

Liturgy and Evangelism in Service of the *Mysteria Dei*

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At the present moment there is probably no issue in the life of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that is more debated than the place of liturgy and, especially, its relation to the numerical growth or decline of the church. It is the opinion of Alan Klaas and Cheryl Brown of the highly publicized "Church Membership Initiative" project that for churches to experience an increase in "mission, ministry, and membership" they should offer a variety of styles of worship. Klaas and Brown attempt to illustrate their point by telling the story of George. George is a 60-year old man who laments that his son refuses to bring George's 12-year old grandson to Sunday school and church. As the presentation continues, the findings of the Church Membership Initiative on worship are presented. Again, George rises to speak. This time, he speaks of the value of the historic liturgy. Then Klaas and Brown inform us that "George discovered that he was willing to trade off the spiritual nurture of his grandson"¹ by insisting that his congregation maintain historic Lutheran forms of worship. The assumption is made that the reason George's son and grandson stay away from church is that they either do not like or are tired of the traditional forms of worship.

Such propaganda assumes that the problem is with the liturgy and not with the world, the flesh and the devil. The current tendency is to locate the malady in the liturgy rather than in the sinner and then proceed to change the liturgy rather than transform the sinner. This tendency has been encouraged by promoters of the Church Growth Movement, which is primarily sociological rather than theological. This essay will attempt to provide a theological analysis of the relationship of liturgy to evangelism from the perspective of the mysteries of God, the means of grace.²

1. Evangelism is directed toward the conversion of the sinner and his incorporation into the Body of Christ in Holy Baptism and the reception of the body and the blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper, not the recruitment of people to be members of a voluntary religious association.

To put it simply, evangelism has to do with conversion not recruitment. In other words, the aim of the church's evangelistic proclamation is not to convince the unbeliever to join up, but to bring him to baptismal death and resurrection. It is not the work of the church to entice, manipulate, or coerce the unbeliever into participation. St. Paul says in well in II Corinthians 4:2, "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

The first order of business is for Lutherans to reclaim evangelism from the American Evangelicals. The whole American Evangelical experience has become the primary evangelistic paradigm for Lutherans in North America. The post-World War II years witnessed the development of evangelism programs among American Lutherans. For the most part Lutherans attempted to Lutheranize programs which were foreign to our own theological ethos. It was assumed that with a few adjustments synergism could be weeded out and sacramental theology could be added, thus making a program that was shaped by either Arminian or Reformed theology usable by Lutherans.

Two things, however, were missed. First, the theological character of evangelism programs such as The Four Spiritual Laws developed by Campus Crusade and D. James Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion have a whole theological orientation that cannot be altered by subtracting a few objectionable statements. It is an

orientation based on the premise that it is possible for sinful human beings to make a decision regarding salvation. Likewise, it is an orientation which lacks a sacramental focus. That is, Evangelicalism does not comprehend that God uses selected elements of His creation as means of conveying salvation. Second, evangelism gets reduced to a program. Rather than seeing evangelism as the speaking of God's law and Gospel by believers in the context of their various callings in the world, evangelism becomes increasingly identified with training in particular techniques.

The picture became even more complicated in the early 1970's as the LCMS was engaged in a battle over the Bible. With the advent of the Historical-Critical Method in the LCMS, the controversy centered around the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of the biblical text³ As the LCMS emerged from this intense conflict, many within the Synod seemed drawn toward others who espoused a high view of the Scriptures. A kinship with those who confessed the inerrancy of Scripture, demonstrated a zeal to missionary outreach over against social action, and had a commitment to traditional moral tenets was recognized. For many, it seemed natural that the LCMS would look to denominations like the Southern Baptists and Assemblies of God for models for evangelistic work and to institutions like Fuller and Trinity in Deerfield, Illinois, for training in missiology.

