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Errata

Due to a production error, a few characters were omitted from page 6 of the print edition of Glenn K. Fluegge, “How Is Theology a *Habitus*? Voices from the Past and Why It Matters Today,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (January 2025). The first sentence on the page should conclude, on the third line, with “ture.”<sup>11</sup>

The Editors

# Lutheran Liturgy as Lutheran Identity<sup>1</sup>

Darius Petkūnas

The Lutheran liturgy is distinct in that it is difficult to define phenomenologically. Unlike the Byzantine Rite, the Roman Mass, and the Anglican liturgy, it stands out for its diversity. Luther D. Reed, American historian of Lutheran liturgy, was able to count no fewer than 135 different liturgies used in Lutheran territories between 1523 and 1555.<sup>2</sup> Hermann Caspar König in his *Bibliotheca Agendorum* of 1726 counted 351 such documents published up to that time in the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> By adding to this list additional church orders and agendas that had not yet been identified and those prepared outside the Holy Roman Empire, the total number of pre-Enlightenment liturgical sources would certainly exceed 400.<sup>4</sup>

Considering such a large variety of liturgies, one may ask what made all of them Lutheran and what should be regarded as the irreducible foundation of the Lutheran liturgy. One would naturally look to Luther for the answer to this question. He stated that it was not his desire to follow the example of the Roman church by preparing a liturgy that all were obliged to use. “Do not make it a rigid law.”<sup>5</sup> His *Formula missae* and *Deutsche messe* were offered only as suggested usages.

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this article were previously published in Darius Petkūnas, “The Lutheran Liturgy: Theological Principles, Structure, and Historical Development,” *Mokslo ir tikėjimo dialogai* 51, no. 7 (2021): 48–89. Reprinted by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann Caspar König, *Bibliotheca Agendorum* (Zelle: Hoffmann, 1726).

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 2004), 282. The study of the nature of the Lutheran liturgy becomes even more complex by the appearance of inventive Enlightenment liturgies. At least fifty official and unofficial neological agendas had been printed in this period. Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands*, vol. 2, *Die Zeit der Aufklärung und des Rationalismus* (1939; repr., Waltrop, Germany: Spenner, 1994), 4–26; translated by Matthew Carver as *A History of the Dissolution of the Ancient Liturgical Forms in the Lutheran Church of Germany* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2025), 475–503. The complexity of the Lutheran liturgy is further compounded by the Prussian Union agenda that King Friedrich Wilhelm III published in 1821–1824 in the hope of uniting the Lutheran and Reformed churches with a single liturgy that would not contradict the theological position of either church. He claimed that the new agenda followed closely the traditional form of evangelical worship as established by the “great reformer Martin Luther himself.” Friedrich Wilhelm III, *Luther in Beziehung auf die Preussische Kirchen- Agende* (Berlin: Mittler, 1827), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther, *The German Mass and Order of Service* (1526), in *Luther’s Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976); vols.

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This study attempts to define the relationship between Lutheran liturgy and Lutheran identity from a theological and historical perspective. Attention is given to the theological principles employed by Luther and Lutheran reformers in their efforts to reform the medieval Mass as well as to the ceremonial aspect of the liturgy. The gradual decline of the liturgy in the ages of Pietism and Enlightenment and the awakening of a new appreciation of Lutheran confessional theology that led to a liturgical restoration are also considered. The influence of the modern ecumenical spirit on Lutheran liturgy is also briefly discussed.

### I. Confessional Character of the Lutheran Liturgy

Given that a wide variety of Lutheran liturgies flourished in the early days of the Reformation, a purely phenomenological examination would not yield an adequate answer to the question of what makes the liturgy Lutheran. Furthermore, any attempt to identify a liturgy as Lutheran simply on the basis of the ceremonies it either includes or excludes is also inadequate, for as the Augsburg Confession states, “It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere” (AC VII 3).<sup>6</sup>

What is essential to any Lutheran liturgy and what defines it as Lutheran is the faith confessed in it. Lutheran unity is not a unity created by the liturgy, but rather what is unitive is the faith that Lutherans confess and to which their liturgies give expression. Accordingly, the expressed forms of liturgy may be many and varied, but the faith is and remains the same. It is that faith that is articulated in the ecumenical creeds and the Book of Concord. Not many and varied confessions bound together by a common liturgy, as in the Anglican family of churches, but one confession expressed in many liturgies would seem to epitomize a fundamental Lutheran principle.<sup>7</sup> The liturgy is not a mark of the church, nor is it a mark of the church’s unity. The outward form of this holy and divine liturgy is from the Lutheran standpoint not a matter of primary importance.

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31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986), 53:61 (hereafter cited as AE) (= *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 73 vols. [Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–2009], 19:72 [hereafter cited as WA]).

<sup>6</sup> In *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 42.

<sup>7</sup> The axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi* (“the rule of prayer [is] the rule of belief”) in the Lutheran church is understood to mean that the liturgy is the way the church confesses its faith. The liturgy bears public witness to the faith of the church. It is an expression of faith, however, not faith’s source and norm. The church’s *lex orandi* flows out of the *lex credendi*. In the liturgy, the church puts into words and actions the faith that it otherwise articulates in its creeds and confessions.

## II. Luther's Reform of the Mass

In the writings of the period 1517–1523, Luther made no attempt to do more than articulate general principles for the reform of the Mass. He did not dictate specific changes to priests and congregations. They would still use their missals with the understanding that what conflicted with the gospel should be eliminated. It was understood that the Words of Christ over the bread and cup should be recited aloud and heard by all, and the people should receive both the body and the blood. No directions were given about the language of the service.

At the urging of Nicholas Hausmann of Zwickau and others, Luther decided to publish a report on the manner in which the Mass was celebrated and Communion was offered at Wittenberg. It was written in Latin and appeared in 1523 under the title *Formula missae et communionis pro ecclesia Vuittembergensi* (*An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg*).<sup>8</sup>

The *Formula missae* was descriptive, not directive. It was not a liturgy that the priest could use in place of the missal. Luther was content simply to offer suggestions for a proper evangelical adaptation of the medieval Mass. He did not provide propers or describe in detail the manner in which the Mass was to be conducted. The only agenda or service book about which he speaks in the *Formula* was, in fact, the medieval missal. He stated what he found to be of value in it and what needed to be cast aside as unevangelical.

