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Liturgy and Pietism
Then and Now

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DAVID LUECKE HAS ADVOCATED PIETISM as a slice of the Lutheran heritage that holds promise for the renewal of mission, congregational life, and worship. Luecke argues that pietism is the "other story"[1] of worship among Lutherans, a story that he claims has been ignored by the "restorationists" who have written liturgical histories and prepared the hymnals. According to Luecke, pietism is part of a tradition that is finding expression in congregations that have abandoned or radically altered traditional Lutheran liturgical forms and hymnody.

The alternative worship movement, which has become so attractive to many within American Lutheranism, draws more deeply on revivalism or the "frontier tradition"[2] of worship, as James White calls it, and pentecostalism via the charismatic movement, than it does on classical pietism. One could only wish that contemporary praise hymns had the theological and spiritual depth of hymns such as Johann Schroeder's "One Thing's Needful; Lord this Treasure" (*277 LW*), which Wilhelm Nelle called "the most blessed hymn of the entire circle of Halle Pietists."[3]

When we compare the changes in liturgical texts and structures introduced by pietism with those brought about by the advocates of so-called alternative worship, we might be tempted to conclude that the innovations of pietism were rather minor. For the most part, pietism did not produce new liturgical orders. What pietism did was to shift away from the centrality of the divine service in the life of the church. This shift was necessitated by a prior shift from justification to sanctification, from the objective reality of the means of grace to the subjective experience of the believer, from *beneficium* to *sacrificium*, from the office of the holy ministry to the priesthood of believers. This was the crucial shift that prepared the way for later developments in pietism's offspring, revivalism and pentecostalism, which in turn have exercised a destructive influence in the liturgical life of North American Lutheranism. The central themes of pietism were unable to sustain the liturgical life envisioned in the Book of Concord.

If we are to understand the influence of pietism on the liturgy in contemporary Lutheranism, it is essential that we see that pietism was more than a renewal movement. It was a theological movement. Bengt Haegglund writes:

> The Pietist movement, which penetrated Lutheran territory in the latter part of the seventeenth century and contributed to the diminution or the internal transformation of the orthodox Lutheran tradition, was not simply a reaction against certain weaknesses in the church life of the time; it was rather a new theological position, which was based on a new concept of reality and which bore within itself the seeds of the modern point of view.[4]

Most of the standard treatments of pietism see pietism as a necessary corrective to the alleged frigidity and formality of Lutheran orthodoxy. Pietism is said to have recaptured the vitality of Luther's evangelical insight. Examples of the living piety of orthodoxy as embodied in Johann Gerhard's devotional writings or the hymnody of Philip Nicolai and Paul Gerhardt are ignored, or else they are classified as a germinal form of pietism.[5] Pietism's reliance on a selected slice of the early Luther to the exclusion of his later sacramental writings is overlooked. Whatever deficiencies there may have been in the church life of Lutheran orthodoxy, it cannot be claimed that pietism was a return to Luther. Pietism was seeking something new. Jeremiah Ohl summarizes the outcome of pietism's search as it relates to worship:

> in a word, what pietism set out to do finally resulted not in bringing about again a proper union between the objective and the subjective, but in the overthrow of the former and the triumph of the latter. The sacramental and the sacrificial were divorced, and the sacrificial alone remained. Public worship ceased to be a celebration of redemption, and became only an act of edification.[6]

Pietism succeeded in introducing a new theology of worship grounded not in the delivery of the fruits of Christ's redeeming work but rather in the edification of the saint.

While Spener in his programmatic work *Pia Desideria* did not set forth a plan for liturgical innovation, we observe a shift away from objective understanding of the divine service in Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy.[7] Spener began not with the Lord's gifts but with the Lord's people, and what he saw was lamentable: clergy whose lives did not conform to their teaching, contentiousness among the theologians, worldliness and drunkenness on the part of the common people. When Spener finally came to discuss the efficacy of the word of God and the place of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution, he focused not on the character of these

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gifts but on their right use. Spener gave assurances that he had not departed from the orthodox Lutheran understanding of the power of God's word:

> We also gladly acknowledge the power of the Word of God when it is preached, since it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith (Rom 1:16). We are bound diligently to hear the Word of God not only because we are commanded to do so but because it is the divine hand which offers and presents grace to the believer, whom the Word itself awakens through the Holy Spirit.[8]

Likewise he affirmed baptismal regeneration and the sacramental presence of Christ's body and blood:

> Nor do I know how to praise Baptism and its power highly enough. I believe that it is the real "washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Ti 3:5), or as Luther says in the Catechism, "it effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death, and grants (not merely promises) eternal salvation. Not less gladly do I acknowledge the glorious power in the sacramental, oral, and not merely spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper. On this account I heartily reject the position of the Reformed when they deny that we receive such a pledge of salvation in, with, and under the bread and the wine, when they weaken its power, and when they see in it no more than exists outside the holy sacrament in spiritual eating and drinking."[9]

Yet after confessing these gifts, Spener once again returns to what he observed in the majority of those who heard the word, were baptized, and received Christ's body and blood. It was not enough to be baptized. Baptism is described as a two-sided covenant: from God's side a covenant of grace, from man's side a covenant of faith.[10] The efficacy of the Word is judged in light of what it accomplishes in the interior life of the auditor. Spener writes:

> But it is not enough that your ear hears it. Do you let it penetrate inwardly into your heart and allow the heavenly food to be digested there, so that you get the benefit of its vitality and power, or does it go in one ear and out the other?[11]

Spener worried that confession and absolution as well as the Lord's Supper were being used *opus operatum.*[12] In his desire to guard against a fleshly *securitas,* Spener undermined the certainty of faith so clearly articulated in Luther's sacramental writings.