However, the kinship was more along the lines of distant cousins, not brothers and sisters. Even though confessional Lutheranism is one with traditional Evangelicalism in expressing a high view of Scripture's inspiration and inerrancy, Lutheranism and Evangelicalism view the Bible in essentially different ways. For Lutheranism, the accent is on the Bible in its relationship to Christ Jesus. All of Scripture bears witness to Him. Scripture is a Gospel book. The proper distinction of law from Gospel is essential for a profitable use of the holy text. Jesus' words are "spirit and life" (John 6:63), not spiritual principles or disembodied truths. Therefore, the Scriptures are not descriptive of the works of God long ago and far away but the means through which the Lord bestows on us His Gospel. God Himself acts in and through His Word to create and sustain saving faith. In Lutheranism, the Word comes to us from the outside (*extra nos*) and draws us outside of ourselves into Christ.

In Evangelicalism the authority of Scripture is seen not in terms of its efficacy but its status as the divinely-revealed source of truth from which principles and concepts can be abstracted. Thus the Bible becomes the "how to" book for the Christian life. For Luther and the Confessions the Bible is that book which proclaims Christ Jesus, thus delivering the salvation which He has won for us. For Evangelicalism the Bible is the book that tells us what we must do to be saved and lead the Christian life. If we assume that because Confessional Lutherans and conservative Protestants speak a similar language regarding inerrancy they share a common understanding of the function of the Holy Scriptures, we will fail to see the profound differences that exist between the two in such matters as sin, grace, faith, justification, sanctification, the sacraments, the Office of the Holy Ministry, and the doctrine of the church.

Yet these differences have often been overlooked in the anxiety to develop workable strategies for evangelism. But the question must be asked "What happens to the evangel, the Gospel?" Lutherans need to reclaim evangelism. A Lutheran theology of evangelism is directed not toward recruitment or decision but to conversion. God alone works such conversion and He does so through His Word and Baptism.

2- The Divine Service stands at the very heart of the church's existence and is the source and goal of genuine evangelism.

God is the subject, not the object, of liturgical action in Lutheran theology. Lutheran Worship accents this theme in using the title "Divine Service" (*Gottesdienst*) for the service of word and sacrament and in the "Introduction" which states:

The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them.⁴

Prior to Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church asserted that the liturgy belonged to the priest ordained to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. Vatican II gave the liturgy to the laity. Now the liturgy became "the work of the people." On both sides of Vatican II the traffic is moving in the same direction, from the church to the Lord. So also with the Reformed and Arminian churches, the liturgy is the Christian's obedient ascription of worth to the majesty of a sovereign God. The mystical Anglican, Evelyn Underhill, defines worship as the response of the creature to the Eternal. Soren Kierkegaard likened worship to a theater where God is the audience, the assembled Christians the actors, and the clergy the prompters.

The Lutheran Confessions, on the other hand, see liturgy as Divine Service. The liturgy is defined by the Lord who came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. In St. Luke 22:24-27, our Lord addresses His disciples as they are engaged in a dispute over who is greatest in the kingdom. Jesus says, "For who is greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves" (v.27). In the Divine Service, Jesus is still among us as the One who serves. He is the Liturgist, serving us with His gifts.

The Apology captures this theme in Article XXIV, insisting that the liturgy is the Lord's public service to His people (AP XXIV:79-83) and that the term "liturgy squares well with the ministry" (AP XXIV: 81). As such the liturgy stands at the very center of the church's life. It is the fountain from which God's people receive the water of life. It is the Table from which we are fed by a God who is chef, butler, and meal, to paraphrase Luther. Marquart writes "This biofocal liturgical structure of sermon and sacrament forms the heart and core of 'the whole worship of the New Testament,' and is therefore the vital center or gathering point of the church's public assemblies (I Cor.10:17; 11:20,33)."⁵

We are brought into the Divine Service by Baptism. The Divine Service is the liturgy of the baptized. Of this we are reminded as the Service begins with the baptismal name: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Here the Father gathers His children around His Table. Heaven intersects with earth, as the Groom speaks words of love to His Bride and gives her gifts to be received in faith. Here the called and ordained servants of the Word "speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but the Holy Spirit teaches" (I Cor. 2:13). These words cannot be received by the natural man "for they are foolishness to him," says the Apostle Paul (I Cor. 2:14).

