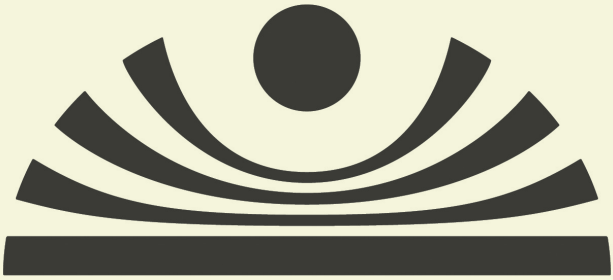

Proceedings

North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting

Seattle, Washington
2-5 January 2024

Proceedings

of the

North American Academy of Liturgy

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The North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) (http://www.naal-liturgy.org) is an ecumenical and interreligious association of liturgical scholars who collaborate in research concerning public worship. The Academy's purpose is to promote liturgical scholarship among its members through opportunities for exchange of ideas and to extend the benefits of this scholarship to the worshiping communities to which its members belong.

The *Proceedings* of the North American Academy of Liturgy is published annually by the Academy for its membership and for scholars, libraries, and religious communities and organizations that would benefit from the research and collaboration of the Academy.

Articles published in Part Three-Select Seminar Papers have been peer-reviewed. Only papers presented at the annual meeting are eligible for review. Authors are responsible for the content of their submissions.

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PART 3—SELECT SEMINAR PAPERS

Foreword

Seattle proved a fitting spot for the 2024 meeting of the Academy. The rain came, as it does in a rainforest, but not a drenching sort, and accompanied most days with relative warmth. For the rainy days, the city had on offer some of the world's best coffee. The downtown Westin saw one of the most productive meetings in memory, with active seminars and engaging plenary sessions. Once again, many of us brought in the new year in Seattle or on the way, with, for some, the pressures of a new semester looming.

Proceedings enters a new era in 2024. After several years of deliberation and preparation, our Academy publication will from now on be open-access and online, hosted by the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems. Our work will be more easily accessible and searchable—freely available to anyone who is interested and catalogued in the relevant academic databases. Crossref and ORCID are integrated into the new platform, making publication in *Proceedings* more in sync with the publication pressures of the university academics among us.

Seminars gathered mostly in person, but also virtually. There were a few changes and achievements of note. The Exploring Contemporary and Alternative Worship seminar has been redubbed Contemporary and Alternative Worship, reflecting the place of such worship in the mainstream of research today. The Word in Worship seminar is now Homiletics, and the Liturgy and Comparative Theology seminar has run its course and will no longer convene. Two seminars celebrated the publication of their respective collaborative work: the Queering Liturgy seminar with its *Queering Christian Worship: Reconstructing Liturgical Theology* (Church, 2023) and the Liturgical Music Seminar with its *Living the Church's Song: Propositions for an Ecumenical Theology of Liturgical Music* (GIA, 2023). A tally based on seminar reports (Part 2) reveals the vitality of the Academy: over one hundred papers and presentations were delivered in Seattle.

Plenary sessions (Part 1) were adeptly introduced by President Glenn CJ Beyer. Kimberly Belcher delivered the Vice-Presidential Address, citing, in an impressive display of erudition and collegiality, the recent research of many of those assembled. She approached "our broken liturgies" from the perspective of a "ritual process for negotiating crises of values." Four "principles of diagnosis" emerged, providing a framework for ritual negotiation: creating a safe space, empathy, creating a third space, and asserting solidarity. A more spot-on address would be hard to imagine. The Academy-proclaimed greatness of *Berakah* recipient Lizette

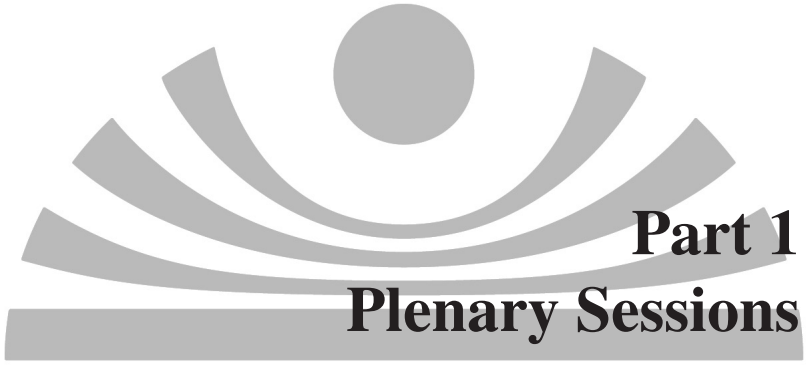
Larson-Miller shone forth in her popular take on teaching "teachers for the whole Church." Her address achieves an eminently useful historical and practical synthesis of teaching liturgy in the North American context, all grounded by the crucial questions: "What is it that we do…?" and "Why do we keep doing [it]?" It is worth noting also that Sr. Vassa Larin led plenary sessions not otherwise recorded in these *Proceedings* for lack of a reproducible text.

Music is integral to worship and the strength of the Academy in the musical domain is clear. Indeed, two of the papers peer-reviewed and published in Select Seminar Papers (Part 3) investigate musical questions and are from members not part of the Liturgical Music seminar. William H. Petersen, founder of The Advent Project seminar, demonstrates the process of deliberate hymn text revision in light of our bending ever toward justice with his "re-writing" of Wesley's "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending" to remove its anti-Semitic imagery. Ron Anderson of the Liturgical Hermeneutics seminar, with a fresh take on liturgical formation, explores how congregational song "might function as an instrument for the formation and sustaining of a Christian social imaginary." Appearing between these two musical-liturgical investigations is Emily Snider Andrews' recounting and analysis of the unexpected journey of one Evangelical mega-church toward "sacrament" as "a pathway toward … theological exploration and renewal … while … encountering significant tension around … this atypically Evangelical theological concept."

The annual business meeting and banquet concluded our time together, as usual. The results: good food bounded by "our liturgy" and indecision as to the mode and location of our 2025 meeting. As it happens, all was resolved and revealed in due course by our able Academy Committee by the time of publication. Seattle was our last hotel meeting. Returning to the practice of the Academy's early years, future meetings will be in-person on university campuses (or the like), interspersed with virtual meetings in some if not every other year(s). Fittingly, we will meet again at Valparaiso University from 2-5 January 2025.

Jason J. McFarland
Editor

Jason is Senior Lecturer in Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology at the Australian Catholic University (Sydney) and the Executive Secretary for Liturgy at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Director of its National Office for Liturgy.



Part 1
Plenary Sessions

Introduction to the Vice-Presidential Address

Glenn CJ Byer, President

The Vice-Presidential address is the first of three plenum addresses. The topic is chosen by the Vice President, and this year that means Kimberly Belcher.

Professor Belcher grew up in Sarasota, Florida, and is a "Gator," holding the BS in Mathematics and Chemistry. Her interest in the liturgy grew out of her experience at the university parish of St. Augustine.

Equipped with a doctorate from Notre Dame, she taught at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, before returning to Notre Dame on the faculty in 2013.

I have very much appreciated having Kimberly as sounding board and guide this past year. Her ability to speak clearly to the heart of the serious issues we face has been a great help to me.

I have spent a little time watching presentations she has made on YouTube, which is always enlightening. Others who have introduced her seem to believe that she is able to leap the Hesburgh Library in a single bound—with a favorable wind—and that her efforts on the virtual meeting of Societas Liturgica are simply legend. But my favorite videos, which I commend to you, are the three videos on the Litany of the Saints, starring her three wonderful children.

Tonight she takes up the work of the Academy with her Vice-Presidential Address, "The Work of a Reconciling Academy: Apprenticing Ourselves to Our Broken Liturgies."

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Kimberly Belcher.

Vice-Presidential Address

The Work of a Reconciling Academy: Apprenticing Ourselves to Our Broken Liturgies

Kimberly Hope Belcher, Vice-President

Kimberly Hope Belcher is Associate Professor of Theology (Liturgical Studies) at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

Introduction: Academy Worship[1]

As I thought about the role of the North American Academy of Liturgy in the changing cultural landscape of North America, I kept thinking of Ruth Langer's 2015 Berakah assessment of Academy liturgy as an imperfect exercise of inter-religious hospitality. "*All* of our liturgies were constructed to enhance in-group identity and to make communal boundaries very clear. This creates real challenges to one's presence, let alone participation, in the liturgy of a community not one's own. Yet, today, the likelihood that a guest will attend any given service is high. Does our contemporary call for liturgical hospitality mean that we must cease using ritual to define our communal identity?"[2]

Langer contextualizes Academy liturgy against contemporary North American civic religion, which permits an assumed neutral cosmology in everyday discussion. One can generally mention God, she argues, but not distinctive features of one religious tradition. The limitations of what I would call "pluralism by silence" are evident in her discussion of "Amazing Grace." The hymn, she notes, does not mention Jesus and only mentions God near the end of the song; "it is deeply embedded in western cultural vocabulary" and so can often pass without being noticed as an expression of Western quasi-secular cosmology. But "its understanding of how God manifests 'amazing grace' is deeply Christian…. dependent on the *very* Christian concept of original sin."[3] In fact, there is a deep, western European, post-Enlightenment anthropology embedded in the way we generally imagine religious neutrality, which takes significant learning from another to recognize.

This is evident also in the Academy's worship space. As Langer puts it, "an established, dedicated worship space … reflects, usually intensely, the specifics of its regular community."[4] In this context, "some will be guests more than others."[5] Despite their apparent neutrality, "Hotel ballrooms, on the other hand, are inherently challenged as liturgical spaces. However beautiful, the room begins as a barren boxy wasteland. This leaves possibilities for transformation up to the limits

of imagination—but also of budget and realism. Can we successfully transform a multipurpose space into one that helps us feel the presence of the Divine?"[6]

Hotel ballrooms are only apparently neutral, however; while some traditions have strategies for the transformation of secularized spaces, other traditions, as indigenous scholarship reminds us, have less portable norms for sacred space or time. In order to really welcome members of these traditions into our academy, we need to be able to hear their critiques of our internalized understanding of "neutrality." Lis Valle-Ruiz, for instance, has called attention to the ways that the perceived neutrality of the Eurocentric Christian tradition of preaching results in the reduction of indigenous spirituality to entertainment.[7] The studied immanence of a hotel ballroom risks reducing the cosmological symbols each of us needs for worship to trappings or decoration. We are all familiar with this concern about liturgy, but it is possible to overlook its colonialist character. Valle-Ruiz suggests a centuries-overdue exchange, not only of knowledge but of ways of coming to know, as the future of preaching: "The Europeans learn that embodying stories is sacred storytelling for the Amerindians. The Amerindians learn that embodying stories constitutes entertainment for the Europeans. All groups learn from one another."[8]

To "learn to hear through the other's ears"[9] is especially challenging when the ways of coming to know themselves are culturally embedded. This is why I am especially interested in rites that are themselves contested and intrinsically seem to demand interpretation. Langer suggests one way that the Academy, in gradually and imperfectly welcoming Jewish participants in a dominantly Christian assembly, has performed an exchange: "we have reached a different kind of balance. We do not express our full mutual hospitality through any one liturgy, but through the aggregate. The usually subtly Christian structure of the opening rite finds significant balance at our tables [at the banquet]. Our combination of prayers over wine and bread, and then a grace *after* the meal, is a Jewish structure. By combining these prayers with our gifts to others, we elevate our tables into altars."[10] I needed Langer's interpretation to understand these Academy liturgies as a balance, let alone to see them as an offering.

Craig Satterlee, in his reflection on the "good liturgical guesting" required of all us liturgical professionals, suggests that "learning to hear a hospitable word in academy worship is a place to start as we who are so often hosts give up that role and even surrender our sense of 'belonging,' and regard ourselves instead as guests of the Divine and the assembly."[11] For Satterlee, "good guests … check their egos and their expertise at the door. Good liturgical guests enter worship with humility. When I go to worship, I do my best to leave my 'sermon critic' behind and consciously cultivate my hunger to receive God's hospitable and life-giving word."[12]

It's no accident that each of these experiences, Langer's experience of flawed but elevating attempts at interreligious worship, Valle-Ruiz's alternate history of a decolonial indigenous-Christian encounter, and Satterlee's generous receptivity of

often ableist liturgical celebrations, requires the deft juggling of critical tools and an almost baffling charity. What possesses us, I want us to ask ourselves, to combine these? to become apprentices of broken liturgies—our own and also those of others? How does the work of our academy contribute to change, to inclusion of new perspectives, and to symbolic transformation?