The structure of the medieval Mass and its language were retained. It followed the traditional pattern: Introit (may be replaced in time with a whole psalm), Kyrie Eleison, Gloria in Excelsis, collect, Epistle, Gradual and Alleluia (sequences at Christmas and Pentecost), Gospel, Nicene Creed, sermon in the vernacular (may be put before the Introit), preparation of the bread and wine, Preface (*Dominus vobiscum, Sursum corda, Gratias agamus, Vere dignum et justum est*), the Words of Institution (*Qui pridie* and *Verba testamenti*), Sanctus and Benedictus Qui Venit, elevation, Lord's Prayer, Pax Domini, Agnus Dei and Communion Prayers, Communion (distribution formula: "The body (the blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life eternal"), Salutation, Post-Communion Collect, Benedicamus Domino, Benediction (Num 6:24–25 or Ps 67:6–7). Luther suggested that the bishop should decide whether all should receive the body of Christ after the blessing of the bread and then receive the blood of Christ after the blessing of the cup, or whether both elements should be blessed before distribution.<sup>9</sup> However, he recognized that

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<sup>8</sup> In AE 53:11–14 (= WA 12:35–37).

<sup>9</sup> Luther sometimes referred to the parish pastor as "bishop."

to separate the giving of the body and the blood would be an innovation requiring changes in the prayers.<sup>10</sup>

In 1526, Luther prepared his German Mass, which he published under the title *Deutsche Messe und ordnung Gottis diensts* (*The German Mass and Order of Service*). It was not meant to be a step forward from the Latin Mass or to supersede it. Luther prepared it with a quite distinct group of worshipers in mind—the “Deutsch.” He had not much interest in translating the Latin service into this “plain speech,” because, as he said, it would sound foreign to their ears, and in any case, the beauty of the Latin original texts would translate awkwardly into the vernacular. “The German service needs to be a plain and simple, fair and square catechism.”<sup>11</sup> By means of it, those who desired to be Christians would be guided as to what “they should believe, know, do, and leave undone according to the Christian faith.”<sup>12</sup> Such people had historically been called *catechumenos* (“catechumens”).<sup>13</sup> The German service must be adapted to meet their needs for thorough catechization in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer.

The German Mass he described was for use on Sundays, the one day of the week when this group was free to come to church, and he entitled the service “On Sunday for the laity” (“Des Sontags fur die leyen”).<sup>14</sup> In Wittenberg, the following order was used for the “plain-speaking” people: a hymn or psalm in the first tone, simple three-fold Kyrie, chanted collect, Epistle in the eighth tone, German hymn (“We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost” or some other), Gospel in the fifth tone, German Creed (“We All Believe in One True God”), sermon on the Gospel, paraphrase of the Our Father and Admonition, consecration of bread with elevation, Communion of the host, German Sanctus (“Isaiah, Mighty Seer”), consecration of the cup with elevation, Communion of the cup (German hymns during distribution or *Agnus Dei*; no distribution formula is provided), Post-Communion Collect, Benediction. Luther describes the celebration of this Mass as a service in which the clergy continue to wear their customary Mass vestments and use the altar and lighted candles.<sup>15</sup>

The German service was meant to stand side by side with the Latin Mass and not to replace it entirely. It was meant for the uneducated, and therefore a catechetical spirit predominated throughout. Clearly, it was Luther’s intention that the people should participate fully, and they were enabled to do so by the German hymns provided, including the sung Creed and the Sanctus in a German version.

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<sup>10</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:15–40.

<sup>11</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:64 (= WA 19:76).

<sup>12</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:64 (= WA 19:76).

<sup>13</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:64 (= WA 19:76).

<sup>14</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:69 (= WA 19:80).

<sup>15</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:61–90 (= WA 19:44–113).

### III. Theological Principles as a Fundamental Factor of Lutheran Identity

Central to any Lutheran liturgy is its support of the doctrine of the gospel according to which Christ has by his sacrifice secured man's eternal redemption. Man is justified before God when the redemptive work of Christ is applied to him through the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments. Liturgical forms should be guided by this principle and its essential message about how justification is obtained. To Luther, the article on justification by faith was the most important of all doctrines. He stated in the Smalcald Articles, "Here is the first and chief article: That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, 'was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification'" (SA II I 1). "The Mass under the papacy . . . directly and violently opposes this chief article" (SA II II 1). "Thus the Mass should and must be condemned and repudiated,<sup>16</sup> because it is directly contrary to the chief article, which says that it is not an evil or devout servant of the Mass with his work, but rather the Lamb of God and the Son of God, who takes away our sin" (SA II II 7).<sup>17</sup>

The idea that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice sets forth works-righteousness. It carries the notion of offering Christ to God in the eucharistic sacrifice and thereby receiving reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, and merits of grace. Such teaching contradicts the gospel that man is justified by grace through faith alone on account of Christ's death and resurrection.

Luther also made a distinction between what God does in the liturgy and what man does. Liturgy is not the work of man by which he appropriates for himself the saving work of Christ and contributes to his own salvation, but rather it is the work of Christ, who is both God and man. Christ is the *leiturgos* ("minister") who by his cross and victorious resurrection has accomplished redemption. The liturgy is the *Gottesdienst*—the "Divine Service" that Christ Jesus supplies for the salvation of sinners. The direction of this service is from God to his people. In response to it, those who have received the fruits of Christ's work offer to God their sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

To describe this distinction, Luther employed the terms *beneficium* ("benefit," "benefaction") and *sacrificium* ("sacrifice"). He did not completely eliminate the concept of "sacrifice" in the Mass but insisted that a distinction must be made between sacrifice and gift. "There is no *officium* ["duty"] but *beneficium*, no work or service, but reception and benefit alone. . . . We must clearly distinguish here between what we offer and what we do not offer in the Mass."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Here Luther refers not to the Lord's Supper but to the Sacrifice of the Mass and the practices developed around it.

<sup>17</sup> In Kolb and Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 301–302.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther, *A Treatise on the New Testament, That Is, the Holy Mass* (1520), in AE 35:94.

Luther asserted that the medieval practice of offering the Mass as a pure sacrifice involved several abuses. It operated on the belief that the Lord is an angry god who needs to be appeased by human sacrifices. Sacrifice was understood as an act of propitiation, as one of the chief good deeds through which righteousness could be achieved. Since the center of the Mass was occupied by the act of sacrifice, the presence of communicants was no longer required. Private masses took the place of communicants. The sacrifice of Christ in the Mass also meant the denial of the one and complete sacrifice of Christ completed on Calvary. For Luther, all these sacrificial notions were a clear contradiction to the doctrine of the gospel.