In part 3 of *Pia Desideria,* Spener provides six proposals to correct conditions in the church. His first proposal is "a more extensive use of the Word of God among us."[13] Spener notes that there already is frequent and in some cases daily preaching in the churches. But increased preaching was not what Spener had in mind. The lectionary provides the church with a limited exposure to Scripture. Later Gottfried Arnold would conclude that the pericopal system is

> a vicious and abominable mutilation of the Bible; and Spener himself declared: "How I wish with all my heart, that our Church had never adopted the use of Pericopes, but had allowed a free choice, or else had made the Epistles instead of the Gospels the chief texts."[14]

Quoting 2 Timothy 3:16, Spener argues that as all Scripture is inspired by God "*all* Scripture, without exception, should be known by the congregation if we are to receive the necessary benefit."[15]

Spener offers three suggestions for the increased use of the Bible: (1) Every housefather should have a Bible, or at least a New Testament, and read it aloud for his household daily; (2) books of the Bible should be read one after another at specified times in public services of the congregation; (3) special meetings should be organized for the reading and application of the Scriptures. It is the development of this third point that was to be most influential in pietism.

According to Spener, these gatherings would be "the ancient and apostolic kind of church meeting."[16] These meetings were not designed to replace the divine service but to supplement it. Spener describes how these assemblies would function:

> In addition to our customary services with preaching, other assemblies would also be held in the manner which Paul describes them in 1 Corinthians 14:26–40. One person would not rise to preach (although the practice would be continued at other times), but others who have been blessed with gifts and knowledge would also speak and present their pious opinions on the proposed subject to the judgment of the rest, doing all this in such a way as to avoid disorder and strife. This might conveniently be done by having several ministers (in places where a number of them live in a town) meet together or by having several members of a congregation who have a fair knowledge of God or desire to increase their knowledge meet under the leadership of a minister, take up the Holy Scriptures, read aloud from them, and fraternally discuss each verse in order to discover its simple meaning and whatever may be useful to the edification of all. Anybody who is not satisfied with his understanding of a matter should be permitted to express his doubts and seek further explanation. On the other hand those (including the ministers) who have made progress should be allowed the freedom to state how they understand each passage. Then all that has been contributed, insofar as it accords with the sense of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, should be carefully considered by the rest, especially by the ordained ministers, and applied to the edification of the whole meeting.[17]

Thus the conventicle was born as a paraliturgical assembly. Spener outlines what he sees to be the benefits of these assemblies. Preachers would gain a more intimate knowledge of the spiritual weaknesses of their people while the people would grow in confidence in their ministers. Those who participate would experience personal growth better enabling them to give religious instruction to their children and servants at home. Both sermons and the private reading of the Bible would be better understood.

The apostolic admonition of Colossians 3:16 would be fulfilled as "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" were used in these gatherings "for the praise of God and the inspiration of the participants."[18] While Spener did not envision the conventicle as a replacement for the divine service, the history of pietism provides evidence that these meetings, not the divine service, came to be the focal point of the spiritual life. Ultimately the songs of the conventicle would find their way into the liturgical services.

The objectivity (extra nos) of the means of grace is overcome by the subjectivity of the believer's experience.

Other themes in *Pia Desideria* were developed that would influence the shape of liturgy within pietism. Spener's second proposal calls for *"the establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood."*[19] The spiritual priesthood was seen in contrast to the office of the holy ministry. While Spener argued that members of this priesthood may not take it upon themselves to preach or administer the sacraments, priests were to be actively involved in the exercise of spiritual functions including the study of the Word of God, prayer, teaching, admonishing, comforting, and chastising the erring. Spener saw the ministry as inadequate without the involvement of the spiritual priesthood. He writes:

> one man is incapable of doing all that is necessary for the edification of the many persons who are generally entrusted to his pastoral care. However, if the priests do their duty, the minister, as director and oldest brother, has splendid assistance in the performance of his duties and his public and private acts, and thus his burden will not be too heavy.[20]

While Spener did not advocate any special function of the spiritual priesthood in the liturgy, his understanding of the priesthood in terms of its activities and his stress on true faith as practice prepared the way of increased involvement of the laity in the conduct of the services.

A third theme with liturgical consequences in *Pia Desideria* is that of preaching. We have already noted that Spener called for a wider use of the Word of God in the congregation, a use that would go beyond the preaching that takes place in the services. He found the preaching of his contemporaries lacking. After criticizing his colleagues for making an ostentatious display of their homiletical skills, their quotation of phrases in foreign languages, and the polemical content of their sermons, Spener goes on to describe the goal of the sermon:

> Our whole Christian religion consists of the inner man or the new man, whose soul is faith and whose expressions are the fruits of life, and all sermons should be aimed at this. On the one hand, the precious benefactions of God, which are directed toward the inner man, may ever be strengthened more. On the other hand, works should be set in motion that we may by no means be content merely to have people refrain from outward vices and practice outward virtues and thus be concerned only with the outward man, which the ethics of the heathen can also accomplish, but that we lay a right foundation in the heart, show that what does not proceed from this foundation is mere hypocrisy, and hence accustom the people first to work on what is inward (awaken love of God and neighbor through suitable means) and only then to act accordingly.[21]

Spener broadened his understanding of the goal of the sermon to include the sacraments also. Worship is internalized.