Diagnosis: Ritual and Interpretation

I have spent the last few years thinking about the role of ritual in polarized and pluralistic contexts, contexts in which the very meaning of ethics and the kind of future we want to strive for is already contested. I am convinced that the polarization and fragmentation surrounding contested issues like race, politics, sexuality, and economics cannot be solved using rational discourse alone. It demands symbolic action (and will be symbolized whether we like it or not), but it also needs the scholarly and evaluative attention that is the expertise of this gathered community. It needs people who are willing to say, "that doesn't work," and then go right back into it a second time, trying to implement some changes, only to get it wrong once again.

I began by thinking about liturgies of healing, unconsciously assuming that the ordinary state of things is a community in agreement about ethics and the future; the existence of a different state of things is an oddity and demands some kind of intervention. Work on social crisis tends to assume that normally, everyone who practices ritual together has the same cosmology and values. When there is a breach, a departure from the community consensus, rituals and discourse are used to minimize or repair the damage caused by the breach. Conversation among the community decides whether the problem remains, in which case the community may schism, or whether it has been resolved, in which case the community returns to a peaceful state.

Ritual and reconciliation in a state of crisis is quite a bit more complex than this. Sarah Kathleen Johnson's research on occasional practitioners and clergy, for instance, showed me that while clergy often expected those planning funerals to be in a state of crisis, those planning baptisms were often also in a state of crisis, which might not be noticed or expected by their ministers.[13] Some participants in a liturgy, then, might see it as a response to a breach or crisis, while others understand it as routine. The idea of "ritual strategies" allows us to be more flexible about understanding how ritualization functions in social settings, versus the more conventional category of rituals of affliction, which assumes either that everyone in a society would categorize a ritual the same way (emic) or that it is the researcher's expert judgment that determines what category a ritual falls into (etic). Catherine Bell's definition of rituals of affliction is still helpful in its breadth: "rituals of affliction attempt to rectify a state of affairs that has been disturbed or disordered: they heal, exorcise, protect, and purify,"[14] although more recent work, some of it by NAAL members, demonstrates that ritual strategies for affliction can be used to transmit and problematize a breach as well as in apotropaic or therapeutic ways.

Even in traditional societies, which depend on an enacted, shared cosmology, the fact that things are changing over time means there are discontinuities in that cosmology. Still more in our modern, pluralistic environment. Academy liturgies show us the ways that ritual and the symbolic world it projects can fail without resulting in schism. In fact, the experience of ritual failure can be a distinctive way of knowing and a way for a community to learn from one another. And the rituals we use to negotiate conflict about community values are not necessarily labeled rituals of reconciliation. Rather, disagreement about cosmology and values is manifested and negotiated by our whole ritual life in common, as well as discussions of that life.

Working in ecumenism made me especially suspicious of Turner's category of schism. After all, ecumenism began from a place of ritual schism which came to seem intolerable after centuries of division. I was intrigued by the way the 2016 Lutheran-Catholic Joint Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden, both critiqued Christian complacency about division and encouraged ecumenists facing down decades of slow, no, or reverse ecclesial change.[15] As a Catholic theologian who longs for Christian unity, I expect to spend much of my life being wrenched by Christian division. This has given me a great interest in these liturgies that hesitantly express our in-between state, the fact that we have become dissatisfied with schism (which is a gift) but have not found a path to full communion. I wanted to explore liturgies that tentatively and symbolically name problems for which no adequate solutions have been found.

Here is a more complicated proposal about ritual negotiation of conflicts about value and meaning. Breach is not a break in a static community life; rather, community life, even when stable, contains bubbles of potential tension, stemming from individual and subgroup differences in values and experience and containing the seeds of social change. Authorities and affliction rites are used to try to "quiet" or manage the damage of the breach; in fact, a community feeling vulnerable often tries to double down on traditional authorities and their power. At the same time, members of the community including leaders may be invested in amplifying the schism, either because of their values commitments or as strategic negotiations or both.

Study of rituals of reconciliation usually address the part of the diagram that here I have labeled the "redress process." I instead want to focus on the part highlighted in yellow: the process of renegotiating meaning through an iterative cycle of ritualizing together, using either established or experimental rituals, and talking about them. Many in this academy have written about this cycle; in fact, in some ways this essay amounts to a sort of collage of liturgical studies work about ritual and contested values. My hope is that this permits a comparative look about the overlap of liturgical strategies for evaluating rituals responding to apparently very different scenarios.

In image 1, conventional ritual and discourse quiet the sense of breach or scandal of a departure from the expected order of things, using established words and acts. For instance, penance or pilgrimage might serve to address public scandal. If these are adequate, no negotiation of the structures of power results. For this reason, some agents will amplify the breach by protest rituals and other ritual and discourse critiquing the status quo. These are meant not to heal but to foment a social crisis, as Sharon Fennema argued in a seminar paper for Critical Theories in 2016.[16] This is comprehensible if we understand a social crisis not as the worst of all possible scenarios, but rather as an active process of negotiation of standards and cosmologies by a social group. In this way, as Victor Turner pointed out, the community's response to crisis manifests symbolic tensions that may have previously been unnoticed or well-managed: "A mounting crisis follows … seeming peace becomes overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible."[17] Rituals of protest and other amplifying communication, then, manifest implicit fractures in cosmology and social expectations.

The bolder arrows in the diagram show the path necessary for social change. If amplifying communication outweighs the attempts of others to quiet the scandal, the community enters into a period of active negotiation and reconsideration of values. Rather than occasioning immediate exile from the social community, rites of lament, subversion, and "clowning" permit new interpretations and admit new voices.

I have modeled the negotiation process as a cycle including evaluation of the ongoing crisis. Liturgical action naturally gives rise to interpretation, which likewise informs not only the meaning but also the affect ascribed to further performances, a cycle summed up as *lex orandi, lex credendi.* I don't intend to get into the debates about the precise way this cycle ought to be regulated; I just want to highlight the interdependence of liturgical experience and its interpretation. The three assessments of particular liturgies by our members that I've already discussed fall into the diamond: they are evaluations of whether certain liturgies adequately diagnose the causes of inequity, whether groups of people are appropriately represented, what kinds of redress would need to be provided, and what the authors themselves and our scholarly community can do to redress the status quo.

Diagnosis, Authority, and Power

Catholic rites of penance were modified and strengthened in the early modern period, responding on the one hand to the schisms in Western Christendom and on the other to the need to export books perceived as effective to numerous mission locations, where a shared vernacular could not be assumed. In these books, according to James Dallen, an "even greater emphasis was placed on complete confession and priestly judgment … steadily removing anything that might dilute the expression of ministerial power or hinder the experience of forgiveness thus received…. As seventeenth century Catholicism used confession to convert the baptized and Christianize a semi-pagan populace, it intensified the medieval

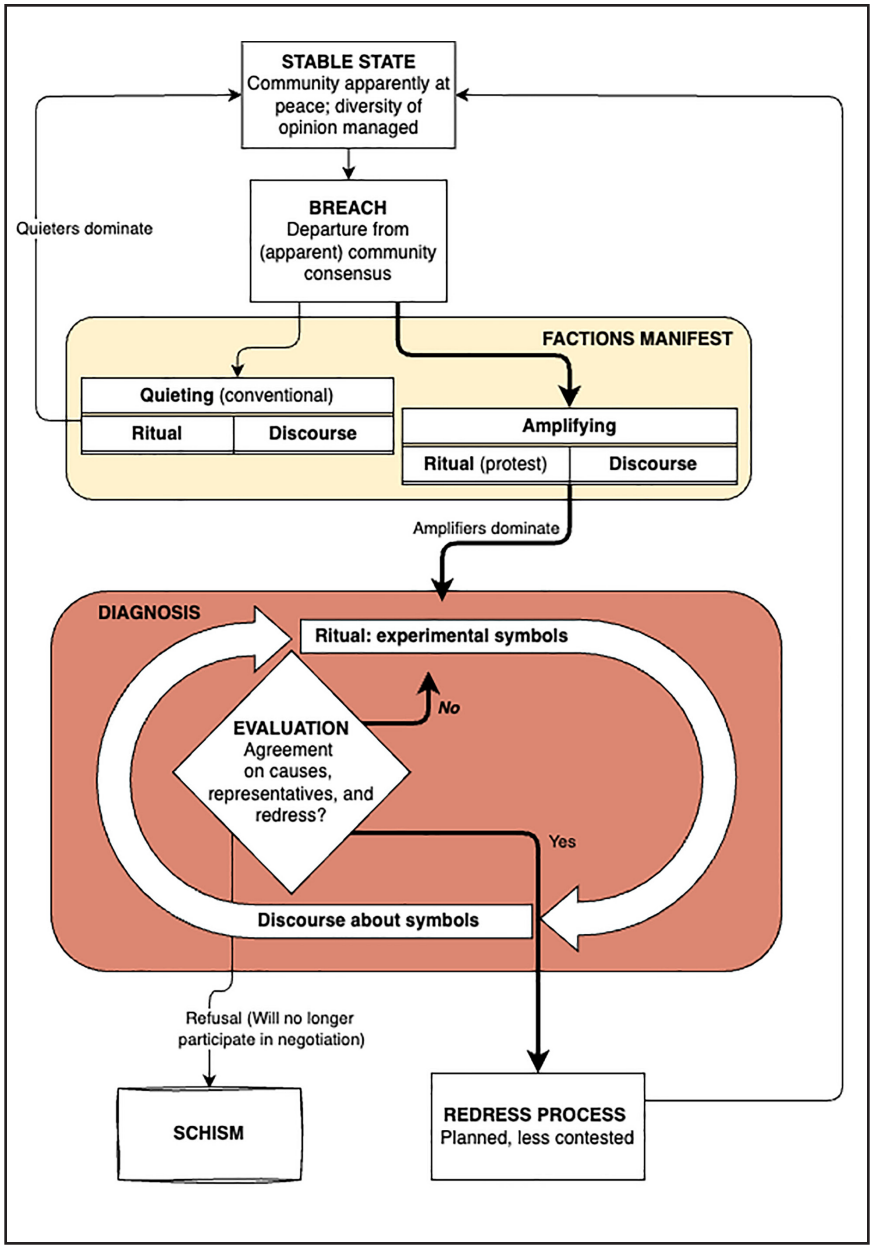


Image 1. Proposed diagram of the ritual process for negotiating crises of values. The stage of diagnosis depends on emerging or experimental ritual and iterative evaluation of that ritual by individuals and communities. Ritual in this diagram is considered as one important type of communication (other kinds are included under "discourse").

fixation on confession as a therapeutic and judicial means of purification from sin and liberation from guilt."[18] Of course, we must add the Christianization of indigenous populations in India, China, Japan, Africa, and the Western hemisphere to Dallen's purposes of these books.

The hierarchical expression of authority in penance that made sense in the 17th century, at least in Rome, is almost incomprehensible now. Bruce Morrill assigns to the 1960s the dissolution of the moral authority of the Catholic hierarchy:

> The stylized, truncated ritual of the confessional drifted away from individuals' exploration and formation of their consciences…. The use of ecclesiastical positivism to assert the authority of both the doctrinal teaching and disciplinary regulations and practices of the sacraments over a laity who largely either oppose or have become indifferent to this type of ecclesiastical power in relation to the contemporary complexities of social and personal life, ironically—tragically—ensures the deterioration of the sort of communal corporate life and mission, clergy and laity together, for a church that all agree should be a living, salvific sign of reconciliation and conversion among its members and to the world.[19]

Of course, the incoherence of this ritual was painfully amplified with the progressive and still unfolding exposure of the scope of the Catholic sex abuse crisis, when confession became a discordant symbol of members of the hierarchy who abdicated responsibility for widespread corruption.[20]

Yet even if it was amplified by the 1960s and the sex abuse crisis, disillusionment about penance reflects something more universal about ritual practice, which Teresa Berger named in her 2005 Societas Liturgica address. "Worship, after all, has embodied its own asymmetries of power, complicities with evil, and performances of brokenness."[21] It was this essay that inspired the subtitle of my address.