The rejection of medieval sacrificial notions and the shift in emphasis from *officium* to *beneficium*—from human work and service to reception and benefit—did not mean that there was no room for *sacrificium* in the Mass. “We should, therefore, give careful heed to this word ‘sacrifice,’ so that we do not presume to give God something in the sacrament, when it is he who in it gives us all things. We should bring spiritual sacrifices, . . . ourselves, and all that we have, with constant prayer. . . . In addition we are to offer him praise and thanksgiving with our whole heart, for his unspeakable, sweet grace and mercy, which he has promised and given us in this sacrament.”<sup>19</sup>

In this way, it is permissible to call the Mass a “sacrifice”—not on its own account but because worshipers offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God. Nineteenth-century liturgical students described this dichotomy as “sacramental” and “sacrificial” acts in the liturgy.<sup>20</sup>

#### IV. Implementation of Theological Principles

Luther acknowledged the ancient glory of the medieval Mass as divinely instituted,<sup>21</sup> and he accepted its historical structure consisting of both the *missa catechumenorum* (“mass of the catechumens,” Service of the Word) and the *missa fidelium* (“mass of the faithful,” Service of the Sacrament) as appropriate.

He preserved the structure of the Liturgy of the Word. No objectionable things were found, except for a few unevangelical collects and tropes that were inserted in the Gloria and Sanctus and added to their complexity. He emphasized the centrality

<sup>19</sup> Luther, *Treatise on the New Testament*, AE 35:98.

<sup>20</sup> The Apology of the Augsburg Confession makes a distinction between the sacramental and sacrificial elements of the service (Ap XXIV). Sacramental acts are those acts of God by which, through means, he offers and bestows his wholesome grace and blessing. Sacrificial are the acts of worship directed toward God—words and acts of the church in faithful response to the gracious words and acts of God.

<sup>21</sup> “We cannot deny that the mass, i.e., the communion of bread and wine, is a rite divinely instituted by Christ himself and that it was observed first by Christ and then by the apostles, quite simply and evangelically without any additions.” Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:20.



of the pure word of God in the *missa catechumenorum* and observed that it had often been silenced by “a host of un-Christian fables and lies.”<sup>22</sup>

The *missa fidelium*, however, needed a more serious revision, since “from here on almost everything smacks and savors of sacrifice.”<sup>23</sup> The offertory was the most offensive of all the propers because it emphasized the sacrificial concept of the Mass. Equally offensive was the Canon, with its references to sacrifice rendering it incompatible with the doctrine of justification.

Other contemporary reformers sought to provide alternative prayers to those of the Canon, but Luther took a different approach.

“Let us, therefore, repudiate everything that smacks of sacrifice, together with the entire canon and retain only that which is pure and holy, and so order our Mass.”<sup>24</sup> “Because the canon was invited to the marriage feast and sat down in a place of honor, it shall now get up with shame and give place to Christ, its master, and sit in the lowest place, as it should properly have done in the beginning.”<sup>25</sup>

The Canon stifled the gospel with the “smell of its sacrifice,” he stated. All that was left of the gospel message in its content were the Words of Christ’s Testament (*Verba Christi*), but even these “words of life and salvation are imbedded in the midst of it all, just as the ark of the Lord once stood in the idol’s temple next to Dagon.”<sup>26</sup>

Luther removed the canon completely, not only because of its sacrificial work-righteous notions, which to him seemed like an “abominable concoction drawn from everyone’s sewer and cesspool,”<sup>27</sup> but also in order to further exalt the *Verba Christi*. There was no need for any alternative prayers. “The words of the gospel [the *Verba*] are clear and plain and need no glosses.”<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, Luther was very critical of the fact that the *Verba*, “a short summary of the whole gospel,” were recited *sub voce* (“whispered”) in the Mass.<sup>29</sup> He decided

<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* (1523), in AE 53:11.

<sup>23</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:26.

<sup>24</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:26.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther, *The Misuse of the Mass* (1521), in AE 36:185.

<sup>26</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:26.

<sup>27</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:21.

<sup>28</sup> Luther, *Misuse of the Mass*, AE 36:185.

<sup>29</sup> Luther writes,

For if you ask: What is the gospel? you can give no better answer than these words of the New Testament [Words of Christ’s Testament], namely, that Christ gave his body and poured out his blood for us for the forgiveness of sins. This alone is to be preached to Christians, instilled into their hearts, and at all times faithfully commended to their memories. . . . Therefore these words, as a short summary of the whole gospel, are to be taught and instilled into every Christian’s heart, so that he may contemplate them continuously and without ceasing, and with them exercise, strengthen, and sustain his faith in Christ, especially when he goes to the sacrament. (Luther, *Misuse of the Mass*, AE 36:183)

to exalt the Words of Christ's Testament by instructing the clergy to chant them in the tone of the Our Father. "I wish these words of Christ—with a brief pause after the preface—to be recited in the same tone in which the Lord's Prayer is chanted elsewhere in the canon so that those who are present may be able to hear them."<sup>30</sup> In the German Mass, he instructed the clergy to chant them in the tone of the Gospel because, as he once said, "God has preached the gospel through music."<sup>31</sup>

In the revised Latin Mass, the preface ended with the words "through Christ, our Lord" and was immediately followed by the Verba, "who the day before he suffered, took bread. . . ." The preface was abbreviated and contained no mention of angels and archangels because the Sanctus was now sung after the Verba. At the Benedictus Qui Venit ("Blessed is he who comes"), the bread and cup were elevated "according to the customary rite for the benefit of the weak."<sup>32</sup>

Luther provided no explanation for the transposition of the Sanctus from the preface to after the Verba. According to Bryan Spinks, Luther came to this decision because he regarded the Sanctus to be a joyful response to the proclamation of the gospel in the Verba.<sup>33</sup> The present author supports this thesis but also suggests that that Luther placed the Sanctus after the Verba because he considered it a hymn addressed to Christ, who at the consecration came in his body and blood into the eucharistic elements. It is likely that he joined the elevation to the Sanctus (with the Benedictus Qui Venit) in order to visually exalt Christ present in and under the bread and cup.<sup>34</sup> He shed some light on it in the *German Mass*: "We do not want to abolish the elevation, but retain it because it goes well with the German *Sanctus* and signifies that Christ has commanded us to remember him. For just as the sacrament is bodily elevated, and yet Christ's body and blood are not seen in it, so he is also remembered and elevated by the word of the sermon and is confessed and adored in the reception of the sacrament."<sup>35</sup> To Luther, the elevation was not a sacrificial but a sacramental act, and to highlight its sacramental significance—the gift given in and under bread and wine and the benefit it conveys—he directed that the elements be elevated toward the congregation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:28.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Luther, table talk recorded by John Schlaginhaufen (before December 14, 1531), in AE 54:129 (= *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden*, 6 vols. [Weimar: Böhlau, 1912–1921], 2:11, no. 1258: "Sic Deus praedicavit euangelium etiam per musicam.").