> One should therefore emphasize that the divine means of Word and sacrament are concerned with the inner man. Hence it is not enough that we hear the Word with our outward ear, but we must let it penetrate to our heart, so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit and the power of the Word. Nor is it enough to be baptized, but the inner man, where we have put on Christ in Baptism, must also keep Christ on and bear witness to him in our outward life. Nor is it enough to have received the Lord's Supper externally, but the inner man must truly be fed with that blessed food. Nor is it enough to pray outwardly with our mouth, but true prayer, and the best prayer, occurs in the inner man, and it either breaks forth in words or remains in the soul, yet God will find and hit upon it. Nor, again, is it enough to worship God in an external temple, but the inner man worships God best in his own temple, whether or not he is in an external temple at the time.[22]

The preached word, baptism, and supper still remain, but clearly the focus is no longer on these, for they are *externals*; rather, the concern is with that which is *internal* to man. This is fundamental to the theology of worship in pietism. The objectivity (*extra nos*) of the means of grace is overcome by the subjectivity of the believer's experience.[23]

This shift can be seen both in the way the classical liturgical forms of Lutheranism were diminished under the influence of pietism as well as in the new hymns and styles of preaching. Frank Senn notes, "Pietism did not have a liturgical program of its own with which to replace that of orthodoxy; but its emphasis did have a profound impact on public worship."[24] The impact of pietism on Lutheran liturgy is seen, at least originally, not in the production of new church orders but in the way in which the subjective and personal impulses were given expression in the church service. The spiritual character and effectiveness of the officiant was seen as a necessary condition for the right hearing of the Word. *Ex corde* prayers were substituted for churchly, liturgical prayers. Exorcisms were omitted from the baptismal rite.[25] Eucharistic vestments were discarded. The Lord's Supper was celebrated less frequently and given less emphasis in preaching. The church year became less influential in shaping the preaching as pericopal

preaching declined along with the use of hymns reflective of the themes of the lectionary. Ohl observes:

> the objective and sacramental elements came to be underestimated to the same extent that Orthodoxy had overestimated them, and public worship became more and more subjective and sacrificial. Its value and the value of its component parts were gauged altogether according to subjective results; the claim was made that spiritual life could be awakened only by those who were themselves spiritually alive; and edification was sought not so much in the worship of the whole congregation as in the exercise of the small private assemblies. This however, was virtually putting the awakened personality above the Means of Grace, the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* above the *ecclesia*.[26]

This subjectivity was given expression both in the hymnody and preaching that issued from pietism. The most significant hymnals to come out of pietism were the two books produced by the son-in-law of August Francke, Johann Freylinghausen, in 1704 and 1714. These two hymnals were combined into a single volume in 1741 that was known as the "Freylinghausen *Gesangbuch*" or the "Halle Hymnal." The theological faculty at Wittenberg rendered a negative evaluation of this hymnal, declaring that it was not suitable for use in church or home, not only because it omitted several of the classical Lutheran hymns, but also because many of the hymns which it did contain were theologically wrong. Among the hymns criticized by the Wittenbergers was Ludwig Andreas Gotter's "*Treuer Vater und Deine Liebe*" ("True Father and Thy Love"), which contains this stanza:

> Since I thought I was a Christian
> And knew how to speak about it,
> I needed the church and altar,
> I sang and gave to the poor.
> I had no terrible vices,
> And yet it was only hypocrisy.[27]

The hymns of pietism reflect a "warm Jesus-mysticism," as Senn calls it.[28] Coupled with this "Jesus-mysticism" was a stress on sanctification with an accent on the *imitatio Christi*. The pietist hymnals arranged hymns not according to the church calendar but according to the *ordo salutus* and selected situations in the Christian life. New tunes were composed that fit with the sentimental character of the pietist texts.

The preaching of pietism, like its hymnody, directs the hearer inward. In "A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Most Useful Way of Preaching," August Hermann Francke advised that a minister should frequently

> lay down in his sermons the distinguishing marks and characters both of the converted and the unconverted, and that with all possible plainness so that every one of his hearers may be able to judge his own estate, and may know to which of these two classes he belongs.[29]

The sermon should lead to self-examinations so hearers are exhorted to see

> whether they can find in themselves the genuine marks of a true conversion to God and living faith in Christ, or whether, on the other hand, they do not conclude that they are true Christians and in a state of salvation, different from being merely moral honest men, and not living in any gross and scandalous sin; and perhaps too, from saying their prayers, hearing sermons, and frequenting the places of public worship, and from their practicing such outward duties of religion?[30]

Francke understood the preaching of the gospel to be less a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ than a proclamation of Christ as the source of the newness of life and the enabler of God-pleasing works. Preachers were to preach in such a way as to bring their hearers "under the influence of the Spirit of Christ" so that "they find themselves transported as it were into a new life, and now they go on with vigor and pleasure in the practice of universal piety."[31] Sermons were to set forth the way of salvation, which Francke explains as the "whole progress of conversion."[32] Genuine conversion would be accompanied by penitential struggle and sensations of grace. The preacher should urge his hearers to make a fervent use of prayer. The effective preacher must love Christ and love his people so that by his example, those committed to his care might learn to love Jesus. Preaching, for Francke, aimed at the edification of the individual using all the spiritual resources that the preacher can muster within himself and from his own experience as a believer.