On one hand, Berger names "forms of brokenness that the liturgy itself performs, but cannot critically render visible when left to its own devices."[22] The liturgical performance can sanctify unholy power differentials, such as the "reconciliation" of the sins of indigenous people sacramentally administered by an all-white priesthood. Of course, these inequities may well have been visible to some of the subalterns in these environments, since they have a hermeneutic advantage that can be expressed if a platform is provided. The knowledge of subaltern members is the primary source of the tension that can lead to social change.[23] Evaluating that a particular ritual exercise has not adequately represented the damage (the bolded, italicized "No" in image 1), perpetuates a social crisis by disseminating and amplifying subalterns' judgement. So one of the strategies I will trace throughout the work of liturgical scholars using various methods and schools of thought is the critique of how liturgy reflects abusive power.

On the other hand, Berger cautions us against being uncritical of the way our scholarly location "brings with it its own knowledge protocols *and* its own occlusions, as well as a specific field jargon of what is good, e.g., 'mystery,' especially

the 'paschal mystery,' and what is not good, e.g., 'liturgical kitsch,' or 'the excesses of popular devotions.'"[24] Paradoxically, the very subalterns we often intend to defend when we critique our broken liturgies have often found nourishment in them—in their very kitsch, their excess, their shallow or deformed symbols. In this way we have to temper our critique when it runs the risk of silencing those whose voices we want to hear.

What we often find is that subaltern practitioners of the liturgy are strengthened (even when the liturgy itself is broken) by liturgies for diagnosis and redress. They reject aspects, and then, increasingly, proclaim their interpretations to add to the process of determining what redress is both necessary and possible. For example, enslaved Americans of African descent used "the hidden ubiquity of the life-sustaining melodies" as Lisa Weaver poetically calls the early spirituals, to nourish a sense of their own irreplaceable value before God in the face of a cosmology that combined Christianity with the message that Black people were less than human.[25] Despite this environment, Weaver reminds us, "the narratives we have reveal a remarkably sustained conviction on the part of the enslaved person that despite the body-, mind-, and soul-crushing reality of enslaved life, she was still a wife and daughter, he was still a father and brother. *They were still human.*" Moreover, in writing songs speaking a divine word, "The formerly enslaved person was testifying not only to being known, seen, and valued by God but also to the experience that God had tangibly partnered with them to create a new thing." Liturgists, of all people, know how participants are agents in creatively and selectively interpreting the meaning of public ritual. Even when we do liturgy the best we can, we get things wrong; even by getting liturgy wrong, we give people the tools they need to symbolically negotiate their situation.

Four Principles of Diagnosis

There are four principles of the practice and evaluation of ritual in this cycle. I want to finish this address by calling attention to a variety of contexts within which Academy members are apprenticing themselves to broken liturgies, demonstrating to us how our work as students of liturgy can make for a more reconciling world.

1. Creation of a space where we can be ourselves: cosmology

Part of the tension of both the NAAL worship and the challenges of symbolic practice in pluralism and polarization comes from our expectation that in liturgy, above any other environment, our various types of identity and belonging will find their surest context.

First, consider the alternative to worshipping as a pluralistic assembly. Siobhán Garrigan's treatment of (putative) reconciliation rites in eucharistic liturgies in Ireland (2001–2008) calls attention to the ways insulation from one another can result

in damaging ritual habits, even in instances where individual members of both estranged communities are in principle and consciously committed to reconciliation.

> Catholics raced through the reconciliation liturgy fast, by rote, and in almost inaudible voices. *Kyries* were never sung (as they often are in Roman Catholic Churches in other countries), nor *Glorias* at the conclusion of the penitential rite, suggesting this part of the rite to be thought of as holding a low value, and to be completed as quickly as possible…. the reconciliation aspect of worship seems of higher value in the common life of the community [for Protestants] than it was among Catholics. The language is very different too: it is of triumph.[26]

These attitudes about vertical reconciliation (with God), "one the performance of a web of denial of sorrow, the other the pursuit of righteous triumph,"[27] are at odds with a genuine reconciliation between Irish and British. The role of each with respect to God "maps quite closely onto the archetypal colonial self-understandings of each side in the Irish-British relationship…. [A] 'grievance-perpetuating myth', with each group forever self-cast as victim and the other victor … while human beings are ostensibly reconciled to God, any requirement for human beings to be reconciled to human beings is circumvented."[28] The puncture of this ritual insulation will be painful and perhaps even damaging, especially to vulnerable persons in each community. Yet the costs of not undergoing this process are ongoing estrangement and periodic violence.

At the same time, the negotiation of cosmological variation has all too often turned into the same pluralism-by-subtraction as ballroom-as-sacred-space. The veneer of neutrality often disguises the fact that the ultimate symbol—in the sense of the last one standing, because the only one permitted to traverse various cosmologies—is currency. Mark Roosien diagnoses this problem in his treatment of "disaster capitalism" and the conflict between 24/7 virtual time and liturgical time. The 24/7 clock of globalized capitalism prioritizes the extraction of resources, including from people, and funnels those resources upwards towards the already loaded even in the midst of a global pandemic. Roosien's identification of individualized sabbath practices as part of the problem, often marketed as the solution for Christians, strikes me as especially apt. In contrast, the experience of Orthodox liturgy, especially in its overweening demands for human attention at the high points of the liturgical year, inculcates a "liturgical temporality [that] rejects an extractive attitude toward time …" because "the liturgical 'now' is structured by remembrance of the past and hope for the future."[29] At the same time, Roosien recognizes the danger of the ecclesial solidarity in observance of time: "keeping steadfastly to a robust liturgical temporality, precisely because it can provide a rich context for group formation, is to encourage *exclusivism and triumphalism* within the community."[30]

Where and how can we find practices that "steadfastly" and "robustly" ground us, but that keep us open to one another? Our cosmological remembrance is often based on our sense of those who have gone before us. We might think of it as literally grounded in our dead, and practices at funerals or at burial places often

carry cosmological weight, as Lizette Larson-Miller has consistently reminded us.[31] Even in contemporary secularity, the memory of the dead plays a unique role in mediating a cosmological pluralism that transcends subtraction, and thereby allows for negotiation of conflicting values.

2. Empathy: Imagining that the other is like ourselves—but not too much like

It is a common instinct that at a funeral, the cosmological projection of the rite ought to be determined, as far as possible, by the values of the deceased, and where our documentation and imagination fails us, by their closest connections. If there is a hermeneutic privilege accorded to the marginalized in the interpretation of liturgical practice, there is also a kind of privilege to the dead. We are all content to be liturgical guests of the deceased and their close kin, to bracket our cosmological commitments for their benefit.

There are many sources of this mercy, no doubt, but one is that in death we are confronting our deep fears, and that spurs us to a radical guesting, of the sort that Satterlee outlines for us. Bryan Cones describes the impact of an embodied practice of remembrance for George Floyd on a mostly white urban assembly in Chicago.

> The presider [instructed] those gathered to kneel on the pavement and hold a nearly nine-minute silence to recall George Floyd's suffocation. While I have experienced such silences in Christian liturgy, the 'sacred space' created by contact with asphalt and the press of people gave it a profound anamnetic character, both 'embodied and empathetic' … While it echoed one particular 'crucifixion', it refracted those terrible minutes in a way that made present countless others; it further proposed a vicarious identification with the victims among those, such as myself, who had never experienced [racism's] direct effects.[32]

At the George Floyd Global Memorial in Minneapolis and online you can find many both ritual and discursive suggestions that George Floyd is a symbolic representative of not only African Americans but of Americans, in a way that may shift forever—and may it!—the symbolic understanding of "American" within U.S. culture.[33]

On the other end of the U.S. political spectrum, I admire how thoughtfully and empathetically Benjamin Durheim unpacks the ritualized tension between political presumption and Christian hope in rural American church life. Presumption takes the place of hope when a community believes "that the exclusive set of worthy Christian hopes is housed in a particular approach to politics, and to challenge that agenda or its divine mandate is to step outside 'true' Christianity."[34] In Durheim's analysis, one of the causes of presumption is a culture of silence, where those who have not collapsed hope into a particular political outcome feel unable to speak or are punished for doing so.

Speaking about rural funerals as a privileged location where hope confronts presumption, Durheim witnesses about the way that personal death reflects the broader deaths threatening rural moral communities:

> The one who has died leaves behind stories, experiences, and artifacts that become part of the lore connected to the land, the most recent pieces of tradition layered upon those defining narratives that came before. Sometimes this legacy is of a continuing and thriving family farm or other enterprise, and many times it is of a farm or enterprise truncated, sold, or lost. In all these cases though, the funeral liturgy—even by being a gathering before God of surviving family and friends—speaks hope for the continuation and/or re-imagining of a family legacy into its next form. This is temporal hope for healing, consolation, and strength to endure, but it is also resurrection hope.[35]

This interconnected legacy of people and place, paradoxically, is like to indigenous hermeneutics of sacred space in ways we can obscure if we are focused only on political identity.

If Cones articulates how one embodied action can open us to an embodied knowledge that is not part of our particular vulnerability, Durheim shows how the challenge of an authentically Christian hope demands we become vulnerable to worldviews and experiences that are not our own.

> Tragedy and death are not realities that only affect particular human bodies. Communities carry tragedy, ways of life can die, and loss can be cultural as much as it can be personal. None of this is to say that the pain of such tribulation can be mitigated by a dose of hope—recall that hope is not an anesthetic—rather, this is to say that Christian hope is resurrection hope. It looks to the future neither as fantasy nor as reducible to human control, but instead as the new creation that has already begun and is not yet complete. This involves a twofold embodiment of vulnerability: first, vulnerability with regard to tragedy and death wrought by a world conditioned by finitude and sin, and second, vulnerability with regard to the eternal good toward which all temporal goods of Christian hope are ordered.[36]

Vulnerability to tragedy and death tends to open us to be good guests at least in the worldview of the deceased. But vulnerability towards, or at least humility about our knowledge of, the ultimate end, can also permit an openness to the ways of knowing of those who are different from us. Perhaps we are good guests of the dead in part because drawing near to death reveals more clearly how much we do not know about the ultimate we worship. It is not only that I am willing to entertain the idea that your community, like mine, might know a bit about God. It is that I know that I need to hear about God from you—not only for your sake but for ours.

Of course, ideally, we would not be only aware that we need each other when we are near death—or we would always be aware that we are near enough to death to need one another.

3. Creation of a "third space"

As I hinted in the first half of my presentation, I have become interested in the ways our discipline itself provides a "third space" where, in times of crisis or of cosmological diversity, we can evaluate the adequacy of our liturgies to our core

concepts and vice versa. Kristine Suna-Koro has written about the importance of a third space, of a hybrid world where the messaging is not under the complete control of imperial power.[37] Suna-Koro has proposed the practice of lament as a third space that specifically speaks to the experiences of displaced migrants: "counter-hegemonic liturgical practice that can empower Christians to name and subvert the polarizing imaginaries of dehumanization, resentment, and hostility into which the uprooted victims of forced migration are increasingly inscribed."[38] Of course this lament may be embodied, like Cones kneeling, as easily as verbal.

Creation of a third space is actually not as difficult as it might sound. Nor is it as easy as we might want. It is simply ritualizing together through the tension involved in cosmological and values conflict, and also articulating that conflict, saying "no, we don't yet have everyone at the table, this doesn't feel quite right, what if we did this other thing instead." In short, by progressing empathetically and with attention to diverse cosmologies through the cycle of symbolic experimentation seen in red in Image 1, we create a third space.

In our evaluations we must simply describe, as honestly as we can manage, the liturgy that is done, and be honest about the ways this challenges our perspectives. Within the contexts of value conflict, historical and ethnographic approaches to liturgy both bring to the table individuals and communities who might not otherwise make it into the insulated, academic negotiations of practice and its value. Both historical and ethnographic liturgy have built in guardrails to prevent me from assuming the cultural or temporal other is totally unlike me; both also hinder me from making the other too much like myself. Rather, the third space of liturgical studies schools me in cosmological encounter. Here I meet others who, like me, find transcendence in liturgy, but in practices that I find unfamiliar or distasteful. I also meet those who are deeply unlike me but find transcendence in practices that move me too. Not coincidentally, a good liturgical historian or ethnographer would meet Valle-Ruiz's standards for cultural encounter perfectly.