<sup>32</sup> Luther, *Order of Mass*, AE 53:28.

<sup>33</sup> Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass*, Grove Liturgical Study 30 (Bramcote, UK: Grove, 1982), 35–36.

<sup>34</sup> In the German Mass, the paten was elevated at the singing of the German Sanctus ("Isaiah, Mighty Seer").

<sup>35</sup> Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:82.

<sup>36</sup> "But, as I have said above, he [the priest] elevates it not toward God but toward us, to remind us of the testament and to incite us to faith in that testament." Luther, *Treatise on the New*

Here a parallel can be drawn between the vision of Isaiah (Isa 6:1–4) and the Sanctus and the elevation. Just as Isaiah saw the Lord on the throne, whom the seraphim adored with the Sanctus, so the worshipers, apprehending by faith Christ present in the elements, and especially at the elevation, sang to him, together with angels and archangels, the Trisagion (“Thrice-Holy”) or the German Sanctus (“Isaiah, Mighty Seer”).

The singing of the Sanctus after the Verba was adopted in the church orders and agendas of Ducal Prussia (1525, 1544, 1558, 1568), Minden (1530), Riga (1530), Brandenburg-Nürnberg (1531), Sweden (Olavus Petri, 1531), Wittenberg (1533), Liegnitz (1535), Pfalz Neuburg (1543), Nürnberg (Veit Dietrich, 1543), Breslau (1557), Courland (1572), Thorn (1575), and Rear County of Sponheim (1600).<sup>37</sup>

### V. Ceremonies and Their Relation to Lutheran Identity

Ceremonies are not in and of themselves worship. Although they have no innate power to bless and save, their function is to train one in reverence for holy things.

The Chief Divine Service has always been marked with ceremonies, including but not restricted to traditions concerning standing and kneeling and the sign of the cross at the triune Invocation, at the closing words of the Creed, over the bread and wine at the consecration, and at the Benediction. Also, the eucharistic vestments, the shape and constitution of the eucharistic host, the laying on of hands in Absolution, the use of incense symbolizing prayers ascending to heaven—all belong to this category. These matters all stand at the periphery, somewhat further removed from what is essential. All of them have their positive value, but they are clearly peripheral, and Lutheran churches do not stand in judgment over other churches either because of the superfluity of their ceremonies or their relative lack of them or the fact that their ceremonies differ.

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*Testament*, AE 35:87. In the churches where the altar stands against a wall or is backed by a reredos, it is the custom that at the sacramental acts the liturgist faces the people. At the sacrificial acts, when he speaks with or on behalf of the people, he faces the altar.

<sup>37</sup> The 1530 church order of Minden deserves special attention, for it included some unique features not found in other agendas of that time. The Easter Preface was designated as a Preface for the Mass on ordinary Sundays, but even more unusual was its division into two parts. The officiant was to sing the Preface until he had concluded the phrase “is raised and has brought us life again.” Then followed immediately the Verba and the elevation. After the elevation and the Cup-Words, “this do in remembrance of me,” the officiant returned to the Preface, singing, “Therefore we sing with all angels, etc.,” after which the Sanctus and Benedictus Qui Venit were sung in a choral setting. *Christlike Ordeninge der Erlyken Stadt Mynden* ([Lübeck: Balhorn, 1530]), fols. G–Gij; Ernst Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 22.

Although Luther never used the term, he considered liturgical forms and ceremonies to fall into the category of *adiaphora*—“neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word” (FC Ep X 3).<sup>38</sup> He neither despised nor elevated the accompaniments of public worship. Their value must be determined in the light of the principle “the just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:16) and love for “the simple-minded . . . who cannot yet grasp the liberty of faith.”<sup>39</sup> The ceremonies should be used as a framework for the proclamation of the gospel and for the “edification of the common people.”<sup>40</sup>

When it comes to ceremonies, the “Christian must take a middle course.”<sup>41</sup> Luther warned against “unyielding, stubborn ceremonialists who like deaf adders are not willing to hear the truth of liberty [Ps. 58:4] but, having no faith, boast of, prescribe, and insist upon their ceremonies as means of justification.” At the same time, he spoke out against those “who neglect and disparage ceremonies, not out of piety, but out of mere contempt.” They are to be reproved, “since the Apostle teaches us not to despise” the external matters: “Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats.”<sup>42</sup> In the *German Mass*, he advocated uniformity in rites and ceremonies in each territorial church and noted which ceremonies were observed in the churches of Wittenberg.<sup>43</sup>

Luther’s attitude toward ceremonies did not change throughout the entire period of his reformatory activity. In 1542, he wrote to Prince Georg of Anhalt, “Your Grace may comfort yourself with the thought which I comfort myself: ceremonies are not articles of faith. And yet they have always created more and greater fuss in the church than the Word and the Sacraments. . . . Therefore I take no other course than this: When the ceremonies are observed, I also observe them (if they are not godless); where they are discontinued, I also discontinue them.”<sup>44</sup>

The Lutheran position concerning ceremonies was further clarified after Luther’s death in the debates that ensued during the Augsburg Interim of 1547 and the

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<sup>38</sup> In Kolb and Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 515.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), in AE 31:373.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Luther, *A Christian Exhortation to the Livonians Concerning Public Worship and Concord* (1525), in AE 53:47.

<sup>41</sup> Luther, *Freedom of a Christian*, AE 31:373.

<sup>42</sup> Luther, *Freedom of a Christian*, AE 31:372–373.

<sup>43</sup> “As far as possible we should observe the same rites and ceremonies, just as all Christians have the same baptism and the same sacrament [of the altar] and no one has received a special one of his own from God.” “Here we retain the vestments, altar, and candles until they are used up or we are pleased to make a change. But we do not oppose anyone who would do otherwise.” Luther, *German Mass*, AE 53:61, 69.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Georg von Anhalt, June 26, 1542, in *What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 306 (= *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel*, 18 vols. [Weimar: Böhlau, 1906–], 10:86, no. 3762).