As the Divine Service has to do with the mysteries of God it will not be readily transparent to the unbeliever. Indeed, the unbeliever cannot understand it. At this point, some would suggest that we make the liturgy more understandable for the visitor, more user- friendly. If this means that we use translations that are in the vernacular and an easy-to-follow format, well and good. Too often it means something entirely different. We end up trading clear, sturdy, scriptural texts that are catholic in the best sense of the word for texts that are fuzzy, flimsy, unbiblical, and sectarian. Thus we end up with confessions that complain rather than confess, absolutions that make general and unguarded assertions about God but do not absolve, and benedictions that do not bless. All done, of course, in the name of evangelism.

The following "confession" was gleaned from the bulletin of an LCMS congregation in California:

We go down into ourselves with a flashlight, looking for the evil we have intended or done - not to excise it as some alien growth, but rather to discover the holy spark within it. We begin not by rejecting the evil but by acknowledging it as something we meant to do. This is the only way we can truly raise and redeem it.

We lose our temper because we want things to be better right away. We gaze with lustful eyes because we have forgotten how to love the ones we want to love. We hoard material possessions because we imagine that they will help us live more fully. We turn a deaf ear, for we fear the pain of listening would kill us. We waste time, because we are not sure how to enter a living relationship. We even tolerate a society that murders because we are convinced it is the best way to save more life. At the bottom of such behavior is something that once was holy. And during times of holiness, communion, and light our personal and collective perversions creep out of the cellar, begging to be healed, freed, and redeemed.

The "confession" is followed by this "absolution":

We do not simply repudiate the evil we have done and sincerely mean never to do it again; that is easy (we do it all the time). Healing, wholeness, and redemption come about when we receive whatever evils we have intended and done back into ourselves as our own deliberate creations. We cherish them as long-banished children finally taken home again. And thereby we transform them and ourselves. When we make our confession, we don't hit ourselves, we hold ourselves. And more than that. We are held! God holds us not because we are good or because we make confession. God holds us because we are. God holds us so that we might have the same courage to hold ourselves as we are and learn to hold others as they are. May the peace of God now embrace you.

Another confession and its accompanying absolution (also from an LCMS congregation) are set in the categories of weakness and power rather than sin and grace:

Strong God, we confess our lack of power. We sometimes feel helpless, alone, and weak. We realize that each time we try to do everything on our own, we fail. We admit we need your power. We need to rely on You to do all that is necessary for our life. We want Your power to be ours so we can stand strong in your world. Give us your power to face death with hope. Give us Your power to live life with joy.

The God that we worship is a great God! In creation we see a glimpse of God's power and majesty. In God's Son we see ultimate love for us in action. In the Holy Spirit we see ongoing encouragement and power to live every day. Our God is a great God! Jesus has forgiven our sin and made a right relationship between us. God has given us all the gifts necessary to do the work of a believer. Praise God for power and love.

What is the point of this excursion into the liturgical twilight zone? In the name of liturgical creativity and evangelistic effectiveness, the attempt is made to create more understandable and relevant texts, but we are left with one confession and absolution that must have had its roots in Babel and another confession and absolution that confuses weakness with sin and directs us to the greatness of God rather than His cross.

We are not engaged in a defense of the liturgy as curators of an art gallery. We are concerned to maintain the liturgy for the sake of the clarity of the saving Gospel. In this sense, the Divine Service is the source of genuine evangelism. We must disagree with Walter Kallestad⁶ that evangelistic concerns must shape worship. It is the other way around. God is seeking those who will worship in spirit and in truth. Authentic evangelism prepares people for such worship.