Roosien has written about the way that earthquakes in ancient Constantinople and their commemorations in Byzantine liturgy often interpreted disaster as the result of widespread sinfulness and led to political reevaluation. Scholars today would be critical of Christians who attribute natural disaster to an angry God punishing our sins, but we might be fine with interpreting them as the natural consequence of ecological damage—that is sinful. Rites following natural disaster, ancient and modern, help remind us that participants in liturgy are not victims and perpetrators, but experience a wide array of perspectives on and existential connections to crisis. This in itself is hybridity. Earthquake commemorations are an interesting model of liturgical reflection on human sinfulness that recognizes the way structural patterns of sin can be recognized in collective patterns of lament and remembrance.[39]

Emerging ethnographic techniques literally bring new voices to the table. Nelson Cowan uses liturgical biography to pull the distinctive interiority as well as the ex-

ternal practices of Hillsong into the discursive light of liturgical theology: "A single act of worship is a complex nexus of negotiations in real time with real bodies who participate in the liturgy. These bodies carry with them complex histories, liturgical formation[s], all in tandem with biological and psychosocial nuances…. *Meaning* itself is fraught with complexity."[40] Cowan's work reminds us that the evaluative and interpretive work involved in both maintaining and changing liturgical meaning is done by individuals, often unheard. Phoebe, one of his biography subjects, reflected on the role of individuals evaluating and questioning pastoral interpretation: "I disagree all the time with all kind of pastors that I respect…. [T]hey are reading the scripture through a filter of something that happened in their life…. So you have to take that and you have to bring it back to the Word and say, 'does that speak to me? Does that feel [like] what God is saying to me through His word?'"[41]

In the collaborative ethnography of Andrew Wymer, Kristen Daley-Mosier, and community activists in Flint, Michigan, author Monica Villarreal imagines the power of a third space created in the water crisis when the hard work of repair opens up to the healing offered by God in Isaiah 58: "In considering the redevelopment of Flint and the many historical injustices, what does it mean to be the water in the spring of hope—in a place that was parched, in a place with contaminated water, in a place that was deserted, in a place that has no water and to be the one who is the restorer?"[42] Bringing these voices into liturgical studies makes it possible to close the gap between our expert evaluation and the primary practitioners who are often silenced by their distance from academia.

When I think of what a third space looks like in liturgical studies, I remember a specific moment in Rebecca Spurrier's *Disabled Church.*

> Miriam tells me she was a mess when she first came to the church. She wasn't sure what she was living for. She feels that she is being cared for here. She gestures to the left side of her body. I imitate the gesture, as an inquiry, wondering if she means it to specify something. She repeats the gesture, touching her side this time, to show me.
>
> "I don't feel a lot, but I feel it right here along the side. It didn't take a lot. I thought it would, but it didn't. I don't know what it took, but it happened. I hope I don't lose it."[43]

The moment when Spurrier repeats a gesture she does not understand, for Miriam and again for all of us who are reading, is a third space. Rather than interpreting or overwriting Miriam's embodied knowledge, Spurrier recounts it, prompting her voice for our discussion. Metaphorically, this is what I want us to do with our broken liturgies, repeat them interrogatively and open them up for discussion.

Sometimes the third space is a literal space. In his essay on the tension between the way the Hispano-Mozarabic "Rite has supported the identity of the Mozarab community[,] … been coopted for nationalist visions," and yet remained at "the margins of social and ecclesial reality" in contemporary Spain,[44] Nathan Chase describes the way the Mozarabic Chapel in the Toledo Cathedral serves as a "ritu-

al ambassador" that connects the Mozarabic parishes that are the real community maintaining this historic Rite to the wider world, both of Spain and of global Catholicism.[45] Mozarabic identity has historically been defined by membership in one of the Mozarabic parishes, and those parishes are tight-knit, economically and socially committed to the survival of their liturgy, and are startled to have a visitor. The dynamic vitality of these parishes is exemplified for Chase by the congregational acclamations that are a part of their liturgical heritage but also by the fact that the assembly gathers in the front rows and responds during the homily: "The priest would mention people directly, some would raise their hands and ask questions, and he would also call on people to say something. At one point in the liturgy, a few people peeked into the church. After they left, a member of the congregation shut the church's doors."[46] This model of preaching in a hidden church in Toledo breaks down many of the paradigms of preaching that Valle-Ruiz critiques. But the insular tightness of Mozarabic churches is only sustainable because of the way the Mozarabic Chapel functions as a third space. The chapel clearly subordinates it to the dominant Roman Rite, as well as posing assertions about history and broader Spanish identity that remain troubling. Yet the celebrations there, nearly all clerics and non-Mozarabic visitors, create a third space that awkwardly maintains a confusing and contested relationship between these three contexts for interpreting the Mozarabic Rite—or I may say, four, adding liturgical scholars to the contexts for the production of meaning.

Sometimes the third space is production of new critical questions about meaning. Theresa Rice, a doctoral student who gave permission for me to use this class reflection, in Fall 2020 wrote an evaluation of the use of Psalm 137 in the Georgetown University "Liturgy of Remembrance, Contrition, and Hope" on April 18, 2017.[47] I want to acknowledge that Georgetown's work on the redress of the damage done by slavery is an inspiration and an invitation to many institutions to invest in a similar evaluation of their role in history. Yet, precisely because they did ritualize around this process of redress, the liturgy made the deformation of our symbols and the need for further work very visible. As Rice put it: "can you know the magnitude of the sin of slavery without having the body and the memory and the inheritance of those men and women and children [the descendants of enslaved people]?" Rice argues the goal of such liturgies is the creation of a new, communal memory: the liturgy's most effective work was in "the comparison of memory, the sharing of memory, and the creation of a new memory in which the pain of the past (and present!) comes to be more fully realized in people who had previously taken no share in it."

What is the outcome, if we manage to stay in the third space of an unsatisfying liturgical-discursive cycle, questioning and renegotiating our symbolic systems while maintaining—perhaps obstinately—our critical questions and evaluative strategies?

4. The assertion of a solidarity beyond the present crisis

If we stay in the third space of discomfort, iterative evaluation, dubious improvement, and new voices brought to the space of liturgical studies, at minimum, we know we will learn a great deal. Each round of ritual practice and evaluation of that practice brings us new tools for representation. We exercise a critical, though limited, lens on each liturgical iteration. At the same time, we subject our critique to respect for others at the table with their at times very different visions. We hope and we humbly remember that we do not know even if what we hope for is worthy of hope.

Garrigan argues that our "liturgical theology of reconciliation … privileges too much the status of the individual victim and too little the social and corporate aspects of our human frailty."[48] Garrigan, like the other liturgical scholars I've quoted here, argues against the production of a single meaning for corporate worship as the goal of either liturgy or liturgical theology in service of reconciliation.

> I may not be able to hug [Ian] Paisley, but (and here is the alongside view) in Christian worship, I can stand in a room and say prayers with him, say a confession with him, offer him a sign of peace (a hand shake and a, 'peace be with you'), and break bread with him. And all of that liturgical conspiring might lead me, in time, to being able to embrace him. But—and this is where the notion of hybridity can qualify the symbol of embrace for the Irish context—I do not think embrace is the goal…. I think the liturgical gestures on their own are strong enough to count as reconciliation…. [T]hey enact the seven times seventy-seven method of forgiveness: not a single moment of arrival at a new state but a perennially-repeated set of actions that articulate the jointness of previously estranged agents.[49]

In fact, where cosmology is helpful is in highlighting how fragmentary and limited human experience and agency is: "what seemed to allow those victims who could do so to 'embrace' was in all cases their sense that they were both part of the same (externally imposed) problem, and in many cases an accompanying compassion for the perpetrator predicated on the understanding that he had suffered too, had had his life ruined too, in this specific, systemic, historic situation which had also harmed them. Forgiveness thus seemed to arise from awareness of a sort of imagined solidarity in the face of a mutual horror."[50] For Garrigan in the Irish case, this horror is the colonial system, which was a deforming structure so grandiose that it has explanatory power over both suffering and evil deeds. For ancient Christians, the world, the devil, and God's zeal for justice provided a similar cosmological frame.

Cosmological explanations are key in the process of coming to consensus, but not in the sense that the participants need to agree on the cosmology. In some sense, it may be enough, especially early in the process, that the cosmological projections of pluralistic liturgy sometimes (often) fail and that the failure can become part of the discourse without abandoning the project of ritualizing together. Moreover, doing ritual together in a crisis of values does not require that we determine ahead of time

how and what to say. The symbolic service of ritual includes the willingness to say and do something wrong in order to discover in doing it what is wrong with it.

Conclusion

This is "all I know right now." Thanks for listening to my evolving understanding of the role of ritual in negotiating changing values in a pluralistic context. From our worship together as an Academy, we know that pluralistic worship does not have to mean the suppression of all our ultimate symbols, that it can be imperfectly sustained by broken liturgies without proselytism, that it can come about through the balance of structures in a community with an ongoing commitment to gather or who are unified by respect for the dead, by an ongoing crisis, or by charity and good guesting.

From our scholarship we know that the negotiation of new values requires gathering people who have a new perspective on the debate, symbolizing and disputing different causes of crisis, and evaluating proposed narratives of past and future. This requires symbolic work. It is not so much that contemporary fragmentation and negotiation of values demands a new set of liturgies for reconciliation, though emerging rituals for reconciliation (often coming from inexpert practitioners) are one part of the production and transmission of new sets of values. Rather, ritual performance as a way of knowing demands a cycle of interpretation, which this academy is especially adept at providing: it demands the persuasive critique of how existing ritual performances reflect human finitude and sin, as well as the transformative abandonment of perfectionism about such performances. In other words, it means committing to iteratively improving the justice and truth of our liturgies, as well as to honoring and learning from the kitschy ways they teach us and our community members. I do think it requires being as critical of neutrality by subtraction or of activism by silence as we have been of the wrong word or phrase. Most of all it requires us, towards our communities as towards one another, to listen.

Notes

1. I am grateful for helpful feedback on this essay, especially from Nathan P. Chase, Anna Petrin, and the members of the Critical Theories and Liturgical Studies seminar.
2. Ruth Langer, "The Blessings and Challenges of Interreligious Prayer," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy* (2015): 30.
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4. Langer, 32.
5. Langer, 32.
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7. Lis Valle-Ruiz, "Performing Cultural Memory Through Preaching," *Liturgy* 35, no. 3 (2020): esp. p. 6, https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2020.1796434.
8. Valle-Ruiz, 7.
9. Langer, 32.
10. Langer, 32–33.
11. Craig Alan Satterlee, "Speaking a Hospitable Word in Worship: Becoming Good Liturgical

Guests," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy* (2012): 16.
12. Satterlee, 19.
13. Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Occasional Religious Practice (New York: Oxford, forthcoming); see also Johnson, "Poured Out: A Kenotic Approach to Initiating Children at a Distance from the Church," *Studia Liturgica* 49, no. 2 (2019): 175-194.
14. Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford, 1997), 115.
15. Dirk G. Lange, "Five Hundred Years of Reformation: A Joint Commemoration," *Word and World* 36, no. 2 (2016): 156–64; for a recording of the liturgy, see "Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration, 2016," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plkK6zNHP_0; for further analysis see Kimberly Hope Belcher, "Ritual Techniques in Affliction Rites and the Lutheran-Catholic Ecumenical Liturgy of Lund, 2016," *Yearbook for Ritual and Liturgical Studies* 38 (2022): 22–41, https://doi.org/10.21827/YRLS.38.22-41.
16. Now published as Sharon R. Fennema, "The Forgetfulness of Gentrification and the Pilgrimage of Protest: Re-Membering the Body of Christ," *Review & Expositor* 115, no. 3 (August 1, 2018): 378–85, https://doi.org/10.1177/0034637318791551. The amplifying character is less central in the published version than it was in the seminar paper.
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19. Bruce T. Morrill, "Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion? Differing Views of Power—Ecclesial, Sacramental, Anthropological—among Hierarchy and Laity," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 3 (September 2014): 607–608, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563914538728.
20. See also Bruce Morrill, "Sacramental Clericalism: Enabler of Abuse, Obstacle to Healing," in *Accountability, Healing, and Trust,* eds. Kimberly Hope Belcher and David Clairmont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2024).
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22. Berger, 78.
23. On liturgy and subalterns, see Kristine Suna-Koro, *In Counterpoint: Diaspora, Postcoloniality, and Sacramental Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017).
24. Berger, 80.
25. Lisa Weaver, "Songs on the Slave Plantation," *Comment Magazine,* 6 October 2022, https://comment.org/songs-on-the-slave-plantation/.
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27. Garrigan, 50.
28. Garrigan, 50.
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35. Durheim, 13.
36. Durheim, 9.