Leipzig Interim of 1548.<sup>45</sup> It was formulated primarily by Matthias Flacius Illyricus of Magdeburg, who rejected the liturgical and ceremonial compromises instituted by the Augsburg Interim, which the Roman church now sought to impose on the Lutherans after the Smalcald War. These included extreme unction; abstaining from the eating of meat on Fridays, Saturdays, and during fasts; confirmation; and the like.<sup>46</sup> Flacius noted in 1550, "All ceremonies and ecclesiastical usages are free in themselves, as ever. But when they are imposed through coercion, or through the erroneous impression that they are required for worship, or through deceit, scandal, or public pressure from the godless, and when they do not benefit God's church in some way, but disrupt it and mock God, then they are no longer *adiaphora*."<sup>47</sup>

The church's teaching concerning ceremonies was elucidated again in the second half of the sixteenth century when the "Second Reformation" entered Lutheran territories. Calvinism viewed the *adiaphora* quite differently. The Reformed insisted that only those things were permissible in the church which were specifically commanded in the Scriptures. Accordingly, they declared that the Lutherans were not sufficiently reformed because they retained too much of the "old pomp."

To the Calvinists, Lutheran ceremonies were relics of "papal poison" and "papal dung." They were "false ceremonies," inappropriate for pious Christians to make use of, just as inappropriate as "a prostitute's clothing is to honourable women, or foreign military insignia are to soldiers."<sup>48</sup> The Calvinists insisted that the Lutheran use of traditional ceremonies, which were also used by Roman Catholics, were "nothing else but the pope's colors and insignia" and must be eliminated to prevent confusion among the people. Accordingly, to Reformed eyes, Lutheran churches were "shrines of idolatry." "Papal dung" needed to be swept out so that "Christ's stable might be clean."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See Robert Kolb and James Arne Nestingen, eds., *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 144–196.

<sup>46</sup> F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English*, [ed. and trans. F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau], (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 107.

<sup>47</sup> Matthias Flacius, *Ein buch, von waren vnd falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erklaret wird, wider die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen* (Magdeburg: Rödinger, 1550), A1; as trans. in Bodo Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity in Late Reformation Germany," in *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), II 144.

<sup>48</sup> *Bericht vnd Lehre Göttliches Worts* (Herborn/Nassau: Christoph Rabe, 1592; repr. Zerbst: Jacob Zanach, 1596), 27; as trans. in Bodo Nischan, "Religious Polemics and Ritual in Early Modern Germany's Confessional Churches," in *Religious Polemics in Context*, ed. T. L. Hetteema and A. van der Kooij (Assen, Netherlands: Royal van Gorcum, 2004), 387.

<sup>49</sup> *Auff sonderbahren Befehl und Anordnung . . . Des . . . Herrn Johannis Sigismunds . . . Anderweit gedruckte Glaubens bekentnus der reformirten Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland*

Particularly offensive to the Calvinists was the consecration of the elements and the Lutheran confession that the speaking of the Words of Institution over the bread and wine was a necessary consecratory act. They condemned the Lutheran consecration as “sacramental magic” that destroyed the gospel message and was directly linked to the Roman Catholic notion of transubstantiation. Salomon Finck (1599–1629), court preacher of the Reformed elector of Brandenburg, Johann Sigismund, declared that the Lutheran consecration represented the return of the medieval notion that the spoken words transformed a “dead host . . . into Christ’s living body.”<sup>50</sup>

The Communion hosts, or *oblaten*, used by the Lutherans were rejected by the Calvinists as “papist Mass-hosts.” In the eyes of Finck, the unleavened hosts used by the Lutherans could not even be classed as real bread. They neither looked nor tasted like bread, and the fact that the sign of the cross was stamped on them made matters even worse. Rector Jakob Fabricius of Danzig asked, “How could it come to pass that in such a small bit of bread, which had neither the taste nor the smell of bread, Christ, a man of six and a half feet, could possibly be contained?”<sup>51</sup> The Reformed insisted that Lutherans used the Communion hosts to indicate that they believed Christ to be “hidden in the bread.” In Bremen, some Reformed made sarcastic statements referring to the hosts as a “bread-God.” They wondered how, if the “people had been eating the body of Christ for so long,” there could be anything left of it. “Is the bread-God of the pastors eaten complete with boots and breeches?”<sup>52</sup> Martin Füssel, Reformed superintendent in the Duchy of Anhalt-Zerbst, added sarcastically that the whole business of communion hosts smelled like “the papal sacrifice of the mass.”<sup>53</sup> The Reformed insisted that only ordinary table bread ought to be used, although in fact, some Reformed developed the practice of baking special Communion bread or cakes. Particularly well-known were the heavy Communion cakes baked in

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(Frankfurt an der Oder: [Hartman], 1614), fol. A4r–v. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

<sup>50</sup> Salomon Finck, *SacramentSpiegels, Ander Theil* (Berlin: Hartman, 1615), 62–63; Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 139.

<sup>51</sup> August Tholuck, *Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus, Zweiter und letzter Theil, Das kirchliche Leben des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts bis in die Anfänge der Aufklärung, Erste Abtheilung, Die erste Hälfte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts bis zum westphälischen Frieden* (Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben, 1861), 264; as trans. in Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*, vol. 10, *Leading Up to the Thirty Years’ War*, trans. A. M. Christie (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1906), 315.

<sup>52</sup> Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*, vol. 7, *General Conditions of the German People from the So-Called Religious Pacification of Augsburg in 1555 to the Proclamation of the Formula of Concord in 1580*, trans. A. M. Christie (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1905), 279.

<sup>53</sup> *Ceremoniae Christianae: Das ist, Kurtzer Bericht Von Lehr vnd Ceremonien Der Reformirten Kirchen in der Chur Brandenburg* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Eichorn, 1616), 20; as trans. in Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession*, 139.