The absolution is anchored in the sincerity of the penitent.

The pietism of Spener and Francke was to have far-reaching effects on the liturgical ethos of Lutheranism, not only in Germany and Scandinavia but eventfully in North America. While pietism may not be the direct source of the liturgical chaos that has come upon North American Lutherans, it surely has provided contemporary Lutherans with an orientation that is predisposed toward an anti-liturgical bias. This orientation can be observed in the history of American Lutheranism in a wide spectrum of Lutherans of both German and Scandinavian descent, from the revivalism of Hauge to the milder pietism of Muhlenberg to the neo-pietism of Schmucker.

It was through Muhlenberg that the heritage of Halle shaped the liturgical life of the early American Lutherans. The Church Agenda of 1748 gives evidence of this, especially in section 5, where instructions are provided for the care of those who are preparing to come to the Lord's Supper. These questions are put to the communicants:

> I now ask you in the presence of the omniscient God, and upon testimony of your own conscience: I ask you: Whether you are fully resolved, with the help of God, to

yield yourselves entirely to the gracious direction of the Holy Spirit, by His Word; in order that by His power, the help, and grace of the same, sin may be subdued in you, the old man with all his evil deeds and corrupt affections be weakened and overcome by daily sorrow and repentance, and that you may win a complete victory over the world and all its allurements?

If this be your serious purpose, confess it and answer, Yes. Finally, I ask you: Whether any one of you yet has, in his heart, any complaint against another.[33]

After this scrutiny, the rubrics call for the communicants and the pastor to kneel as one of the communicants leads the group in speaking a confessional prayer. The pastor is further instructed to "a few words of prayer."[34] Then the pastors forgives and retains sins in these words:

Upon this confession of sin which you have now made, I, a minister of my Lord Jesus Christ, hereby do declare, to all who are truly penitent and heartily believe in Jesus Christ, and are sincerely resolved, in heart, to amend their lives and daily to grow in grace, to them I declare the forgiveness of all their sins; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

But, on the other hand, I declare to all who are impenitent, to the hypocritical as well as the openly ungodly, and I testify, by the Word of God, and in the name of Jesus, that so long as they continue in their impenitent state, loving sin and hating righteousness, God will not forgive their sins, but retains their sin against them, and will assuredly punish and condemn them for their iniquities, in the end, except they turn to him now, in His day of grace; except they sincerely forsake all their evil ways, and come to Christ in true repentance and faith; which we heartily pray they may do. Amen.[35]

Here we note that the absolution is anchored in the sincerity of the penitent. The penitent is directed to the strength of his repentance and the resolve to amend his life. Thus pietism has left its fingerprints on this early American Lutheran liturgy.

In 1782, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in North America, meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, appointed Muhlenberg and others to begin work on a new hymnal. The ministerium's resolution gives five directives to the committee:

1. As far as possible to follow the arrangement of the Halle Hymn Book.
2. Not to omit any of the old standard hymns, especially those of Luther and Gerhardt.
3. To omit the Gospel and Epistles for Apostles' Days, Minor Festivals, and the History of the Destruction of Jerusalem, together with the collection of prayers and the Catechism.
4. To report all this together with incidental changes, for example, the Litany, to a special meeting of Synod.
5. Not to admit more than 750 hymns into the collection.[36]

As he worked on the this new hymnal, Muhlenberg made the following entry in his journal:

Those hymns which expect the last judgment of the world in the too-near future and mention the signs that precede it I have left out. I also have not included those which, inspired by the Song of Solomon, are composed too close to the verge of sensuality, and also those that dally with diminutives—for example, "little Jesus," "little brother," "little angels," etc. These appear to me to be too childish and not in accord with Scripture, even though they were intended to be childlike and familiar. The ancient and medieval hymns, which have been familiar to Lutherans from childhood on, cannot well be left out; even though they sound somewhat harsh in construction, rhyme, etc., they are nevertheless orthodox.[37]

The pietistically flavored confessionalism of Muhlenberg[38] would ultimately give way to the neo-pietism of Samuel Simon Schmucker. In Schmucker the central motifs of pietism were given an American expression. Indifference to doctrinal distinctives where there is unity in spiritual experience marked the thought of Schmucker as it had for the pietists. Like the earlier pietists, Schmucker defined Lutheranism in opposition to Roman Catholicism. What Rome is, Lutheranism is not. For Schmucker as for the pietists, the Reformation was a return to the primitivism of genuine Christianity. "The Reformation restored the church to the 'primitive, simple ordinances of the Gospel' instead of corrupted sacraments."[39] Schmucker, like pietists, believed that the Reformation was fundamentally unfinished; Luther and his colleagues had not gone far enough. The essence of Lutheranism was to be found not in the confessional documents but in the brave, reformatory spirit of Luther, who replaced the pope with the Bible and freed believers to engage in a genuine spirituality unhampered by external ritualism.