37. Kristine Suna-Koro, *In Counterpoint.*
38. Kristine Suna-Koro, "Liturgy and Lament: Postcolonial Reflections from the Midst of a Global Refugee Crisis," *Liturgy* 34, no. 2 (April 3, 2019): 34, https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2019.1604032.
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41. Cowan, 187. Square brackets in original.
42. Kristen Daley Mosier et al., "'Water Brought Us Together': A Baptismal Ethic from Flint," *Religions* 13, no. 8 (August 2022): 716, p. 5, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13080716.
43. Rebecca F. Spurrier, *The Disabled Church: Human Difference and the Art of Communal Worship,* 1st edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 135.
44. Nathan P. Chase, "Crisis, Liturgy, and Communal Identity: The Celebration of the Hispano-Mozarabic Rite in Toledo, Spain as a Case Study," *Religions* 13, no. 3 (March 2022): 216, pp. 16, 9, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030216.
45. Chase, 18.
46. Chase, 15.
47. Georgetown University "Liturgy of Remembrance, Contrition, and Hope" April 18, 2017 (YouTube) https://www.youtube.com/live/tO4Xsz36kTU?si=LL_hZgmHIQBrjzAe.
48. Garrigan, 51.
49. Garrigan, 55.
50. Garrigan, 41.

Introduction of the *Berakah* Recipient

Glenn CJ Byer, President

The Rev. Canon Lizette Larson-Miller, PhD, is Professor of Liturgy and Sacramental Theology at Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago, Canon Precentor for the Diocese of Huron (Anglican Church of Canada) and the former Huron-Lawson Chair of Liturgical Studies at Huron University College (concluding on June 30, 2023). Her first degrees were in music (conducting and church music from the University of Southern California); she then earned an additional MA in liturgical studies (St. John's University, Collegeville) and a PhD in liturgical history and sacramental theology (Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley). She is the author of four books and numerous articles, including *Sacramentality Renewed* (2016), and past president of both Societas Liturgica and IALC (International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, a network of the Anglican Communion). She was ordained deacon and priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles in 2003 and has served in a number of Episcopal and Anglican (Canadian) parishes in addition to teaching at Loyola Marymount University, the University of Notre Dame, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, and Huron.

We could have guessed that Lizette has a degree in music. You hear it in the voice. No matter the topic there is always a musical sense of joy—as if all of life were a song ready to be sung. But as Paul VI wrote, joy is always imperfect, fragile and threatened—and you can hear that too. I am told that her Confirmation name is Saint Mary of Magdala, given to her because she was the one who upset the process by asking so many questions. She was the girl who wanted to know things. Lizette, I call on you now to return the favor, for there are things that we want to know, and we want to hear them from you. Ladies and Gentlemen, your *Berakah* Laureate, Lizette Larson Miller.

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You said YES to Societas Liturgica, the International
Anglican Liturgical Consultations, and others when leaders were needed
For all your gifts, we bless you.

Berakah Response

Imagining the Future: How do We Teach the Teachers for the Whole Church?

Lizette Larson-Miller

The Rev. Lizette Larson-Miller is Professor of Liturgy and Sacramental Theology at Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, and canon precentor for the Diocese of Huron (Anglican Church of Canada).

Thank you to President Glenn Byer for graciously fulfilling my request for a short introduction, to the Academy Committee for bestowing this honor on me, and to all of you for being here in the room this evening!

This coming Tuesday, January ninth, I begin teaching an intensive course, Introduction to Homiletics. Teaching preaching is not my primary field or focus, but there was a need, and I was trained to both preach and teach preaching (with many thanks to the Benedictines of Collegeville and the Society of Jesus in both California and Massachusetts). Teaching homiletics from time to time I've reflected on what is the most important aspect of preaching: Is it the skills of exegetical preparation for the sermon? Is it the rhetorical design of the homily? Is it knowing the community with which one preaches? Is it knowledge of very current events? I've probably gone through each of those as an emphasis in various iterations of preaching classes, but I've arrived at a different place in the past few years—exegesis, rhetoric, context, and preparation are all important—but what do people want to hear/need to hear? I think to hear a person of faith, ok, most likely a person of faith, preach well!

Perhaps this is why teaching preaching is both central and appealing—there is the necessary background understanding, preparation and execution, but it focuses on this preaching event—it seems refreshingly logical when I actually get to creating a syllabus. What is the focus of homiletics? Well, to preach!

So, transfer that distillation of intent and focus to liturgical studies, which is, I suspect, the primary academic field of many of us here in this room. What is it we do? And especially to those of us who teach (in many different contexts and to many different communities): What are we teaching (content, method) and to what end? Every time I try to articulate this in a way similar to homiletics, I find myself caught up in the multi-faceted interdisciplinarity of liturgical studies—there's just so much! There is the essential ground floor of sacramental and liturgical theolo-

gy, and the ever-expanding insights of historiography, ritual studies, postcolonial studies, massive numbers of essential cultural considerations, music, liturgical preaching, visual art, architecture, spirituality and prayer, linguistics, ecumenism, interreligious study and work, and so many other conversations. It's not that homiletics doesn't also build on a web of contributing conversations, but where exactly are we going when teaching liturgy and how much of all these contributing arenas are in the circle of essential elements? And yes, of course, the context of where, with whom, to whom, and for whom we teach matters greatly.

What I would like to do in light of this breadth and complexity (and disarray) is look first at the reality of academic liturgical studies in North America at this point in time, what is almost the quarter century mark of the 21st century. There is much here that is neither encouraging nor uplifting. But, as one learns in preaching to recognize and name the grace, the good news, having perhaps challenged your cheerful table fellowship on this Thursday evening we'll end with reminding ourselves of some of the reasons why we do this and why it matters.

First, the World of University Teaching

The bad news comes toward and from many ecumenical directions … at the end of this past October CTSA (The Catholic Theological Society of America) presented a webinar titled "The End of the Golden Era: Theology in the Age of Academic Precarity"[1] (and, as an aside, "precarity" led me to the dictionary, where one of the definitions is a "state of persistent insecurity with regard to employment or income"). The webinar followed on conversations at the CTSA gathering last June where the repercussions resulting from a number of college and university closings were still being processed, as well as what some perceived as the specific targeting of theology departments with regard to finances and numbers of students.

The webinar featured four panelists in four different settings and stages of employment and unemployment followed by conversation, but it was the larger context that was, for me, more compelling. It reflected a list of Roman Catholic universities and colleges in the US who were cutting humanities and re-inventing themselves through better-selling options for study in order to stay afloat. In a plea to rethink this approach, Jonathan Malesic wrote in the July 19th issue of *America* magazine that cutting liberal arts majors, cutting the humanities, may not actually help keep universities afloat. He continued "when every small Catholic school has shifted resources from its traditional academic base in the arts and sciences to newer programs in business, engineering, nursing and cybersecurity, they become indistinguishable. Why should any student enroll at *this college*, as opposed to the next one over?"[2] In other words, turning the chapel into labs or basketball courts may not yield the result for which one is hoping.

This is not just an issue in the U.S. but also in Canada. I left a university college (part of a larger university) because it looked like the Faculty of Theology was go-

ing to be pushed to fold. I hope it will survive, but the clear emphasis of the school is now on pre-business school studies, entrepreneurship with a nod to ethics, and all this in spite of the foundation of the whole university as an Anglican divinity school. I know many of our academy members are from outside North America and work in university situations which are quite different because of government funding and long-standing benefice arrangements, but I also know many of you working on other continents do a lot to apply for grants and to recruit graduate students in order to sustain the funding and the programs.

This is the broader academic concern—the diminishing of the humanities in universities and colleges which house theology departments. But surely, they would never get rid of the liturgists, right?! Based on personal experience, the last two jobs I have resigned from have not replaced me with liturgical scholars in the same way, and actually the Canadian position was quite clear that the endowed chair I held will not go to a liturgical and/or sacramental theology scholar. Regarding these types of experiences and statistics I cannot speak with any confidence outside of the Christian spectrum, and actually within that, outside of those schools and traditions which have had long-standing programs in liturgical studies. But, within Roman Catholic and Anglican circles this movement is sufficiently common to qualify as a trend.

In addition, we probably need to mention that there've been a few other things going on in the world in recent years. A worldwide pandemic impacted and continues to affect higher education, student enrollment, and the very ways we teach. In North America we might add the anticipated enrollment drop coming because of population shifts, which when combined with trying to recover from the pandemic has contributed to some schools not being able to continue while others have adapted to a completely online education that may result in increased student populations. It's early days to see the long-term effects of COVID at the university level on this continent, and always good to remember that in other parts of the world, notably China and India, university enrollment is numerically exploding.[3]

Second, from the University to the Seminary

Many of us in the room who teach do so not at universities but at seminaries or graduate consortia which are often in more fragile situations than university theology departments. For many seminaries funding (from sponsoring churches, tuition, alumni) is a constant concern, as are sufficient numbers of students and continuing support from their ecclesial institutions. Episcopalians and Anglicans in North America have done a lot of writing and reflecting on seminaries in the last two years, often about simply surviving, the reality that seminaries have been more competitive sport than cooperative exercise, the ongoing debate of residential versus dispersed student bodies, the challenges of online formation, and maintaining a core curriculum versus "electives that often align with current cultural debates" as one author described the tension.[4]

In the U.S. Episcopal seminary conversation, the last decade has seen a drop from eleven to nine seminaries (with more changes likely to come). While many have pointed out that this is perhaps still too many seminaries for a small church, I was amazed to learn in preparing to give a talk to the Association of Anglican Musicians in 2016 (so, eight years ago now) that close to half of those preparing for ordination to the priesthood in the US were not even going to the official seminaries, but rather to "houses of study" at universities, to ecumenical seminaries, or local study centers of diocesan or other sponsorship. Half of "not many students" is not a lot of students to begin with.

Now, I am also aware that many people in the room here do not primarily exercise their ministry and training in liturgy in the "classroom," or perhaps teach as adjuncts or affiliated faculty, coming in to teach a class in addition to other responsibilities in parishes, religious communities, hospitals, or other means of employment. This may be a personal choice, or it may be what was possible and available—teaching with "precarity" as CTSA called it—without the security of tenure, contract, pension, or support to attend a meeting like this (and, in the US, without health insurance). Whether we consider ourselves as academics in the classic sense or academics in the broader sense of independent scholars engaged in alternative arenas of teaching and writing, I trust all of us in this Academy of Liturgy are concerned with how the teaching of liturgy will continue, both in the teaching of the teachers and for the good of our broader religious communities.

Third, the Challenges of the World of Liturgy in Academia

When you are immersed in something like fulltime teaching—with its multiple and increasing demands—it's easy to miss the dramatic changes in your own field that are happening all around you. By about 2010 I could no longer miss (or try to ignore) the reality that things had changed, a realization that came primarily through teaching and directing PhD students. Graduate students in liturgy (PhD students) were not finding fulltime teaching positions—or were doing the post-doc scramble of various fellowships and adjunct positions, parish and diocesan ministry positions while waiting for openings in the field and in their ecclesial affiliations. Many did eventually find positions, but often after a gap of several years of cobbling multiple part-time positions together. When I look back at this shift from where we are now, I'm appalled at how clueless I was regarding changes in our field. I graduated in the 90s—now pretty much classified as prehistoric. This is how it went: I had a baby on New Year's Eve, defended my dissertation three weeks later, and the next week interviewed for a tenure-track position in liturgy and sacramental theology at Loyola Marymount University (and got it—beginning fulltime in the summer to follow). I thought I was normal, and perhaps at that time I was. LMU was a wonderful place to begin a teaching career—full of gracious mentoring, enthusiastic students, and a growing MA in theology program—and I look back on that experience through the lenses of four subsequent teaching posts with gratitude.