3- Lest we "marry the spirit of this age" and become irrelevant we must constantly be on guard against the tendency to subject liturgy and evangelism to the canon of relevancy. It was the Anglican Dean Inge who said that "he who marries the spirit of this age soon becomes a widower." The watch word has become "relevance." What are the standards for this relevance? Who determines what is relevant or irrelevant? Is it not a profound arrogance, if not outright blasphemy to believe that we have to make the Word of the Living Lord relevant? Is it not relevant simply because it is God's Word?

In the conversation on relevancy in the church, especially the church's liturgical life, several things are to be kept in mind. First, a quote from Simone Weil: "To be always relevant, you have to say things which are

eternal."⁷ One of the great values of the liturgy is that it constantly reminds us to use the words of Robert Schaibley that "we are the new kids on the ecclesiastical block."⁸ We are part of something much broader and deeper than this narrow slice of history which we currently occupy. In the liturgy we are joined with patriarchs, prophets, and psalmists; with apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, saints from all ages...indeed with angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven. As the liturgy bears the Word of God it keeps us relevant by speaking into our ears words that are eternal.

Second, an observation from C.S. Lewis on the posture of humility over against the liturgy. Lewis writes: "One of the advantages of having a written and printed service, is that it enables you to see when people's feelings and thoughts have changed. When people begin to find the words of our service difficult to join in, that is of course a sign that we do not feel about those things exactly as our ancestors. Many people have, as their immediate reaction to that situation, the simple remedy - 'Well, change the words' - which would be sensible if you knew that we are right and our ancestors were wrong. It is always at least worth while to find out who it is that is wrong."⁹ The burden lies on those who would change the liturgy to, at the very least, know the liturgy - its history and theology - before attempting to change it. Perhaps such a serious study will reveal that our ancestors were right after all.

The liturgy is not static. It has changed and will change. The Introduction to Lutheran Worship puts it nicely: "We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each generation receives from those who have gone before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day - the living heritage and something new."¹⁰ The new needs to be tested against the old. In our pragmatic age, the tendency is to panic and embrace change without the benefit of historical or theological perspective. James Turner¹¹ suggests that the churches lost their credibility not because they refused to adjust to changing times, but because they adapted too rapidly and capitulated to the unstable whims of culture.

Here we can learn from the Evangelicals. Within the last decade, a number of eminent theologians and pastors from within Evangelicalism have expressed criticism of elements in their own tradition which some Lutherans are eager to embrace.

Robert Webber of Wheaton College is a Baptist turned Episcopalian. More than any other individual within Evangelicalism, Webber has been responsible for calling his fellow Evangelicals to rediscover the liturgical heritage of the Western Church through his many publications. In his book *Celebrating Our Faith: Evangelism Through Worship*,¹² Webber contends for an evangelism that utilizes the resources of the liturgy for the formation of new Christians. While Webber is not able to divorce himself completely from the language of decision, it is worth noting that he sees within Evangelicalism an absence of the liturgical-sacramental dimension of conversion and discipleship.

In a similar manner, Thomas Howard has authored a book entitled *Evangelicalism Is Not Enough: Worship of God in Liturgy and Sacrament*.¹³ Howard holds that Evangelicalism is incomplete, that it separates the physical from the spiritual, failing to grasp the incarnational and sacramental nature of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Like Webber, Howard challenges his fellow Evangelicals to return to the liturgical heritage of the ancient church.

Eugene Peterson is a Presbyterian clergyman on the faculty of Regent College in Vancouver and the author of over a dozen books on a variety of biblical themes. In his book, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*, Peterson laments that much of Evangelicalism has fallen prey to what he calls Neo-Baalism - the watch words of which are "Let's have a worship experience" and "I didn't get anything out of it."¹⁴ Under the seductive spell of Neo-Baalism, American pastors have been "transformed into a company of shopkeepers with shopkeepers concerns - how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from the competitors down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money,"¹⁵

writes Peterson. This ecclesiastical consumerism subverts worship. Peterson says, "There are others who do not desert the place of worship, but in staying, they do something worse: they subvert it. They turn it in to a place of entertainment that will refresh bored and tired consumers and pump some zest into them; or they turn it into a lecture hall on the assumption that what they know, they then do; or turn it into a platform for launching good works, shooting rockets of righteousness behind the enemy lines. Attention is subverted from what God is doing to what we are doing."¹⁶