Schmucker defined Lutheranism in opposition to Roman Catholicism.

This can be seen in Schmucker's *Definite Platform* as it identifies five errors in the *Augustana:* (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the mass; (2) private confession and absolution; (3) denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath; (4) baptismal regeneration; (5) the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Lord's Supper. Schmucker's rejection of these confessional teachings as remnants of Romish error echoed similar sentiments in pietism. Schmucker's pietism made it possible for him to adapt the new measures of revivalism for Lutheran use. This adaptation can be seen clearly in the General Synod's *Hymns Selected and Original* of 1828. This hymnal stands in the pietistic tradition with hymns arranged topically, not according to the liturgical year or catechetical themes, but the being and characteristics of God and the *ordo salutis.* It is especially telling that in the section designated "The Means of Grace" six hymns were included on prayer, nineteen on the spiritual pleasures of worship in God's house, five on Baptism, and fourteen on the Lord's Supper. None of the great

sacramental hymns of Lutheranism were included in this collection. Typical of the hymns on the Lord's Supper are stanzas 3 and 4 of "My God! And Is Thy Table Spread":

> Let crowds approach; with hearts prepar'd
> With warm desire, let all attend;
> Nor, when we leave our Father's board,
> The pleasure or the profit end.
> Revive thy dying churches, Lord!
> And bid our drooping graces live;
> And more that energy afford,
> A Savior's death alone can give."[40]

Not a single hymn in this section contains an unambiguous statement of the Lord's Supper as the place where Christ's body and blood are bestowed for the forgiveness of sins. Instead the hymns are dominated by the themes of remembrance, the need for heartfelt repentance and preparation, the delights of personal communion with Christ, the eucharistic nature of the Supper, and the Lord's Supper as the expression of a communion of love between believers.

While Schmucker and his co-religionists in the General Synod were not the only perpetrators of the pietistic legacy, their efforts surely resulted in the ecclesiastical establishment of pietism as a clearly defined element within American Lutheranism, an element that would be hospitable to and further shaped by revivalism, ecumenism, and eventually the charismatic movement.[41] Pietism's theological orientation provided a context for the impulse of these three movements to shape both the theological understanding of liturgy as well as actual liturgical texts, practices, and hymnody among modern North American Lutherans. It is to these contemporary developments that we shall now turn.

Pietism left its imprint on Lutheran hymnody as texts and tunes from pietist authors and composers found a permanent place in Lutheran hymnals. The hymns of Tersteegen, Zinzendorf, and Freylinghausen have been widely used in American Lutheran hymnals. The use of pietistic hymns opened the way for the inclusion of hymns from the Wesleyan tradition in England and from a variety of American Protestant traditions that accented themes identical or similar to the central motifs of pietism.[42]

The sentiments of pietism are given a contemporary voice in Dave Anderson's *The Other Song Book*. Telling is the comment that Anderson quotes in the inside front cover the book: "Music prepares the heart for worship and commitment. Music is the greatest mood alternator of all, and unlocks the ministry of God in the untrespassed soil of a person's soul."[43] The continuity with pietism is clear. John Weborg writes:

> Various proposals for reform were made such as would contribute to the renewal of the spiritual life of persons and congregations investing as it were "soul" into the music and manner of life. These reforms . . . contributed the *experimental* aspect to the pietistic movement. I have chosen this word because the Pietists did not necessarily see a cause and effect relation between these proposals for reform and their results. Rather, they sought to create occasions within the context of which God's Holy Spirit in, with, and under Word and Sacrament, could do the work of renewal and regeneration in persons and in the church. God made certain promises to the church regarding the future as such and regarding the power of the Word of God itself. It was a human responsibility, motivated by the obedience of faith, to provide tangible instances whereby this Word could embody itself in creative and regenerative activity.[44]

Music is used to create a mood, to provide such an occasion for the Spirit to work. Hence it is common in many "alternative services" to begin with a period of mood-setting music, of so-called "praise and worship" songs.

The vast majority of songs in *The Other Song Book* (*TOSB*) reflect the theological themes of pietism while also fitting in with the pietistic goal of creating a "moment" for the Spirit. The language of the heart, so common in pietism, predominates. A few examples will suffice:

> There is a flag flown from the castle of my heart
> When the King is in residence there.
> So raise it high in the sky,
> Let the whole world know, let the whole world know,
> Let the whole world know.
> So raise it high in the sky,
> Let the whole know
> that the King is in residence there (*TOSB* 226).

Like pietism of old, this song is *Christus in nobis*, not *Christus pro nobis*. Another song invites the worshiper to "feel the faith":

> Feel the faith swell up inside you,
> Lift your voice with us and sing.
> Accept him with your whole heart,
> Oo-and use your own two hands;
> With one reach out to Jesus,
> And with the other bring a friend (*TOSB* 242).

Most telling, however, is the total subjectivity of a song entitled "He Lives," which ends with this line: "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart" (*TOSB* 61)[45]

References to baptism and the Lord's Supper are all but nonexistent in the songs included in *The Other Song Book*; however, songs describing the blessings of prayer abound:

> The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
> The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
> The blessings come down as the prayers go up,
> So build your Life on the Lord (*TOSB* 224).