Fast forward to another generation of those prepared to teach the teachers. Anne McGowan undertook a 2013 survey within the North American Academy of Liturgy on how much things had changed by asking those who had graduated a while ago and had been teaching liturgy if they would do it all again.[5] I think the results were pretty unanimous—yes, this was and has been a very good thing to do. Then she asked the same questions of those who had graduated more recently as well as those who were still in graduate studies—they were not so sure. Some would do it all again, others maybe not. But the really interesting question was: would you recommend to others that they pursue a PhD in liturgy with the goal of teaching liturgy? The answers were much more negative. The playing field of job opportunities had changed, the availability of spots in doctoral programs in liturgy had changed with some programs closing, others providing fewer slots and a lot less financial support, and it's a lot of time, perseverance, work, and money for the increasing gamble of getting a job at the end.[6]

Anne's survey is now a decade old—where are we at this starting point of 2024? I think without benefit of her standardized survey I might informally summarize that, while fewer in number, there are still excellent students going through PhD programs in liturgy who will take up teaching posts and excel at both teaching the teachers and writing the studies that will change our minds about many things. I would love to say that those students represent a much broader scope of students, meaning a greater variety of ecclesial and cultural backgrounds (and beyond ecumenism, remembering our Jewish members of the academy and your unique and parallel issues in continuing to teach the teachers). The good news is that this broader scope of students shows up here in the Academy of Liturgy through our newer members. In my own seminar group Problems in the Early History of Liturgy it has been exciting to see so many talented, young, engaged Eastern Christians joining the ecumenical conversation.

Continue on this tangent for a minute; I went back and read Karen Westerfield Tucker's seminar talk for this academy gathering in 2007 titled "The State of North American Liturgical Scholarship: A Report Card"[7] in which she reviewed a decade-long development of Protestant liturgical study through the lenses of denominational and pan-denominational histories in both the US and in Canada, as well as the focal points of liturgy and justice, music in worship, and the insights of particular cultural contributions on liturgical development. It was both a wonderful summary and a helpful launching spot for how much has changed since then, and yes, we have expanded the conversations to include other voices from different perspectives, different churches, and different cultures.

But I also just read a chapter of Scott Haldeman's book *Towards Liturgies that Reconcile: Race and Ritual among African-American and European-American Protestants* with students this fall, and, while also published in 2007, I realized 2024 has arrived and we still have a ways to go. One conversation in his book that

stands out is the need to recognize some substantial differences between assumptions of a common (and correct) "ordo" and the reality of substantially different ways of ordering the worship of God. In drawing on Gordon Lathrop, Scott reminds his readers that "there are other juxtapositions and other ritual means to facilitate the encounter of God and God's people. African-American traditions provide testimony that other authentic "shapes" exist."[8] I might add to Scott's careful and still relevant study of the need to remember that not all African-American Christians worship one way or the other, that the same is the case with countless other expressions of inculturated and multicultural liturgies, many of which are now the meeting place of cultures deeply grounded in non-Christian religions juxtaposed with faithful practitioners of Christianity.[9]

We also have other areas in need of attention regarding whom we raise up to teach the teachers. I had a rather frustrating experience in the last few years with several extremely talented Canadian MA students who were applying to PhD programs in liturgy but where their sexual orientation (gay and married, bisexual, and trans) became a stumbling block to acceptance (in addition to financial support). It is not just the individual students applying who lose in these situations, but the whole academy and future students.

Deeply related to issues within the teaching of the teachers of liturgy is the phenomenon of preparing to teach in different ways than being in one of the very few PhD programs in liturgical studies. There are wonderful teachers and scholars in this room who did not study in one of "the programs" in the US but chose to study in a theology program where there was an individual (or two) with expertise in liturgy. In other words, how do we teach the teachers of liturgy: through a program that immerses us in the "traditional" subfields of liturgical history, liturgical theology, and ritual studies, or through programs intentionally interdisciplinary (study liturgy, study another theological emphasis, and then add to that another discipline outside of theology)? Or, not through a program but through a mentor in a broad theological program at a university without a named degree in liturgical studies? And what role does a solid MA program in liturgy—one with both breadth and depth—play in taking the pressure off of a focused PhD in liturgy, allowing for alternatives in undertaking this next step? And, in any of these approaches, how does not only the omnipresent age of search engines such as Google but also increasingly AI and its role in education raise the urgent question: Is being prepared to teach primarily about breadth of content, or a deep and narrow expertise whose tools can be applied more broadly, or a methodology, or knowing where to look for the answers?

I know Sister Vassa has already presented on teaching liturgy online ("Liturgizing in Cyberspace") at this Academy meeting, which is, especially since the pandemic and the explosion of AI, profoundly affecting all that we do and study. I would add to that the massive turn toward "competency-based education," which adds to the

reality that teaching is radically changing. Teaching liturgy and doing formation are changing quickly. How does that change the way we learn and teach in order to teach and form others in liturgy? From where I'm standing, the ongoing changes in the delivery of teaching are happening much faster than our opportunities to reflect on their impact on the field of liturgy.

Lastly in this relationship between liturgy as a field of knowledge and practice and the programmatic preparation for teaching the teachers, here's a question that will undoubtedly make me very unpopular in some circles: Is it time to talk about the proliferation of DMin programs in liturgy? Doctor of Ministry degrees, which generally emerged in the 1980s, began as "a kind of continuing education for ministerial professionals."[10] In some ecclesial groups and in some countries, however, having a DMin is de rigueur to achieve lead pastor positions at major Protestant churches, which is a different focus for the degree. The point I want to make though is that DMins and PhDs are not aimed at the same work nor are they the same degree. A DMin builds on an MDiv or equivalent degree and offers people with ministerial experience and expertise a way to focus on topics that will be returned to worshiping communities. PhDs are research focused.

But in an age when a bone fide PhD in liturgy is no guarantee of any teaching or ecclesial position (back to Anne McGowan's NAAL survey), how do we (or do we?) adjust our expectations in job searches and our advising of those keen to teach liturgy? None of this is to say there is anything wrong with DMin degrees. Many of those pursuing the degree take their ministerial experience and their particular question or topic and return to pastoral ministry with expansive gifts for the good of the community. And, on the other side of the argument is the reality that many parish clergy with PhDs do their liturgical work not in a classroom, but in parish ministry. How does the Academy of Liturgy understand these degrees and their different intents and pathways? What have we to say about the implications of these changes?

Fourth, the World of Liturgy Outside the University

Not all liturgy is taught in a classroom. That's stating the obvious, but I have argued in several presentations in the last few years of a growing concern that theological conversations about liturgy, what it means, where it comes from, where it is going, how it relates to scripture, ecclesiology, systematic theology, and more, are talked about in some circles but not "shared" with parishes—with the actual communities who gather to do liturgy. OK—while shocking, I am aware that not everyone in our parish communities actually cares about the implications of the West Syrian anaphoral structure, or the central theological importance of the dismissal rites for linking liturgy and ethics, or that we have a solemn blessing for the Feast of the Epiphany. But what I have become increasingly concerned about is how and why important theological conversations and decisions—liturgical, ecumenical, ecclesial—are undertaken without any catechesis outside of the univer-

sity or diocesan/national committees and conferences. At the parish level there is often a diminishing sense that theology matters at all (who cares?); what matters is how people feel. And this phenomenon is not a division between clerical and lay members of the community: I have spoken with many ordained leaders for whom theological conversations elicit only a shrug.

All of this came home in two sets of conversations at the parish where I currently serve. The first was in sharing with a small group of well-educated and articulate parishioners the document *Sisters in Hope of the Resurrection,* part of the Malines Conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics—this one regarding mutual study and recognition of ordination rites. I mentioned that my part of a panel discussion at *Societas Liturgica* last August had been on the clarity the document gave to ordained and lay baptized Christians: first by embracing the theological reality that all the baptized are "co-workers"—it is not the clergy alone who minister to passive receivers, and also because the document does not allow for a sloppy approach such that there is no differentiation in orders or ministries—both churches have a hierarchy with charisms hoped for and gifts bestowed. Back at coffee hour, my conversation partners were pretty much shocked by the thought that baptism had anything to do with ministry.

The second was a more formal gathering after the Sunday liturgy in which parishioners could ask about and discuss the upcoming diocesan election of a new bishop. I was not running the meeting, which gave me a bit more freedom to really listen to the comments and questions. I was stunned. "So, what is a bishop again?" What does the bishop have to do with our church? What does a bishop do? Are we paying for this bishop? It was fantastic to have this conversation in that without it, I certainly would not have understood what a poor job of catechesis we have done (churchwide), but it was also sobering to realize that these were not the questions we expected. We assumed people knew both polity and ecclesiology—that was not the case.

These sound like negative examples of a screaming need for ongoing catechesis at the parish level. Actually, while a bit surprising, I found them exciting, rewarding—this is teaching where it really matters. Whether in conversations, or, best of all, in the doing of liturgy—in serving with lay ministers and the whole worshiping community—this is the application and the point of all those courses taken and taught, of all those articles written and talks given. This is at the heart of what makes me so grateful to also be a parish priest: to be a part of peoples' lives sacramentally, spiritually, and catechetically.

Not all of us here use the language of diocese and parish, of deanery and bishop, but I do have to remain with Anglican-speak for just a bit longer to rejoice in another circle of liturgical learning and engagement outside of the university. I want to mention how good it is when bishops engage in theological education. The Rt.

Rev'd Dr. Todd Townshend is the bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Huron in Ontario, Canada, and the bishop I have served as Canon Precentor for several years. He has led wonderful diocesan theological conversations that become enfleshed in shaping the liturgy. We also have an amazing group of people who serve on the diocesan committee for doctrine and worship in which the link between the communities who do the liturgy—and reflect on what it means, what is needed, and what needs to be adjusted—is the focus. The application of liturgical and sacramental theology in this company of people who care deeply, the episcopal call to be a catechumenal church throughout the diocese—not just in the doing of the ritual, temporal, and sacramental cycles of initiation, but in calling the whole diocese to be on the move in drawing ever nearer to God—has been wonderful, and I hope continues to draw in and enthuse others.

Fifth and Last, What Is It to Liturgize?

I suspect I'm not the only one who has this experience—you board the airplane, find your seat, sit down, and someone next to you says "hi" and "what do you do?" What do you say? Or, more to the point, what do they hear? I'm still waiting for the perfect response: "Oh liturgy, how fantastic!" My personal favorite, however, was not one of these "plane conversations" but being introduced at a small local presentation on death and burial. The designers of the workshop wanted different talks on green burial, how to do it, legal issues, ritual suggestions, and more. I had agreed because a friend was involved and when someone introduced me to speak a bit about Christian funerals, I was introduced as a geologist! I think in mentioning that I was a liturgist, and that ringing no bells at all, they just filled in with "geologist" as something a bit more logical.

So, in turning to the joys of our field—to what gives us life in spite of the challenges academically, pastorally, financially, and numerically—articulating what we do as "liturgists" or as people who "liturgize" is important. I did take a couple minutes at the funeral talk several years ago to explain that I was not a geologist but rather a liturgist, and stumbled through some vague definition of the importance of ritual that was probably not very helpful. But I have stopped trying to ignore my seat companions on flights who want to know what I teach and what I do by taking the complexity of our field—not only in the breadth of content, but also in its multiple settings—and trying to answer their question from a particular perspective that I hope might make sense based on comments my travelling partner has already shared.

a. History still makes sense as a category to some people. In addressing liturgy from the historical perspective I think of John Baldovin's *Berakah* address from 2007 plus many conversations in our academy seminar over the years which have helped differentiate between "liturgical history as an exercise in antiquarianism" and liturgical history, in Robert Taft's words, as being not so much about recovering "the past (which is impossible), much less to imitate it (which would be fatuous), but to understand liturgy…which can only be understood in motion."[11] We learn about ourselves and what we do today by what we value in our studies of the past. This conversation can help make sense of one dimension of liturgical studies for some people.

b. Conversely, I've found starting the conversation with liturgical and sacramental theology works less well because, quite simply, "theology" is not common parlance. In interesting ways those outside of organized religion (or who used to be this or that) are more interested in engaging sometimes because the assumption of meaning and something pointing beyond itself is so removed from their daily lives it is not threatening at all. But, in the hands of observant religious people theology often turns to competing doctrine rather quickly, and has frequently ended in a lecture for my benefit about things like the wrongness of women in ordained ministry.

c. Talking about rituals (especially popular rituals) is a way in for more people. Popular manifestations of rituals with contemporary meaning (slow food, family dinners on certain occasions, what's changing with weddings, etc.) have provided a helpful way into the conversation. But still, liturgy as an orchestration of music, rites, rituals, people, place, and more is far beyond descriptions of curated household patterns.