Kassel. They were heavy, round biscuits, made from so-called mill-dust or coarse flour, which could be broken into four thick pieces, very hard to divide, and still harder to bite and chew, so that the people might be certain that they were eating “bread, bread, and nothing but bread.”<sup>54</sup>

For this reason, wherever Calvinism gained the upper hand, it “reformed” Lutheran worship practices and purged the churches of altars, baptismal fonts, crucifixes, statues, pictures, and other decorations. In these matters, what the Lutherans regarded as adiaphora could no longer be treated as indifferent. The Lutherans insisted that, as the Formula of Concord taught, the church must not “yield to the opponents in such indifferent matters” (FC Ep X 6),<sup>55</sup> and in the face of the Second Reformation, they came to consider that some adiaphora were essential to Lutheran identity and were practices that needed to be preserved and elevated as *in statu confessionis* (“in a state of confession”).

Therefore, in Lutheran lands care was taken that traditional ceremonies and usages be conscientiously maintained. In a sermon preached at the consecration of the city church (*Stadtkirche*) in Freudenstadt in Baden-Württemberg in 1609, Andreas Veringer told the congregation that “alongside the fact that we have a beautiful altar and font in our newly-built church, we also want to show with these objects that we share no part or community with the Zwinglians and Calvinists, who smash up the altars and fonts.”<sup>56</sup>

Even after the Thirty Years’ War, Lutherans would continue to assert that what were commonly called adiaphora were in fact necessary marks of their confessional identity.

## VI. Gradual Decline of Lutheran Liturgical Identity

### *Pietist Criticism of External Worship*

There are no early indications of hostility evident against liturgy and worship traditions among the Pietists. Philipp Jakob Spener, whose *Pia Desideria* of 1675 had set the movement in motion, held firmly to the liturgy and the traditional ceremonial practices associated with it.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Janssen, *History of the German People*, 10:295.

<sup>55</sup> In Kolb and Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 516.

<sup>56</sup> Bridget Heal, “Church Space and Religious Change in Reformation Germany,” in *Religious Conversion—History, Experience and Meaning*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 119n61.

<sup>57</sup> Gabriel Almer, *Calvinista Aulico-Politicus* (Berlin: Freie Univ. Berlin, 2016), 90; Detlef Reichert, *Der Weg protestantischer Liturgik zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung* (Münster: Univ. of Münster, 1975), 93–112.

More critical in their approach were August Hermann Francke and Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen. In 1699, they did away with the exorcism in Baptism and rejected it along with the use of the Mass vestments as a “relict of the papacy.”<sup>58</sup>

More reproving of the Lutheran ceremonies was Christian Thomasius, professor of jurisprudence at the University of Halle. In 1705, he declared that any and all external worship of God was adiaphoron—a matter of indifference. He himself set down as adiaphora seven practices that he considered to be of little value for proper edification from the Pietist point of view. They included the Gregorian calendar, ecclesiastical music, the Mass vestments, the use of images and their superstitious veneration among the laity,<sup>59</sup> Latin hymns, exorcism in Baptism, and the practice concerning private Confession.<sup>60</sup>

As Pietism developed, the Pietists became more and more indifferent to what they regarded as formalism in church ceremonial as strictly external, while their own emphasis was on the newness of the heart. The internal worship of the heart was emphasized as more important than elaborate liturgical ceremonial.

Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688–1740, King in Prussia and Elector of Brandenburg 1713–1740), a member of the Reformed church, took advantage of Pietists’ critical approach to ceremonies. He was convinced that by stripping the Lutheran church of its customs and ceremonies, he would bridge the gap between Lutherans and Reformed. His new and far-reaching liturgical-reform program concerning worship and ceremonies was initiated in Saint Peter’s Church in Berlin in 1733. The decree stated that at the Benediction the pastor was still permitted to lift up his hands, but he was now prohibited from making the sign of the cross. He was not permitted to make the sign of the cross over the elements at the consecration or to sing the Words of Institution. No lighted candles, chasubles, surplices, or Mass vestments of any kind were to be in evidence. The singing of Latin hymns was to be completely eliminated. The preachers were not to be permitted to engage in “vain ceremonial actions.”<sup>61</sup> After facing some opposition from the clergy to his crusade against the Lutheran ceremonies, the king responded with a rescript to the government and consistory in Magdeburg, stating, “If one or the other should find himself that he has some reservations concerning it or wants to make an issue of conscience out of

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<sup>58</sup> Almer, *Calvinista Aulico-Politicus*, 91.

<sup>59</sup> “For daily experience shows that not a few among us Lutherans are too devoted to the veneration of images, and that they are not far removed from papist superstition.” Christian Thomasius, *Essays on Church, State, and Politics* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), 104.

<sup>60</sup> Thomasius, *Essays*, 99–109.

<sup>61</sup> David Fassmann, *Leben und Thaten des Allerdurchlauchtigsten und Großmächtigsten Königs in Preußen, Friderici Wilhelmi*, Zweyter Theil (Franckfurth and Hamburg: n.p., 1741), 746–747.



it, let him know that we wish to grant him dismissal [from office] for his peace of mind.”<sup>62</sup>

*Destructive Influence of the Enlightenment on the Liturgy*

Even more harmful to the Lutheran liturgical identity was the Enlightenment. Those who supported the new thought insisted that liturgies must be produced that reflected the modern view of God, man, and the world and should accommodate themselves to the speech, song, and spirit of the new age.

The old faith gave pride of place to a new faith, and this new faith needed a communal and corporate expression and a festal celebration. The liturgy inherited from the fathers did not much compliment man. It was framed in terms of doctrines no longer acceptable in modern society—a slain Lamb and spilled blood, angels doing battle with demons, Christ conquering Satan—not at all the sort of thing that eighteenth-century modern man could make use of.

A new language and worship were needed. The word that constantly appeared in discussions was “improvement” (*Verbesserung*). Liturgy must be improved not only in some grammatical sense, as though accommodation to modern verbal expressions would be sufficient. Worship itself would need to be adjusted to agree with modern thought and norms.

According to Johann Joachim Spalding (1714–1804), a master of the German Enlightenment, theology, liturgy and preaching, hymns and devotional literature must be rational and practical. “You hear sermons; you read Enlightenment literature; you need prayer formulas and hymns. You want to know if they edify one in the truth, and so you ask yourself—do I understand what I am hearing, reading, praying, or singing?”<sup>63</sup>

Another commonly used word was “edification” (*Erbauung*). Pietism also emphasized the importance of edification in personal faith and the Christian way of life but always understood that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Neology viewed Christian edification from an anthropocentric perspective and stressed the power of human reason.<sup>64</sup> Man must be edified, built up, and made more than he was before in terms of his moral being. Thus, proper preaching, prayer, and songs must be designed to meet this goal.