Songs having to do with the church generally define the church as a community of love or a fellowship of shared experience, as in "There's a Quiet Understanding," which contains these words:

> And we know when we're together,
> Sharing love and understanding,
> That our brothers and sisters feel the oneness that He brings.
> Thank you, thank You, Jesus,
> For the way you love and feed us,
> For the many times You lead us,
> When we gather in His name.
> Thank you, thank You, Lord (*TOSB* 223).

A look at "contemporary Christian music" reveals that much of it is really not that contemporary, as it embodies themes set in place by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pietism.

Pietism has also shaped preaching. We have already noted that the pietists found difficulty with the lectionary, judging it to be too restrictive. In a recent article in *Worship Innovations,* entitled "The Lectionary Captivity of the Church . . . Or Ten Reasons to Kick the Lectionary 'Habit'," Philip Bickel offers ten arguments against lectionary-based preaching:

1. Freedom to preach on one subject.
2. Freedom to develop worship services with a single focus.
3. Freedom to encourage lay Bible reading.
4. Freedom to develop sermons and services specific to the needs of the local church.
5. Freedom for local leaders to LEAD!
6. Freedom to utilize Bible narratives.
7. Freedom to shape and cast a vision.
8. Freedom to be creative rather than conform.
9. Freedom to have immediate relevancy.
10. Freedom for preachers to share what God is teaching them.[46]

The parallels with pietism are obvious. Lectionaries inhibit the preacher's freedom by binding the preacher to the text, making it more difficult for him to share "what God is teaching him." The assumptions that fuel Bickel's call to abandon the lectionary are already there in pietism. The text is no longer the bearer of the Spirit's presence and the instrument through which he works to create and sustain faith. Instead the preacher's own experiences and spiritual insights become primary. Bickel's exposition of his tenth point could have been written by Gottfried Arnold himself:

> A pastor may be personally stirred through study of a standard pericope. But personal, devotional Bible reading is often the crucible where the Lord refines his servant. Lectionaries tend to limit you from preaching on what God is teaching you. When you preach on the biblical texts which God has been using to encourage and disciple you, many good things happen. First, you speak with the ardor of personal conviction. Second, you model the growth that is to occur in people's lives. Third, they will see you not as the religious know-it-all of the church but as a fellow traveler on the journey.[47]

The chief aim of preaching in pietism was not the delivery of the forgiveness of sins but the spiritual edification of the believer. The goal of the sermon was to change the life of the hearer. Preaching was seen as an appeal to the heart that would result in a changed life. Philip Bickel's diatribe against lectionary preaching is consistent with the major thrust of the book that he co-authored with Robert Nordlie, *The Goal of the Gospel.*[48] Here the goal of preaching is not absolution but obedience to the commandments. The law predominates over the gospel as the "effectiveness of the sermon" is determined by "the obedience of faith" evidenced in the conduct of the hearers.

Pietistic preaching demands visible results. Such results are best achieved by preaching that inspires or motivates. Narrative preaching or stories from the life of the preacher become a fundamental medium for such preaching, not unlike the place of the preacher's own testimony in pietism. Gerald Krispin aptly summarizes this trend within pietism:

> Ultimately only that pastor who himself is a true Christian can lead people rightly in the ways of God. As a guide, he therefore becomes the *primus inter pares,* who is in fact the director, the older brother to all priests in the faith. Thus the pastoral office is not so much a *Predigtamt* as the means by which a godly example and encouragement provide concrete help for the formation of the inner man.[49]

The same can be seen in much contemporary Lutheran writing on preaching.[50]

Gerhard Forde has coined the term "decadent pietism"[51] for the contemporary replacement of the pietism of Spener and Francke. Decadent pietism indulges the "felt needs" of the potential believer, offering a cafeteria of religious options, encouraging imagination and creativity in preaching. Sermons must be practical, offering solutions for the problems of daily life.[52] While the sermons of classical pietism at least dealt with issues of sin and grace, the sermons of the decadent pietists are shaped by therapeutic concerns. Self-realization replaces salvation,[53] and right feelings overshadow right doctrine.

The chief aim of preaching in pietism was the spiritual edification of the believer.

We observe in pietism a shift from congregation to conventicle that is not unlike the Meta-Church emphasis of recent memory. It is beyond the scope of this article to draw out the many parallels between the pietistic *collegium* and the Meta-Church cell groups. Nevertheless, a few comments are in order. According to Spener's original proposal, the small, informal gatherings would operate under the oversight of the pastor and would supplement the divine service. With the passage of time, the conventicles became the central feature of the corporate life of the Christian, in some cases, such as that of Gerhard Tersteegen, to the exclusion of the divine service. In other cases, believers continued to attend the divine service, but the prayer group was clearly the foundational assembly. The divine service where the word was proclaimed and the Lord's body and blood were distributed was seen as inferior to the prayer group and at best as a supplement to it.[54]

The Meta-Church method, as it is set forth by Carl George, does not need preaching and sacraments in order to exist. Prayer and Bible study are essential, but not the means of grace. Larger gatherings, called "celebrations" by Carl George, support and supplement the cell groups, but these gatherings are not the church of Augustana VII. These gatherings are not assemblies drawn together around the preached and sacramental word. Instead they are

"praise celebrations" in which participation is the key. George writes that these celebrations provide "a sense of significance" that "emerges in the consciousness of the group, an apprehension that God is accomplishing something big enough to be worthy of their involvement and investment."[55] Both the cell groups with their focus on the "felt needs" of the participants and the "praise celebrations" are centered in man and not in the bestowal of the forgiveness of sins in gospel and sacrament.[56]

One of the ways in which the Liturgical Movement has a decidedly pietistic flavor is its definition of liturgy as "the work of the people."