The most successful thus far? Stories. My most common ritual stories circle around my fascination with roadside shrines—which everyone has seen, even if they've never thought about them. If they want to continue the conversation, I often describe my interest in and subsequent study of why people mark the places of death and engage with the place—hallowed by death, the ritual of visiting, the social dimension of wanting to do something to express solidarity and sorrow—and bringing and leaving items: What do they mean? What do they do? How do candles continue our presence or express another presence? In other words, what I have gradually learned in attempting to introduce this amazing spectrum of liturgy, of liturgizing, is to take an example of something familiar and then in rather sneaky ways add in history and theology and practices that mean something. I think of Elizabeth Drescher's reminder to her readers in her 2016 book *Choosing our Religion* that the "nones" are not necessarily anti-God, anti-ritual, or anti-spirituality, but rather severely nervous about the institutions which may claim to have a monopoly on the business of spiritual awareness.[12] I am convinced that continuing to make connections between popular religiosity, domestic rituals, and the liturgy of the church is crucial to argue our case for the importance of liturgical studies. But is only part of the evangelization of articulating how important what we do, what we teach, what we study, and how we study is to those who have honestly never thought about the word "liturgy," i.e., the majority of the world! How do you, the reader, engage people in the field of liturgy? What is your plane conversation—or elevator talk—to the outside world?

This outward orientation on articulating the lifestyle of liturgizing also returns us to teaching. This past September I gave a series of three lectures at Sewanee (The University of the South) on the essential nature of baptism. Here's the complexity of theology—we often don't have sufficient time to really "explain" or to get into the background of why we arrive and teach and live a particular understanding of something so core as baptism. In hindsight, I think the absolutely best part of the experience and the subsequent conversations was being able to more fully follow the threads of weaving the theological argument on why baptism is of the essence of being a Christian.

From a different setting, I have just finished teaching an MDiv introductory level course on liturgy and music at Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago. I was reminded again that many students are coming to seminary without much background or even experience in liturgy—we are simultaneously preparing people for ministry (ordained and lay) and doing basic catechesis. How do we balance sharing the content, encouraging the reflection and inspiring our students to love this field? Some of the best encouragement is in the responses from students—even through the less-than-ideal medium of Zoom—who blurt out, "This is so cool—I had no idea that liturgy could be so exciting!" Inspiring the "insiders" and intriguing the "outsiders" is a fairly good job description to start with in this new year.

What is it that we do as members of the Academy of Liturgy? Why do we keep doing all this in light of institutional struggles and challenges? Why do we encourage new members to be part of this group? I suspect because we love it—because it is an endlessly fascinating interdisciplinary academic field and we have the luxury of sharing what we love to do and learning from others every time we meet, as well as remembering liturgy, liturgizing, as the heart of how we live our lives as faithful Christians, as faithful Jews. In both the study of liturgy and in living liturgically we find a heart for our understanding of God, our relationship with God, and our actions for the good of the world which make sense. It is in this that we remember and imagine the future—go forth, liturgize!

Notes

1. Presented through John Carroll University, 30 October 2023.
2. https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2023/07/19/catholic-colleges-universities-mission-priorities-245689
3. https://www.highereddive.com/news/fall-2023-enrollment-trends-5-charts/697999/
4. Rt. Rev. Dr. Kirk Smith, "Commendable Effort, Troubling Trends" in *The Living Church* (October 15, 2023), 15.
5. Dr. Anne McGowan is now an Associate Professor of Liturgy at CTU in Chicago.
6. With gratitude to Dr. McGowan for several conversations regarding the results of her work within the Academy of Liturgy.
7. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "The State of North American Liturgical Scholarship: A Report Card," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy,* Toronto (4-7 Jan 2007): 118-136.
8. Scott Haldeman, "Discerning the Body" in *Towards Liturgies that Reconcile: Race and Ritual among African-American and European-American Protestants.* (New York: Ashgate, 2007), 131.
9. With thanks to the careful and ongoing work of Jonathan Tan, who is always helpful in questions about inculturation and syncretism in person and through his publications.
10. R. Scott Clark on the somewhat tongue-in-cheek blog "Heidelblog: Recovering the Reformed Confession" https://heidelblog.net/2018/09/a-persnickety-point-about-doctorates/
11. John Baldovin, "The Usefulness of Liturgical History," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy* (2007), 192, citing Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1997).
12. Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

President's Report

to the Membership of the North American Academy of Liturgy

Glenn CJ Byer, President

In the beginning, fifty years ago in Scottsdale, December of 1973, there was a meeting. I was not present, but I began my career in Church music three years later, in 1976, the year of the first official meeting of the Academy. I leave that as a note to the Vice President we elect today, who will preside over that Jubilee. Since then the Academy has had successes that none present in Scottsdale could imagine, and trials that have tested our resolve.

Today I believe we stand as an organization with a lot of hope. I, at least, am hopeful for many reasons:

1. We have met here in Seattle, and met well. Our numbers are strong and the discussions stronger. Tonight's Berakah address will complete a trifecta of brilliant presentations. I wish I could take credit for the fact that our Keynote addresses this year are all by women. This, too, is a sign of the health of our Academy.
2. Visitors and New Members. We have just admitted a wonderful cohort of new members to our association, and have what I think must be one of the largest groups of visitors in living memory.
3. At the end of this meeting, I am happy to say we will discuss a proposal that would allow us to meet in person in 2025.
4. Our efforts at fundraising and recruiting exhibitors have been exceptional. Thanks to Michael Prendergast, this has been a good year. May there be many more to come.
5. I have hope because I was surrounded by an Academy Committee of amazing talents. Leading a group of leaders can be challenging, but this group gave me all the help I could ever need to do this task.
6. My last reason for hope is that throughout my year in this post, I have never been turned down by any member when I asked them to do anything—no task was too large or too small.

We do have challenges ahead, and so my hope is tempered by several challenges:

1. We celebrate what seems like a return to normalcy, but our field is not in a growth sector of the academic world, let alone the pastoral one. Many institutions, looking for ways to cut payrolls, feel that credentials in the field of

worship are a luxury they can do without. As an organization we will need to continue to broaden our appeal to practitioners of worship, but at the same time we need to strategize on how we can make institutions aware of the essential place we hold.

2. Even in those places where we still work, the pandemic created a new reality. It means that travel to events such as the Academy is now no longer a given. Yes, we have recovered nicely this year, but it will be more challenging in coming years for our membership to gather; our need for scholarship money will continue to grow.
3. We celebrate the fact that treasurers past and present built up a reserve that saw us through these past years. While we are better equipped now to deal with the next pandemic, we will need to rebuild those reserves.

So faced with hopes and challenges, I will, in a few hours, be happy to turn over the leadership of the Academy to our new President. This seems especially fitting, as I am as of this week starting my preparations for retirement. I could not have asked for a better group of friends and colleagues with whom to have spent my professional career, and I thank you.

Part 2
Seminar Reports

The Advent Project

Convener: Suzanne W. Duchesne (dr.suzanne.w.duchesne@gmail.com) is Assistant Professor of Worship & Preaching and Director of Mast Chapel, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and an ordained Elder of the United Methodist Church.

Members in Attendance: Jill B. Comings, Suzanne Wenonah Duchesne, Timothy Duchesne (guest), Elise A. Feyterherm, Laura E. Moore, Priscilla E. Petersen (guest), William H. Petersen

Description of Work: Two papers were presented. One was an expansion of a paper presented in 2023. Three comprehensive presentations were given as part of a continuing seminar project for further exploration for future meetings and for posting on our www.theadventproject.org website. Accomplishments of 2023 were celebrated, including an NPR report, Participating Parishes/Congregations were reviewed, and continuing presence through the APS website and social media was discussed. The group closed with a time in remembrance of Carol Doran.

Papers and Presentations:

- William H. Petersen: "Re-Writing Wesley: An Advent Intervention."
- Suzanne Wenonah Duchesne: "Expanded Advent as Decolonizing Liturgical Action: Through the Lens of Relationships." This was a review and update of the same paper delivered in 2023.
- William H. Petersen: "Speaking of the Divine Realm: Proposal for a Perichoretic Pattern." The presentation was an exploration of expansive language which describes the relationship and community of God's Reign and disrupts Empire and Colonization.
- Laura Moore: "Compiling Sunday School and Children's Resources for Advent."
- Elise Feyerherm: "A Women's Lectionary (Year B), Intersections and Value of Wilda C. Gafney's Lectionary for an Expanded Advent."

Other Work and Plans for the Future: We plan to continue exploring language and imagery and creating practical resources for congregations, particularly around children's ministries. We will also continue updating our website with the latest publications and interacting with new parishes through various social media platforms. The following were proposed for the 2025 meeting:

- "A Women's Lectionary (Year W)"
- "Expanded Advent Worship and Preaching Resources for Churches"
- "Expanded Advent Bible Study"

Christian Initiation

Convener: Christina Ronzio (ciseminarnaal@gmail.com) is the Director of the National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Members in Attendance: Diana Sanchez-Bushong, Dennis Chriszt, Garrick Commeaux, Christina Condyles, Christopher James, Christina Ronzio, Mark Stamm, Paul Turner, Stephen Wilbricht

Visitors: Kelli Joyce, Christopher O'Brien, Lorenzo Penalosa OSB, Michael Wilke

Description of Work: In preparation for the 2024 meeting the members read a number of books and papers proposed at the 2023 meeting by both members and visitors. The various topics led to fruitful discussion and new insights on baptismal practices for both children and adults throughout history and in various Christian denominations, the need for evangelizers to be mystagogues, and the similarities between baptismal ecclesiology and synodality.

Papers and Presentations:

- Dennis Chriszt, CPPS: *Creating an Effective Mystagogy: A Handbook for Catechumenate Leaders,* 2nd ed. (Liturgy Training Publications).
- Mark Stamm and Diana Sanchez-Bushong: "Belong (UMC)" midstream report.
- Paul Turner: *Be Renewed: A Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (Liturgical Press).
- Christopher O'Brien: "Children and the Eucharist in the Roman Rite: History, Theology and Ritual" (dissertation).
- Stephen Wilbricht: "Synodality, Baptismal Ecclesiology, and Welcoming a Newly Translated *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*."

Other Work and Plans for the Future: The members of the seminar expressed interest in exploring the possibility of a joint session to discuss *This Assembly of Believers* with the author Bryan Cones. Plans for the next meeting of the seminar include, if available, a consideration of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (USA edition) as well as papers and presentations by:

- Christina Condyles: "Sacramental Personhood."
- Christopher O'Brien: Update on dissertation, "Children and the Eucharist in the Roman Rite: History, Theology and Ritual."
- Kelli Joyce: "Contemporary Baptism Ritual and Practice (1979–2008)."
- Stephen Wilbricht: "Synodality and Sacraments, Hopefulness and Initiation."

Contemporary and Alternative Worship

Convener: Rev. Nelson Cowan (ncowan@bu.edu) is the Director of the Center for Worship and the Arts at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church.

Members in Attendance: Emily Snider Andrews, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Nelson Cowan, Jim Marriot, Adam Perez, Ed Phillips, Tim Ralston, Ron Rienstra, Melanie Ross, Diana Sanchez-Bushong, Matt Sigler, Casey Sigmon, Noel Snyder, Karen Westerfield Tucker, Nicholas Zork

Visitors: Shannan Baker, Sean Thomas

Description of Work: The Contemporary and Alternative Worship Seminar had an eclectic lineup of papers and presentations on topics such as: liturgical theologies and practices of contemporary praise and worship music, an evangelical megachurch embracing marriage as "sacrament," the practice of eucharistic adoration accompanied by worship music, the origins of the charismatic renewal movement, and adolescent liturgical curiosity. This year's visit to Seattle also inspired an off-site field trip to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, often referred to as the birthplace of the Charismatic Renewal Movement. We heard a paper from Matt Sigler on the work of Fr. Dennis Bennett, then continued on for a lunch presentation at Seattle Pacific University on the relationship between worship and loneliness.