<sup>62</sup> Fassmann, *Leben und Thaten*, 748–749.

<sup>63</sup> Johann Joachim Spalding, *Neue Predigten*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: n.p., 1788), 82.

<sup>64</sup> Neology (*Neologie*) was a movement beginning around 1770 that sought to revise Christian theology in Germany to make it conform to modern, enlightened thought. Eric Carlsson, “Eighteenth-Century Neology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), 642.

This approach has little or nothing to say about God's sacramental action through preaching, holy Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution, and it leads to a moralistic Christianity in which man is the actor and the liturgy is understood as *Gottesdienst* only in the sense that it is aimed toward God, rather than the setting through which God acts, giving his gracious gifts to man.

Neological liturgies proliferated throughout German-speaking lands. Most of these works were predominantly anthropocentric and had in them little trace of sacramental realism. The Lord's Supper was understood to be a solemn remembrance of the death of Jesus the Teacher that he himself had established to remind his followers what he had accomplished for their eternal welfare. It was symbolic action that reminded the people of Jesus himself in order to strengthen them in their faith and actions to live a proper moral life and reach at length the heavenly goal. The heavenly feast had been turned into an earthly supper, with the heart of the gospel replaced by a serious call to a devout and upright life.

## VII. The Awakening of a New Liturgical Sensibility

### *Prussian Union Agenda: Lutheran Liturgy with Defected Identity*

The impetus for an awakening of interest in the Lutheran liturgy was prompted by the Prussian Union and its agenda. In 1821, surprising news reached the Prussian Lutheran and Reformed churches that King Friedrich Wilhelm III (1770–1840, King of Prussia 1797–1840), a member of the Reformed church, without consulting the theologians, prepared a complete liturgical agenda for all military congregations and the cathedral church in Berlin. The cathedral edition was titled *Kirchen-Agende für die Hof- und Domkirche in Berlin* (Church agenda for the court and cathedral church in Berlin). In order to secure its universal acceptance, the king decided in 1827 to allow each of the provincial consistories to make whatever minor modifications they deemed appropriate. In 1834, the king proclaimed that no other agenda was to be used in his kingdom, and the consistories made it amply clear that pastors who refused to conform would be suspended.<sup>65</sup>

The Chief Divine Service contained within it Lutheran elements that dated back to the time of the Reformation. The Divine Service included hymn, triune

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<sup>65</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm III's cabinet order of February 28, 1834, to the State Minister Baron von Altenstein concerning the essence and purpose of the Union and the agenda. [Hermann Theodor] Wangemann, *Sieben Bücher Preussischer Kirchengeschichte. Eine aktenmäßige Darstellung des Kampfes um die lutherische Kirche im XIX. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Schultze, 1859), 34–36. English translation in Christian Charles Josias Bunsen, *Signs of the Times: Letters to Ernst Moritz Arndt on the Dangers to Religious Liberty in the Present State of the World*, trans. Susanna Winkworth (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856), 429–430.

Invocation, Adjutorium Nostrum, Confession of Sins, Verse after Confiteor, Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Salutation and collect, Epistle, Alleluia, Gospel and Response ("Praise to you, O Christ"), Apostles' Creed, Verse after the Creed, "Eucharistic Preface," Triple Sanctus, Hosanna, Benedictus Qui Venit, Prayer of the Church, Our Father, hymn, sermon, Aaronic Benediction, concluding hymn verse. If Communion was to be celebrated, the service would continue as follows: Admonition to Communicants, Prayer, Verba, Pax Domini, Agnus Dei, distribution (referential formula), Post-Communion Prayer, Aaronic Benediction, hymn.<sup>66</sup>

Friedrich Wilhelm III claimed that everything he had prepared was in the spirit of "Father Luther" himself.<sup>67</sup> To uncritical eyes the liturgy would indeed appear to be Lutheran. However, it was, in fact, Lutheran only in a superficial sense. Its admonitions were altered to avoid any suggestion that communicants were receiving the body and blood of their Lord. The referential distribution formula no longer declared the sacramental nature of the eucharistic gifts. Instead, it simply stated, "Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ says, 'This is my body,'" leaving the worshiper to interpret these words as he saw fit. The Lord's Prayer began with the Reformed form "Unser Vater," although the vast majority of the Prussian people were Lutheran and had always prayed "Vater unser." The service was a Lutheran service only in the sense that Lutherans could bring a Lutheran understanding to it and think of it as in some sense having certain continuity with Lutheran liturgies.

It was not possible to mix together the realistic sacramental theology of the Lutheran church with the strictly spiritual understanding of the sacraments by the Reformed. The liturgy might sound somewhat Lutheran, but the similarities were really only superficial. In short, the book was stripped of any confessional identity; it was a monument to the spirit of unionism. For this reason, a number of Lutheran clergy in Silesia eventually stated that the use of the new liturgy violated their confession, and they were constrained by conscience not to use it. They were defrocked, and because they continued to serve "illegally," they were arrested and tried as criminals.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Kirchen-Agende für die Hof-und Domkirche in Berlin*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Dieterici, 1822 [1824]), 9–24.

<sup>67</sup> Rulemann Friedrich Eylert, *Charakter-Züge und historische Fragmente aus dem Leben des Königs von Preußen Friedrich Wilhelm III*, Dritter Theil, Erste Abtheilung (Magdeburg: Heinrichshofen, 1846), 312.

<sup>68</sup> J. D. Löwenberg, trans., *Persecution of the Lutheran Church in Prussia from the Year 1831 to the Present Time; Compiled from German Publications* (London: Hamilton & Johnstone, 1840), 15–91; Wangemann, *Sieben Bücher Preussischer Kirchengeschichte*, 135–165.

*New Appreciation of the Confessional Theology and Liturgical Heritage*

The Prussian agenda with its Union scheme moved many to a new appreciation of the confessional-Lutheran theology and liturgical heritage. Theologians and pastors, such as Wilhelm Löhe, Theodor Kliefoth, and others, began to study in depth the history of the Lutheran liturgical tradition as exemplified in the church orders and agendas of the sixteenth century and later. This gave impetus to the preparation by the territorial churches outside the Prussian Union of agendas that made good use of the fruits of these labors.<sup>69</sup>

No centralized liturgical movement emerged from these efforts as had been the case in the Roman Catholic Church. This situation changed in the twentieth century when the study of the liturgical tradition and worship emerged as major scholarly subjects. In Germany, scholars and pastors formed liturgical movements that brought into consideration both confessional particularity and a modern ecumenical spirit. Among the principal purposes of these movements was the development of a new appreciation of the church's liturgical treasures and the relationship between public worship and the life of the congregation. These movements sought to bind the people more closely to the living proclamation of the word of God and the sacramental life of the church. They had no authority to issue official liturgies, but they did publish and circulate private agendas to be used by those who shared their concerns and vision.