One of the most outspoken critics of Evangelicalism is Michael Scott Horton,¹⁷ president of the California-based CURE (Christians United for Reformation). Horton is especially critical of the what he calls the "man-centered" evangelism of Charles Finney that saw evangelism as a use of the right technique to close a sale.

Os Guinness, a leading Evangelical apologist, has turned his attention to the impact of modernity on Evangelicalism in his book *Dining With the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts With Modernity*. Guinness sees the Church Growth Movement as a product of modernity, and, as such, he contends that it is implementing a vision of the church primarily guided and shaped by considerations and circumstances alien to the church's own character and calling. Guinness worries that the Church Growth Movement, shaped as it is by managerial and therapeutic concerns, is bringing contemporary Evangelicalism perilously close to the liberalism of the early years of this century criticized by Richard Niebuhr as advocating a "God without wrath bringing men without sin into a Kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."¹⁸

In a similar vein, John MacArthur of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, compares the state of contemporary Evangelicalism with British Evangelicalism at the time of Charles Spurgeon in the last century. MacArthur argues that Evangelism has lost its theological moorings and is now being guided by pragmatic concerns. In *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, MacArthur notes that "User-friendly, entertainment-oriented, market-driven, pragmatic churches will probably continue to flourish for a while. Unfortunately, however, the whole movement is based on current fashion and therefore cannot last long. When the fickle winds finally change, one of three things may happen. These churches will fall out of vogue and wane; or they will opt to change with the spirit of the age and will very likely abandon any semblance of biblical Christianity; or they will need to rebuild on a more sure foundation"¹⁹

A final voice which we would do well to note is that of David Wells. In his book *No Place for the Truth Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* Wells charts the "unconscious contextualization that goes on in American theology"²⁰ concluding that Evangelicalism has actually embraced the liberalism which it originally sought to avoid. Theology is reduced to autobiography as the classical disciplines of the seminaries give way to managerial and therapeutic training. The American clergy have "grabbed at professionalism like a drowning man might grab at a life jacket, but having thus been saved, they must now live by its limitations and dictates"²¹. Worship becomes entertainment. Hymnody is changed to reflect the experience of God rather than the truth of God. The outcome is the death of theology. Wells writes, "Theology is dying not because the academy has failed to devise adequate procedures for reconstructing it but because the Church has lost the capacity for it. And while some hail this loss as a step forward toward the hope of new evangelical vitality, it is in fact a sign of creeping death. The emptiness of evangelical faith without theology echoes the emptiness of modern life. Both have elected to cross over into a world where God has no place, in which reality has been rewritten, in which Christ has become redundant, his word irrelevant, and the church must find new reasons for existence."²²

These critiques from within American Evangelicalism provide us with ample evidence that this is hardly a movement capable of providing Lutherans with a fitting model for liturgy and mission. David Housholder

complains that "Lutherans are a highly allergic group of people"²³ with a theological immune system which too quickly responds to defend the body against the dust and pollen of non-Lutheran practices. On contrary, the problem is not that our immune system is over-active, but that it has adjusted itself to the allergies.