Pietism, both classical and contemporary, calls for active involvement of the laity in worship. There is a convergence here between the modern liturgical movement and pietism. In a very short but intriguing section of his *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church,* Ernest Koenker has noted how the liturgical movement challenged complacency within the church. He entitled this section "Sociological Classification of the Movement as a *Collegium Pietism.*"[57] We generally do not think of the Liturgical Movement as pietistic. But perhaps one of the ways in which this movement has a decidedly pietistic flavor is its definition of liturgy as "the work of the people" and its concomitant desire to make sure everybody has something to do. Hence the call for lay readers, communion assistants, and so forth. We have been slow to think through the theological implications of this trend. Especially pietistic is the rationale that is given for lay readers that ties this practice to the royal priesthood, arguing that the word of God comes out of the believing congregation. *Worship Alive,* a publication of Fellowship Ministries, contains this rubric: "assign various people within the congregation to stand up right where they are and read out the verses boldly! The 'Word of God coming from among the people of God'—a nice concept."[58] So much for the *extra nos* character of the word and the Lutheran assertion that the church is created by the word.

The influence of pietism can be seen in the subjectivity of liturgical texts. We have confessions that do not confess sin and absolutions that do not absolve. Assurance, and it is not a blessed assurance, has replaced absolution. We have homemade creeds that engage in creativity but never come close to saying back to God what he has said to us. Note this example from "Worship Order No. 3" in *The Other Song Book:*

> I believe in God who created all things and continues to create new life within us.
>
> I believe in Jesus—son of God—son of man—the Savior of the World. By His life, His death, and His resurrection I can know the true depth of human possibility and experience the true joy of a meaningful life.
>
> I believe that the Holy Spirit is present—now and always—calling us to faith, giving us His gifts and empowering us for service. I believe that the community of believers called the church can experience the fullness of life through the Word, the sacraments and all that we do. Amen.

The subjectivity of pietism can be seen in Francke's reshaping of the confirmation rite. He omitted the Apostles' Creed as the form of confession, and in its place as the confirmands expressed their faith in their own words—a practice that has also been encouraged by some in Lutheran circles today.

Finally, it must be noted that today's pietism, like its counterpart three hundred years ago, collapses the *beneficium* into the *sacrificium.* Man is the actor and God is the audience. The Chicago Folk Mass of the 1960s went so far as to call the Service of the Sacrament "the Service of the Doers." You cannot get much more pietistic than that! The focus in the divine service is not on our response but on God's gifts. Pietism ancient and modern confuses the two. Where these are confused, law and gospel are mingled and faith is anchored not in the gifts of God, which are always *extra nos,* but in the subjectivity of the religious ego. This was the great mischief of pietism, and it remains a threat yet today. LOGIA

NOTES

1. See David Luecke, *The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship: Reclaiming Our Heritage of Diversity* (Tempe, AZ: Fellowship Ministries, 1995), 74-97; and *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America's Mission Challenge* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 86-92. For an insightful critique of Luecke's misuse of the data, see R. Stuckwisch, "The Other Story of Lutherans at Worship?" LOGIA 5 (Holy Trinity 1996): 39-44.

2. James White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 171-191.

3. Quoted in Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: Hymnal Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 297.

4. Bengt Haegglund, *History of Theology* trans. Gene Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 325.

5. Both James White and Carl Schalk identify Nicolai and Gerhardt with pietism. White identifies Gerhardt as "the greatest of the pietistic hymn writers." See *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition,* 52. Also Carl Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America* (St. Louis: CPH, 1995), 40. For a refutation of this charge, see Robin Leaver, "Bach and Pietism," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January 1991): 9. Pietism is not to be confused with piety.

6. Jeremiah Ohl, "The Liturgical Deterioration of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association IV* (1901-1902), 70. Also see Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Aufloesung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands,* 2 vols. (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1939).

7. For helpful treatments of liturgical theology in Luther and early Lutheranism are Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism,* trans. Henry P. A. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); Norman Nagel, "Luther's Liturgical Reform," LOGIA 7 (Eastertide 1998), 23-26; Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcotte Notts: Grove Books, 1982); Vilmos Vatja, *Luther on Worship,* trans. U. S. Leupold

(Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958). For a description of the vitality of the liturgical life of Lutheran orthodoxy, see Guenther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984).

8. Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria,* trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 63.

9. Ibid., 63.

10. Ibid., 66. In contrast to Spener, note Luther's understanding of the baptismal "covenant" as described by Bryan Spinks, "Luther's Timely Theology of Unilateral Baptism" *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1995): 23–45.