In the course of the twentieth century, most Lutheran churches revised their liturgies based upon a renewed appreciation of their own liturgical heritage, the scholarly work being done in other Lutheran churches, and ecumenical interests.

### VIII. Liturgical Identity and Ecumenical Perspective

Of necessity, there is always a certain tension between liturgical identity and ecumenical activity. Peripherally and in terms of outward ceremony, the Lutheran Eucharist may continue to look somewhat similar to the Roman Catholic Mass, but there are essential differences at the core, central concerns that the Lutheran church cannot sacrifice if it is to remain true to its Confessions. With reference to the Anglican service, liturgical ecumenical direction takes into consideration that the Book

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<sup>69</sup> New agendas appeared in Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1867), Reuss-Greiz (1869), Kingdom of Bavaria (1879), Kingdom of Saxony (1880), Lippe-Detmold (1883), Saxe-Weimar (1885), Kassel (1897), Hamburg (1890), and Braunschweig (1895). In 1886, the Old Lutheran church in Prussia published its agenda. Outside Germany, new agendas appeared in Poland (1886 and 1889), the Russian Empire (1832 and 1897), Denmark (1885), Norway (1889), Finland (1886, published in 1888), and elsewhere. In 1895, a revised edition of the Prussian Union agenda itself was published. Georg Rietschel, *Lehrbuch der Liturgik*, vol. 1, *Die Lehre vom Gemeindegottesdienst*, 2nd ed., ed. Paul Graff (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), 390–395.

of Common Prayer, the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980, and *Common Worship* of 2000 allow for a measure of theological latitude that each clergyman could interpret in a manner agreeable to his (or her) own particular theological position. For Lutherans, what is central is the church's confession of the nature of the gift, the very body and blood of the Lord in and under bread and cup consecrated by the Words of Christ.

Lutheran theologians today engage in discussions concerning the inclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer such as had not previously been found in the Western Mass. Many contemporary Lutheran liturgies include both anamnesis (the prayer after the Verba in which the church calls to mind the passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ)<sup>70</sup> and epiclesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine or the communicants). However, although in the Eastern tradition the Holy Spirit is invoked over the elements as an act of consecration, in the Western tradition the Words of Christ have always been considered consecratory. What constitutes consecration stands at the center, and this calls into question whether an epiclesis should be included at all, and if so, what place it should occupy. Questions have also arisen as to what is to be consecrated by the epiclesis: the communicants, the elements, or both? In any case, the Verba ought to retain their independent position even if they are preceded and followed by prayers.<sup>71</sup>

Here the ecumenical perspective stands in tension with Lutheran theology. Liturgical ecumenical agreements call for a respectable compromise between the ecumenical perspective and confessional concerns. One must ask to what extent confessional positions may be altered because of ecumenical concerns.

## IX. Conclusion

Essential to any Lutheran liturgy is the faith confessed in it. The expressed forms of liturgy may vary, but the faith as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions is and remains the same. The liturgical identity is defined not by the unity created by the rites and ceremonies but by the faith that Lutherans profess and to which their liturgies give expression.

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<sup>70</sup> For example, The Proclamation of Christ, Divine Service Setting One, in *Lutheran Service Book*, ed. The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 162.

<sup>71</sup> The few Lutheran agendas that included a prayer before the Verba, such as Palatinate-Neuburg of 1543 and Danzig of 1753, each concluded the prayer with "Amen," thereby indicating that it was not the prayer but the Verba that consecrated the elements. *Kirchenordnung, Wie es mit der Christlichen Lehre* (Nürnberg: Petreius, 1543), 26; *Verordnung des Rats die Einrichtung der geistlichen Ampts-geschaffte und Kirchen-gebethe bey der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeine der Stadt Danzig belangend, publicirt Mense Mart. 1708* (Danzig: Schreiber, 1753), 38.

The central theological principle of Lutheran liturgy is the teaching of the gospel that Christ by his sacrifice secured the eternal redemption of man. Man is justified before God when the redemptive work of Christ is applied to him through the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments. Liturgical forms must be guided by this principle and its essential message about how justification is obtained.

The Lutheran church preserves the historical form of the Mass consisting of both the *missa catechumenorum* and the *missa fidelium*. The revision of the medieval *missa fidelium* during the Reformation primarily affected the offertory and the Canon, since these parts referred to the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice and contradicted the doctrine of justification.

The ceremonies fall into the category of adiaphora. Their value is determined in the light of the gospel. They serve the edification of the congregation and train the people in reverence for holy things. Lutheran churches do not stand in judgment over each other over the fact that their ceremonies differ. Historically, in cases when the ceremonies had been imposed or eliminated through coercion (Interims of 1548, Second Reformation of 1563–1618), some adiaphora were considered essential to Lutheran identity and were elevated as *in statu confessionis*.

Lutheran liturgical identity gradually declined in the eras of Pietism and Enlightenment. The Pietists regarded the liturgy as strictly external in comparison to their own emphasis on the newness of the heart. From their point of view, some ceremonies were of little value for proper edification. The proponents of the Enlightenment philosophy insisted that new liturgies had to be produced that reflected the neological expression of faith. These liturgies were predominantly anthropocentric and had in them little trace of sacramental realism.

The new perception of Lutheran liturgical identity came in reaction to the Prussian Ecclesiastical Union and its agenda of 1821–1824. The Prussian agenda mixed the realistic sacramental theology of the Lutheran church with the strictly spiritual understanding of the sacraments of the Reformed. The agenda and its Union scheme moved many Lutherans to a new appreciation of confessional theology and liturgical heritage. New agendas were published that more clearly reflected Lutheran identity.

Lutheran liturgy is ecumenical in that it shares a certain commonality with the Western catholic tradition. It is catholic, but not Roman, insofar as it evokes expressions of this commonality. It is at the same time evangelical in that it refuses to elevate any form of human works to the level of the activity that merits God's favor and blessing and thereby displaces the centrality and completeness of the work of Christ.