Over thirty years ago, the distinguished historian of American Christianity, Winthrop Hudson offered the following prognosis for Protestantism in the United States:

The final prospect for a vigorous renewal of Protestant life and witness rests with the Lutheran Churches....The Lutheran Churches are in the fortunate position of having been, in varying degrees, insulated from American life for a long period of time. As a result, they have been less subject to theological erosion, which so largely stripped other denominations of an awareness of their continuity with a historic Christian tradition. Thus the resources of the Christian past have been more readily available to them, and this fact suggests that they may have an increasingly important role to play in a Protestant recovery. Among the assets immediately at hand among the Lutherans are a confessional tradition, a surviving liturgical structure, and a sense of community which, however much it may be of cultural factors, may make it easier for them than most Protestant denominations to recover the integrity of church membership without which Protestants are ill-equipped to participate effectively in the dialogue of a pluralistic society.²⁴

As we survey the landscape of American Lutheranism at the end of the twentieth century, we can only conclude that Hudson's vision of an American Protestantism renewed by a Lutheran catalyst failed to materialize. Instead the theological orientation of all branches of Lutheranism has suffered serious erosion from sources as diverse as fundamentalism and feminism. Liturgical structures have been so seriously mangled that the worship life of many congregations hardly resembles anything that could be identified as Lutheran. The Catechism is an unknown book to many converts to Lutheranism who are brought into communicant membership with a catechesis that is limited to a "new member orientation" and "a spiritual gift inventory." In some circles a "gnostic synergism" dominates "that allows anything to go as long as it is creative, liberating, and expressive of individual freedom."²⁵

We are in the midst of a genuine liturgical crisis. It is not a debate over adiaphora, indifferent things. It is not a controversy over style. At the heart it is a crisis of faith. When our Lord spoke of His return at the end of time, He did not say, "When the Son of Man returns will He find a growing and successful church?" but, "when the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth?" (St. Luke 18:8). The liturgical crisis is a crisis of faith, for faith lives by the Word of the Lord. The contemporary uneasiness with the liturgy is really an anxiety over whether the Word of the Lord will really do what the Lord promises us that it will do. Therefore there is a shift so aptly illustrated by a comment from George Barna: "The audience not the message must be sovereign"²⁶ Once this shift is made, we settle for entertainment rather than edification. We forget, to use the words of T.S. Eliot, that "It is not enthusiasm but dogma that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society "²⁷

4- In our call for maintaining the liturgical character of Lutheranism in North America, we are not calling for the preservation of the status quo, but rather a return to a renewed understanding of the liturgy as Divine Service and a recovery of this reality for preaching, church music, catechesis, pastoral care, piety, and evangelism.

Rejection of the "alternative worship movement" is not an affirmation that all is well in congregations that to stick to the hymnals. No doubt that one of the reasons so-called alternative forms of worship have been so eagerly embraced by many in the LCMS is that liturgy was seen as something to be endured out of a sense of duty, but without any real knowledge on the part of pastor or congregation as to its fullness. The liturgy was not taught. The richness of our hymnals was left untapped. Hymns were chosen with little regard to the lectionary. Preaching lacked the doxological focus given by the Trinitarian shape of the Church Year. The

liturgy itself was conducted as a lifeless exercise. In short, liturgy became something like a family heirloom. It is kept on the mantle but never used.

It is not the liturgy that is the problem but the way it has been misused. The fault lies not with the liturgy - it is God's Service to us in Word and Sacrament. We have not let our confessional theology of the liturgy define the character of our congregational life. Genuine renewal in worship and evangelism will require change. Following the Lutheran Confessions, the Divine Service must be restored to the very heart of parish life. The church is where God's Word is rightly preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with that divine Word (AC VII). The Word rightly proclaimed and the Holy Supper of our Lord distributed every Lord's Day and on festival days is the foundation for authentic congregation life and growth.

Note how this understanding of the centrality of the Divine Service shapes the character of congregational life with a view toward evangelism.

Preaching. Preaching is integral to the Divine Service. As in the rest of the liturgy, God serves us in preaching. Listen to Luther: "To be sure, the tongue, the voice, the hands etc. are those of a human being; but the Word and ministry are those of the divine Majesty Himself."²⁸ Liturgical preaching is not simply preaching that follows the lectionary; it is preaching which allows Christ to have His say. The preacher stands in the pulpit as the called and ordained servant of the Word delivering the gifts of the Liturgist of our salvation, Christ Jesus. The Church Year guides the flow of these gifts, omitting nothing that is profitable for our salvation.²⁹ The sermon's effectiveness, in the final analysis, does not rest on the preacher's personality, experiences, learning, humor, or communication abilities but on the words of Jesus, words which are spirit and life.

