction with non-eucharistic services. The result was a continuing incorporation of eucharistic components into them, until they virtually became ante-Holy Communion services.

Since Norway was part of Denmark until 1814, its liturgical history is similar to Denmark's. Denmark almost resisted Luther's Reformation. Hans Tausen ("the Danish Luther"), however, roused much popular support. In a series of debates, Tausen articulated Reformation themes, while Rome's defenders lost support among the common people when they refused to rebut Tausen in Danish. Finally, the King called for help from Luther to reform his country, and in 1537 Luther's co-reformer Bugenhagen went to Denmark. That year, he crowned Christian III in a ceremony that was an adaption of a Roman coronation, and consecrated the bishops of Denmark and Norway. The rite of that same year was in Latin, though only two years later it was translated into the vernacular.<sup>26</sup> Bugenhagen called for a thorough education program before changes were brought in. The rite is a mixture of Luther's 1523 and 1526 rites, with the following notable exceptions: elevation is accompanied by bells; candles on the altar are to be lit only when there is Communion; the service is celebrated in an alb until after the Sermon, when the chasuble is put on; the order prescribes kneeling and silent prayer at the beginning; the wording of the Confession is strong: "I have outraged you by my thoughts, words and deeds, and I confess the evil desire in my heart"; after the gospel, the response is: "God be praised for his glad tidings"; after the pulpit notices, the priest blesses the people; the response to the intercessions is: "Glory be to thee, forever."

This agenda issues instructions for celebrating each High Festival. There is great concern that the service be not too long—a bishop's consecration is to be over by 10:00 A.M. Laity

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<sup>26</sup>Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 394-399.



are occasionally permitted to preach, provided they do not speak too long. The chasuble is invariably red, and the Lutheran "ruff" collar replaces the amice. The Danish and Norwegian readings and collects are closer to the English than German ones. Their liturgical differences from Rome are due less to the alteration of an ancient prescription than to the prohibitions of local pre-Reformation variations by the Council of Trent. The Vespers is closer to the traditional Latin than is the Book of Common Prayer's *Order for Evening Prayer*. "Psalm" here means a vernacular hymn. It is even specified what the priest is to preach on at the different times of the church year (for example, on St. John the Baptist's Day, preaching is to be against re-Baptism).

The *1539 Altar Book* of Denmark mainly contains the historic collects and lessons in large print. Children of married couples are to be baptized before the sermon, while illegitimate children are to be baptized after the sermon. The introduction to the 1685 Revision was considered such a good defense of traditional ceremonies, that it was translated into English. The regular service is to be a High Mass with nothing omitted. The sermon is after the Lord's Supper, and the gospel and prayers can be read either from the pulpit or altar. The liturgist (deacon) stands in the middle of the congregation to lead the singing better. School towns are to have the Nicene Creed in Latin. As long as another clergyman is present, the officiating priest is not to commune himself. Here for the first time, against Calvinistic influence, we have the polemical distribution formula "This is Jesus' true body." A medieval expansion of the Agnus Dei is used. The first communicants are already kneeling at the altar during much of the eucharistic liturgy, and before they commune, the priest prays a very beautiful prayer stressing the presence of the risen Lord.

In 1814, Norway united with Sweden, but it was not until 1889 that it developed its own rite. Generally, the Scandinavian rites, like the Anglican, have less detailed rubrics than the German rites have. The German rubrics contain an informative theology worthy of analysis.

We now take the 1528 Brunswick as a typical example of a German rite not created by Luther.<sup>27</sup> It is a useful one because we can compare it with its influential 1615 revision, and see how much the Lutheran liturgy had stabilized. This is a wholly vernacular rite, except for the choir parts, which are in Latin. This rite gives instructions regarding what is to be taught in schools, organists' duties, and welfare for the needy. Bugenhagen, who prepared this rite, takes a much stricter line on liturgical non-deviation than Luther did: "this is an order, and is to be followed as closely as the old order was!" The order presupposes a continued use of the old lectionary, prayer, and choir books, and may justifiably be characterized as providing "evangelical" instructions for the Roman rite—hence its brevity. A full Psalm replaces the Introit. The normal order is followed with the traditional sequences being sung on festival days after the epistle, the choir and people alternating in Latin and German. During the Nicene Creed, the congregation and priest sing alternately. The sermon is on the gospel, and, after the intercessions, the communicants enter the chancel. Then follow the Preface, Proper Preface, and Sanctus in Latin, as well as the Our Father in German (which is virtually a eucharistic, consecratory prayer). If there are no communicants, the priest still wears the vestments and the service concludes with the Lord's Prayer.

In 1615 the rite is still called a Mass. If the Introit is too difficult to sing, a hymn in German may be substituted. Decius's "All Glory Be to God" replaces the Gloria. The Gradual is a vernacular hymn, and "We All Believe in One True God" is exchanged for the Creed. The catechism is read at the beginning of the sermon, followed by a second reading of the gospel, which is then explained. Non-communicants are then encouraged to stay for the whole service. The rest of the eucharistic liturgy is the same as 1528. The sermon should encourage people to commune often. Eucharistic vestments are retained, as are sacramental candles.

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<sup>27</sup>Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 91-97; Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 330.