11. Spener, 66.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 87.

14. Ohl, 70.

15. Spener, 88.

16. Ibid., 89.

17. Ibid., 89–90.

18. Ibid., 91.

19. Ibid., 92.

20. Ibid., 95.

21. Ibid., 116–117.

22. Ibid., 117. On this point see Vilmos Vatja, "Worship and Sacramental Life" in *The Lutheran Church Past and Present,* ed. Vilmos Vatja (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 128–131.

23. This was the criticism of Valentin Loescher, *The Complete Timotheus Verinus,* trans. James Langebartels and Robert Koester (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998), 63–92. Also note Gerald Krispin, *Propter Absolutionem: Holy Absolution in the Theology of Martin Luther and Philipp Jacob Spener: A Comparative Study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1992), 160–161.

24. Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 498.

25. Loescher, 243.

26. Ohl, 70. Also see Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* trans. Walter Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 334–338.

27. Leaver, 12.

28. Frank Senn, "Worship Alive: An Analysis and Critique of Alternative Worship Services," *Worship* (May 1995), 197.

29. August Hermann Francke, "A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Most Useful Way of Preaching," in *Pietists: Selected Writings,* ed. Peter Orb (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 117.

30. Ibid., 118.

31. Ibid., 120.

32. Ibid.

33. "The Church Agenda (Liturgy) of 1748," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Summer 1998): 98.

34. Ibid., 98.

35. Ibid., 99. This form survives in the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958): "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us, and for the sake of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, forgiveth us all our sins. As a Minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare unto to you who do truly repent and believe in him, the entire forgiveness of all your sins: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. . . . On the other hand, by the same authority, I declare unto the impenitent and unbelieving, that so long as they continue in their impenitence, God hath not forgiven their sins, and will assuredly visit their iniquities upon them, if they do not turn from their evil ways, and come to true repentance and faith in Christ, ere the day of grace be ended" (*Service Book and Hymnal,* Philadelphia: Board of Publications—Lutheran Church in America, 1958), 252.

36. Schalk, 45.

37. Ibid., 46–47.

38. See Robert F. Scholz, "Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's Relation to the Ongoing Pietist Tradition," in *Lutheranism and Pietism,* ed. August Suelflow (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1992), 40–66.

39. David Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 68.

40. *Hymns, Selected and Original for Public and Private Worship* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1857), #526.

41. For a study of the connections between pietism and the charismatic movement see Carter Lindberg, *The Third Reformation?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983).

42. Pietism was influenced by several non-Lutheran movements, including English Puritanism. See James Stein, *Philipp Jakob Spener: Pietist Patriarch* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1986), 36–42, for an account of how young Spener was shaped by the devotional writings of the Puritan divines. Also note F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 24–108. Avoiding doctrinal polemics, pietism became increasingly indifferent to doctrine. This indifference is reflected in the hymns which the pietists were willing to incorporate into their hymnals.

43. *The Other Song Book,* compiled by David Anderson (Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1984), inside front cover.

44. John Weborg, "Pietism: The Fire of God Which . . . Flames in the Heart of Germany," in *Protestant Spiritual Traditions,* ed. Frank Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 184.

45. Note Krispin: "Pietism pointed to the God whose presence was both felt and awesome in one's own experience. . . . Experience also came to be the measure of the ultimate source of truth" (61).

46. Philip Bickel, "The Lectionary Captivity of the Church . . . Or Ten Reasons to Kick the Lectionary Habit," *Worship Innovations* (Winter 1997), 6–7.

47. Ibid., 7.

48. Robert Nordlie and Philip Bickel, *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992). For an excellent analysis of the underlying problem of this book, see Edward Kettner, "The 'Third use of the Law' and the Homiletical Task" *Lutheran Theological Review* (Fall/Winter 1994), 67–90.

49. Krispin, 170.

50. See, for example, Bradley D. Hoefs, "Surviving Sunday Morning!" *Concordia Pulpit Helps* (Pentecost 16–Last Sunday of the Church Year, 1994), 8–9; and Dean Nadasdy, "Monuments and Footprints: The Art of Pilgrimage Preaching," *Concordia Journal* (January 1996): 12–26.

51. Gerhard Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1987): 5. For a further development of this theme, see Philip Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1987.

52. See Timothy Wright, *A Community of Joy: How to Create Contemporary Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 85–118.

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

54. Carter Lindberg, "Pietism and the Church Growth Movement in a Confessional Lutheran Perspective," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (April–July 1988): 130.

55. Carl George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1992), 60. Also see the review essay by Timothy Quill, "Meta-Church and its Implications for a Confessional Lutheran Church," *Logia* 2 (Reformation 1993), 61–65.

56. See Kenneth Wieting, "The Method of Meta-Church: The Point of Truth and the Points that Trouble," *Logia* 2 (Holy Trinity 1993): 14–20. Also see "The Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology on 'Meta-Church'," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (July 1995): 219–224.

57. Ernest Koenker, *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 6.

58. Cindy Warnier, "What is Worship Anyway?" *Worship Alive* (Tempe, AZ: Fellowship Ministries, n.d.), 5. This view squares with the emphasis on liturgy as human action in the liturgical movement. See Eugene Brand, *The Rite Thing* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1970). Brand's first chapter is entitled "To Be Involved," 17–33. For a Lutheran evaluation of the use of lay assistants in the liturgy, see Timothy Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement on American Lutheranism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 152–167; and Thomas Winger, "Assisting Ministers," *Logia* 7 (Eastertide 1998): 66–67.