There is a temptation to "despise preaching and God's Word" in the sense that we lack the trust that God's Word will accomplish His purpose. We doubt that God will actually save sinners through the foolishness of preaching Christ crucified and so we turn the sermon into a pep talk or a lecture about some human interest topic spiced up with some Bible verses.

Divine Service preaching, on the other hand, proclaims Christ as the One who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Such preaching does not merely describe Christ or His works in the past, it points to Christ as He is present now in His Word and Supper bestowing forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Church music. Luther's comment that he values "music next to the preaching of the Word of God" is well known. In the Scriptures, singing has an eschatological dimension; it takes place in heaven. Here on earth, the church's song imitates the angels as in high and holy doxology we confess, that is, we repeat back to the Lord what He has said and done. Our hymnody is evangelistic in that it confesses and catechizes. Think of Luther's great hymn "Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice", for example as it narrates the story of our salvation.

When the distinction between church and world is blurred, the church's song begins to sound more like the tunes of this world, seeking to entertain or amuse rather than edify. Pastors and church musicians alike will need to rediscover the truth of Martin Franzmann's words "that theology is doxology.....and that theology must sing"³⁰ and put that truth into action in planning and preparing for music appropriate to the Divine Service.

Catechesis. Genuine liturgical renewal will be a renewal in catechesis as well. The bridge between evangelism and liturgy is catechesis. Catechesis is the transmission of the Word of God from the mouth to the ear so that it lodges in the heart, bringing forth confession with the lips and forming lives that are lived

under the cross of Jesus Christ. The baptized are taught the sound doctrine that is drawn from Sacred Scripture, confessed in the Small Catechism, and expressed in the hymnal. Three books, therefore, are essential for Lutheran catechesis: The Bible, the Small Catechism, and the hymnal. Catechesis teaches God's priests how to use the Small Catechism as a user's guide for both the Bible and the hymnal. Good catechesis will connect doctrine with doxology, helping the catechumen become at home in the liturgy.

Pastoral Care. E. Brooks Holifield³¹ of Emory University has charted the evolution of pastoral care from the time of the Puritans to the present. Holifield notes how pastoral care becomes secularized as it moves away from a use of Scripture, sacraments, and prayer to a use of psychological tools and techniques. The language and context for pastoral care have become clinical rather than churchly. In fact, pastoral care has been reduced to pastoral counseling.

We need to reconnect pastoral care with the liturgy. The first place to begin is with individual confession and absolution. This is the primary means of liturgical pastoral care. The Lutheran Worship Agenda is actually the pastor's handbook for pastoral theology as it includes various rites for pastoral care: Orders for the visitation and communion of the sick, the commendation of the dying, emergency baptism, marriage, and as well as various prayers and collects.

Piety. Pietism has perhaps clouded the fact that there is a genuine Lutheran piety. Piety is not the same as Pietism³². There is nothing showy about this piety. It is the piety of the daily prayers and the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism. It is a piety that flows from liturgy to vocation in the pattern of Romans 12 where the Apostle bids us to present our bodies as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God. It is a piety that prays and works. It is the piety shaped by the words of the post-communion collect which implores God to strengthen us through the salutary of gift of the Sacrament "in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another" (emphasis mine).

We live in a world that desires a church without God, at least without the God of Israel and Jesus. There is a danger that in our ardent desire to reach the unchurched we become unchurched ourselves. We best evangelize simply by being church. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (I Cor. 11:26). And in the presence of angels, and archangels, and the whole company of heaven that proclamation will echo out into all the world to the salvation of many. No new programs that try to convince the pagans that we are just like them after all. No Friendship Sundays. Not mega-church or meta-church, just plain church, created and sustained by the life-imparting words of Jesus along with His evangelical sacraments. These are the *Mysteria Dei* which are at the center of the church's life and apostolic mission.