Generally, Lutheran liturgies of the seventeenth century exhibited a strong catholic sense and retained the form of the Mass. The exception to this rule is that where there were no communicants, the sermon replaced the eucharistic Canon. Until 1723, the main worship service in Lutheran lands involved the Sacrament of the Altar. On festival days, the nine-fold Kyrie returned and the lessons were chanted. The Gradual became the chief hymn, the theme hymn of the day, and the gospel was read from the pulpit. The difference between Reformed and Lutheran worship appeared particularly in differing music. The Lutherans, retaining Gregorian chants, used the organ alternatively with congregational singing, rather than accompanying it. The Pfalz-Neuburg (1543) liturgy is of unique importance, because it was one of the few to retain a eucharistic prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou only true Son of the living God, who hast given thy body unto bitter death for us all, and hast shed thy blood for the forgiveness of our sins, and hast bidden all thy disciples to eat that same body and drink thy blood to remember thy death; we bring before thy divine majesty these thy gifts of bread and wine, and beseech thee to hallow and bless the same by thy divine grace, goodness and power, and ordain (*schaffen*) that they may become (*sei*) thy body and blood, even to eternal life to all who eat and drink . . .<sup>28</sup>

This would become the basis for 19th century eucharistic prayers in Bavaria and America.

Friedrich Kalb has thoroughly detailed how faithfully seventeenth-century Lutheranism adhered to Luther's liturgical principles and suggestions.<sup>29</sup> Kalb shows how unjust and incorrect is the charge of "dead orthodoxy" against 17th century Lutheranism. Orthodox Lutheran worship exhibited a rich vitality in that era. Yet, Pietism gradually and slowly undermined traditional liturgical practices.

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<sup>28</sup>Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 635.

<sup>29</sup>Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism*, translated by H. P. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965).

In the eighteenth century, German worship suffered badly from Pietistic and Enlightenment influences. The outstanding exception was Bach's Leipzig (1730-50). Gunther Stiller has shown how Bach was responsible for a liturgical revival in that city.<sup>30</sup> There was such an increase in communions that midweek eucharistic services had to be held. Private confession experienced an upsurge. Many of Bach's cantatas, which became a regular part of the liturgy, are filled with eucharistic allusions. These cantatas are fully intelligible only when their texts are viewed in relation to the Lutheran liturgy they served. The Lutheran liturgy was the native soil from which Bach's cantatas arose. They closely follow the Lutheran order of worship and the seasons of the church year. Bach saw the cantata as an important correlative of the sermon in the proclamation of the Gospel. Luther's "Theology of the Cross" finds rich expression in Bach's music, especially in his *Saint Matthew Passion*. His cantatas reveal a deep and prayerful exegesis of the epistle and gospel for that Sunday of the church year. Bach never envisaged that one day his cantatas would be "performed" outside of the Sunday liturgy. Rather than being composed for the pleasurable titillation of the ear, they were created for the heart and mind that they might give rightful glory to God. In the final analysis, Bach gives musical expression to what he found in Luther: true theology is doxology. At the age of twenty-three Bach had set himself the task of renewing Lutheran liturgical music. By 1748, he had exceeded all expectations. He had fulfilled his professed lifelong goal: "to provide well-regulated church music to the glory of God." His church music shows why Bach has rightly been called the greatest Lutheran theologian and liturgiologist since Luther!

Hermann Sasse often claimed that it was the Lutheran liturgy that saved the Faith of the Lutheran Church during the Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> The deep love

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<sup>30</sup>Gunther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984).

<sup>31</sup>One may see, for example, Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand: The Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith*, translated, with revisions and additions from the second German edition by Theodore G. Tappert (Minneapolis:

German Lutherans had for their liturgy can be seen in the widespread opposition to King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia's imposition of an unlutheran liturgy on Lutheran congregations in September 1817. The "Awakening" initiated by Claus Harms in October 1817 and the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augsburg Confession helped many Lutherans rediscover the priceless treasures they possess in their historic liturgies.

Lutheran liturgical work in the nineteenth century was more restorative than innovative. Bavaria, which had always fostered a high sacramentalism, was influenced especially by the great Neuendettelsau pastor, Wilhelm Löhe. Under him it became a leading center of liturgical and sacramental renewal. Nineteenth-century scholars returned to the best liturgies of the sixteenth century, and set about removing later questionable additions and changes.<sup>32</sup> Löhe was perhaps typical of the high eucharistic piety of many of these scholars: "I find all of Lutheranism hidden away in the Sacrament of the Altar. Here all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, and particularly those of the Reformation, have their center and focal point. It is not so much Lutheran doctrine, but sacramental living that counts with me. My progress is my advancing in a sacramental Lutheranism."<sup>33</sup> Lutherans in America, Germany and Australia who treasure the liturgical heritage of their church are forever indebted to Pastor Löhe and his renewal of authentic Lutheran worship.

In the period from Martin Luther to Wilhelm Löhe, in the German and Scandinavian Lutheran churches, we find amid the variety of liturgies, an overwhelming agreement on essentials.<sup>34</sup> The liturgies of this period are informed by a similar theology of worship and a common understanding of the purpose of

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Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), 106, 109-110.

<sup>32</sup>Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 753.

<sup>33</sup>F. W. Kantzenbach, "German Lutheran Theology of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries," in *The Lutheran Encyclopedia*, edited by Julius Bodensieck, three volumes (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1965), 2:912.

<sup>34</sup>Theodor F. D. Kliefoth, *Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienst-Ordnung in der deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation*, five volumes (Schwerin: Stiller, 1859-1861).

Divine Service: God's building up of His people, and the people glorifying their God. There is a desire to worship God in continuity with Christians of past centuries. Despite the ardent attacks of Pietism and the Enlightenment, many Lutherans clung to the forms of worship they had inherited from Martin Luther. For them worship was "the Gospel in action." The sacramental parts of the liturgy gave expression to this. The Lutheran liturgies from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries show us how to maintain a healthy balance between the sacramental and sacrificial aspects of our worship. A better knowledge of them and the theology that shaped them can only enrich our present praise and adoration of the triune God.