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1 -Alan Klaas and Cheryl Brown, "Growing Churches Offer Worship Variety," Reporter, (July 1994), 1.

2 -Professor Kurt Marquart was among the first to sound the warning in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. See his article "Liturgical Commonplaces," Concordia Theological Quarterly, (October 1978), 330-346. Subsequently Professor Marquart has continued to give thoughtful attention to the impact of the Church Growth Movement on Lutheran liturgical practice. See K.Marquart, "Church Growth" as Mission Paradigm: A Lutheran Assessment, (Houston: Our Savior Lutheran Church, 1994), 76-113; "Liturgy and

Evangelism" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, ed. by Fred Precht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 58-76; "Law/Gospel and Church Growth" in *The Beauty and the Bands* ed. by John Fehrmann (Minneapolis: Association of Confessional Lutherans, 1995), 173-188.

3-Marquart's critique of the historical-critical method noted its incompatibility with "the incarnational-sacramental unity of history and theology in the one gospel." See K. Marquart, "The Incompatibility Between Historical-Critical Theology and the Lutheran Confessions" in *Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics* ed. by John Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 330.

4 -*Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.

5 -"Liturgy and Evangelism" 59.

6 -Walter Kallested, "On Worship and Evangelism," *dialog* (Summer 1994), 225.

7 -Os Guinness, *Dinning With the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts With Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 63.

8 -Robert Schaibley, "A Lutheran Strategy for Urban Ministry: Evangelism and the Means of Grace," *Logia* (Holy Trinity, 1993), 12.

9 -C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 120.

10 -*Lutheran Worship*, 6.

11 -See James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

12 -See Robert Webber, *Celebrating Our Faith: Evangelism Through Worship* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).

13 -See Thomas Howard, *Evangelical is Not Enough: Worship of God in Liturgy and Sacrament* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984).

14 -Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980), 147.

15 -Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 1.

16 -Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 141.

17 -See Michael Horton, *Made in America: The Shaping of Modern American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991).

18 -Guinness, 78.

19 -John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 188-189.

20 -David Wells, *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 137.

21 - *Ibid.*, 246.

22 -*Ibid.*, 301.

23 -David Housholder, "An Allergist Looks at Lutheran Worship," *dialog* (Summer 1994), 228.

24 - Winthrop Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Scribners, 1965), 176.

25 - Philip Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (New York: Oxford, 1987), 212.

26 -George Barna, *Marketing the Church* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1990), 145.

27 -Robert Wilken, "No Other Gods," *First Things* (November 1993), 14.

28 - AE 24:67; WA XLV, 521.

29 -Note Marquart's radiant description of such preaching: "True preaching, in other words, throbs with the right distinction between Law and Gospel. Christ and His Person and Work-the Gospel!-are ever uppermost: everything else must subserve this great Mystery of our Salvation (I Tim. 3:16). That is why the church year and liturgical cycle of Gospel pericopes are so important. They focus on the Lord Himself, and on what He has done and said-and is thereby saying and doing now. For, in Luther's glorious phrase, these texts are not dead histories or histories of the dead, but 'sacraments.' which do and give the very things they report....Here is the tap-root of the church's missionary power" -"Church Growth" as Mission Paradigm: A Lutheran Assessment, 85. Also see Marquart, "The Sacramentality of Truth" in *And Every Tongue Confess: Essays in Honor of Norman Nagel on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday* ed. by Gerald Krispin and John Vieker (Dearborn: Nagel Festschrift Committee, 1990), 86-99; Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (Fort Wayne: International Foundation for Confessional Lutheran Research, 1990), 198-200.

30 -Martin Franzmann, *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* (St.Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 92.

31 -See E. Brooks Holifield. *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983).

32 -Note the excellent section on Pietism in Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy:Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 497-498. For a contemporary application, see Harold Senkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1989).

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