Papers and Presentations:

- Casey Sigmon: "Progressive Modern Worship Music? From Enigma to Establishment in Theological Education."
- Shannan Baker: "Corner[stone]-ing the Market: How Worship Leaders Navigate Chart-topping Songs and their Brand Affiliations."
- Adam Perez: "How Old is the Worship Music Industry?: Recursive Processes in Church Affiliation and Industry Apparatus."
- Sean Thomas: "The Lived Experience of Eucharistic Adoration."
- Emily Snider Andrews: "From Pragmatism to Doctrinal Commitment: An Evangelical Megachurch Embraces 'Sacrament'."
- Nelson Cowan: "Assessing the Liturgical Curiosity of Teenagers: Methods and Metrics."
- Matt Sigler: "Fully Charismatic, Clearly Episcopalian: Worship Practices at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in the 1970s."

Critical Theories and Liturgical Studies

Convener: Layla A. Karst (layla.karst@lmu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California.

Members in Attendance: Kimberly Belcher, Stephanie Budway, Bryan Cones, Benjamin Durheim, Sarah Johnson, Layla Karst, Geoffrey Moore, Gabriel Pivarnik, Rebecca Spurrier, Kristine Suna-Koro, David Turnbloom

Visitors: Julia Canonico, Hansol Goo, Seyeom Kim, Benita Lim, Maren Marchesini, Tom McLean, Audrey Seah, Chris de Silva, Erik Sorensen, Marileen Steyn

Description of Work: This year, seminar members offered papers around the theme: "whether and how worship forms us." In pursuing this topic, our seminar presentations focused our attention on questions of liturgical rupture, failure, and schism to consider the ways that worship both forms and malforms participants, communities, and theologies. Kristine Suna-Koro interrogated the "theological, liturgical, and ethical lacunae of worshipping on un-decolonized land," especially with regard to penitential rites that purport to name, heal, and right historical wrongs. Tom McClean highlighted the internal tensions and divisions within Christian denominations that are provoked by ecumenical liturgies and explored their implications for ecumenical relations. Rebecca Spurrier's essay reflected on liturgical experiments that attempted to "hold together and navigate multiple, ambiguous, and sometimes competing narratives," showing the formative value of both liturgical successes and liturgical failures. Finally, Layla Karst explored the ways that clergy sexual violence has malformed our liturgical symbols and actions, transforming them into ritual experiences of trauma rather than grace. All four papers are slated for publication.

In addition, the seminar also discussed two excellent selections from recent doctoral dissertations. Hansol Goo's paper constructed the theological concept of a "migrant sacramentality" by drawing on the memories, practices, and experiences of Korean American Catholics. Using ethnographic portraiture, Marileen Steyn illuminated and analyzed the ritual responses to the loss of a minister in three South African Dutch Reformed churches.

Papers and Presentations:

- Hansol Goo: "Selections from "Migrant God: Absence, Anamnesis, and Migrant Sacramentality for Korean American Catholics." Respondent: David Turnbloom

- Layla Karst: “Broken Bodies, Broken Symbols: Liturgical Ripples of Clergy Sexual Abuse.”
- Tom McLean: “Anglicans in Rome: Rites of Ecumenical Reconciliation and the Ordination of Women.”
- Rebecca Spurrier: “‘The Disabled God Is God with Us’: Experiments in Liturgical Formation.” Respondent: Audrey Seah
- Marileen Steyn: “Death, Conflict and Scandal: A Practical Theology Study of the Role of Rituals in Congregations Following the Loss of a Minister.” Respondent: Sarah Johnson
- Kristine Suna-Koro: “Interrogating Penitential Rites: Whose Healing? Whose Rupture?” Respondent: Benjamin Durheim

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Next year, the seminar will invite papers on two themes: (1) liturgy and trauma/trauma-informed liturgies, and (2) liturgy and consumerism. In addition to our regular practice of reading and discussing seminar papers, we may also explore additional formats like “lightening talks,” where seminar participants offer 10-minute presentations followed by 20-minute discussions.

Ecology and Liturgy

Convener: Samuel Torvend, OblSB, (torvensa@plu.edu) is Faculty Fellow in Humanities, Professor of Religion Emeritus, and the Director of External Relations in the Center for Vocation at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. He is a priest of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia and former professor of liturgy at the University of St. Thomas and Aquinas Institute of the Theology.

Members in Attendance: Timothy Brunk, Joseph Bush, Lisa Dahill, Kristen Daley-Mosier, Christopher Grundy, Mary McGann RSCJ, Lawrence Mick, Ellen Oak, Susan Smith, Benjamin Stewart, Samuel Torvend OblSB, Nancy Wright

Visitors: Martin Marklin

Description of Work: Seminar members gathered in person and online for the discussion of members' papers that had been sent in late Fall: an exercise in embodied gesture and sound, reports on ecological projects with Terra Divina and Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, watching a visitor's video on care for bees in the United States and Kenya, and discussion with the director of Earth Ministry in Seattle.

Papers and Presentations:

- Lisa Dahill: "What Can We Confess? Climate Emotions and Costly Grace."
- Ben Stewart:, "A Fragile Tree of Life: A Metaphor Touching Heaven and Earth, Death and Life."
- Ellen Oak: "Liturgy as Biomimicry."
- Larry Mick: "Sermon Collection on Laudato Si'."
- Samuel Torvend:"Early Christian Resistance to Imperial Domination of the Earth." Portions of this paper will form a chapter in his forthcoming work, *The Christ of Creation: An Ecological Christology*.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: The seminar will continue its practice of discussing papers submitted by members, considering a visit to a church or synagogue known for its commitment to environmental sustainability, meeting with religious leaders who are promoting environmental sustainability, and receiving reports on advocacy and education from denominational representatives. We have not employed a theme or topic for a particular meeting: the majority of our time is spent in discussing papers submitted by members for seminar review.

Depending on the annual meeting forum—online or at Valparaiso University—the seminar will meet to welcome visitors and new members, discuss papers, hear reports, and, if possible, welcome a representative of a religious community whose work focuses on environmental sustainability.

Environment and Art

Convener: Martin V. Rambusch (martinr@rambusch.com) is Chairman of Rambusch Decorating Company.

Members in Attendance: Daniel McCarthy, Martin Rambusch, Mark Thorgelson, Richard Vosko

Visitors: Lorenzo Penalosa, Marissa Soto, Jim Wetzstein

Description of Work: As is our tradition as a seminar we had a day of touring of interesting structures and communities, and a day of papers and works in progress. This year we toured the community and building of First Covenant, and then St. James Cathedral. Sadly the Ranier Club and the Curtis Collection were not receptive to our interest. The following day we had a paper by Mark Thorgelson on Ed Sovick, a presentation by Dan McCarthy, and a paper in progress by Dick Vosko.

Papers and Presentations:

- Daniel McCarthy: "The Double Invocation Over the Gifts for the People."
- Mark Thorgelson: "E. A. Sovick and a Search for Post-War Church Design Renewal."
- Richard Vosko: "Biomimetics and Religious Buildings."

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Next year we hope to follow our typical process of a day of tours and a day of papers. We hope to have a paper on a female ceramic artist and there is a possibility of a paper on a sculptor as well.

Feminist Studies in Liturgy

Convener: Rev. Chelsea Brooke Yarborough, is the Assistant Professor of African American Preaching, Sacred Rhetoric, and Black Practical Theology at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Members in Attendance: Heather Elkins, Elizabeth Freese, Marcia McFee, Elizabeth Moore, Susan Roll, Janet Walton, Khalia Williams, Chelsea Yarborough

Visitors: Marissa Sotos

Description of Work: At this meeting, we focused on rituals in the public square. From the women's march to Beyonce's Renaissance tour, women have utilized rituals towards inclusivity, justice, and joy. We learned from a variety of perspectives about different public rituals and their impact on the communities that engaged them.

Papers and Presentations:

- Elizabeth Moore and Heather Elkins: "Object Lesson on the Many Possibilities of the Red Napkin."
- Elizabeth Freese: "Eucharistic Liturgy."
- Chelsea Yarborough: "The Ritual of the Renaissance Tour."
- Marcia McFee: "Curating a Life of Spiritual Depth."
- Susan Roll: "Women's March."

Other Work and Plans for the Future: We will continue to look at rituals in the public square alongside rituals for particular communities. Topics include liturgy and ritual with senior communities, "dangerous" rituals from powerful women, and womanist readings of protest and liturgical power. We will cohost a session with the Queering Liturgy Seminar.

Formation in Liturgical Prayer

Convener: Rodica M. M. Stoicoiu (rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com) is currently an independent academic working with the VLCFF at the University of Dayton, and has taught at Mount St. Mary's University and The Washington Theological Union.

Members in Attendance: Stan Campbell, Bernadette Gasslein, Paul Janowiak, Anne McGuire, Roc O'Connor, Michael Pendergast, Rodica Stoiciou, Kyle Turner

Visitors: Julie Bellefe, Bryon Hanson, Sean Thomas

Description of Work: The seminar discussed the text *Eucharistic Church, Eucharistic Formation,* eds. Owen F. Cummings and Mark Nussberger, sections from the General Synthesis document *A Synodal Church in Mission, Synthesis Report* and distributed for further reading "Mystagogy of the Unauthorized" in *Liturgy* by David Farina Turnbloom. This conversation began with a conversation of liturgical formation and the local Church in terms of the current tension between what is perceived as more "traditional" liturgy and the liturgy of Vatican II. What role does poor formation play in this turn away from the Conciliar liturgy? Is it a need for certainty or a reaction to poor Vatican II liturgy and a mistaken conflation of unity and uniformity? In subsequent sessions we focused more directly on the nature of mystagogy, its capacity to open one to mystery and its pneumatological, ecclesiological and relational elements within the liturgical dynamic, always within the context of a celebrating community. The final two discussions examined the role of mystagogy as an essential element in the implementation of the General Synod as viewed from the perspective of the General Synthesis document. The seminar focused on three specific sections of the document as examples were mystagogy would be a critical component in the formation of a listening Church grounded in the common dignity of the baptized and shaped by the celebration of the Eucharist.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: The seminar proposes that we offer one session in the next series on the General Synthesis section 3 "Entering the Community of Faith: Christian Initiation," on the topic of the Eucharist and liturgy. We propose that members of our seminar group participate as moderator/facilitator and presenters. It was also proposed that seminar members explore modelling the listening Church in their local settings and engage the ideas discussed at this year's meeting.

Homiletics

Convener: Timothy Leitzke (taleitzke@gmail.com) is the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Valparaiso, Indiana, and an Adjunct Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University.

Members in Attendance: Jennifer Ackerman, Gennifer Brooks, Edward Foley, Timothy Leitzke, Andrew Wymer

Visitors: Matt Cortese SJ, Wayne Croft, Seyeom Kim, Michael Wilke

Description of Work: This year's seminar was equal parts review/critique of papers and planning for next year. We spent a considerable amount of time planning a direction as a seminar.

Papers and Presentations:

- Timothy Leitzke: "Two Proposals for Research in Homiletics: Culture and Trauma." The author presented two rough proposals and sought feedback.
- Jennifer Ackerman: "Preaching the Gospel of Justice." This presentation was a review and critique of a forthcoming book as well as a discussion of strategies for presenting at the Festival of Homiletics.
- Edward Foley: "Is There an Anthropocenic Homiletic? Preaching in the Midst of the Anthropocene Event;" "Preaching with the Sciences: The Neuroscientific Turn;" and a "Narrative Proposal" for research. Foley led a discussion and critique of new neuroscientific approaches to preaching.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Papers from Edward Foley (preaching and neuroscience), Jennifer Ackerman, Gennifer Brooks, Andrew Wymer, and Timothy Leitzke.

Issues in Medieval Liturgy

Convener and Chair: Daniel J. DiCenso (djdicenso@gmail.com) is Associate Professor of Music at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Members in Attendance: Cara Aspesi, Katie Bugyis, Daniel DiCenso, Barbara Haggh-Huglo, Walter Knowles, Rebecca Maloy, Tyler Sampson, Kate Steiner, Michael G. Witczak, Anne Yardley

Visitors: Samantha Slaubaugh

Description of Work: Our seminar's work in 2023 was divided between online and in-person presentations. We heard fourteen diverse presentations, some of them work that is ready for publication and others "work in progress." As usual, our discussions were lively, and each presenter got helpful feedback.

Papers and Presentations:

- Michael G. Witczak: "The History of the Roman *Ordo Missae*: Shifting Paradigms of Spirituality." After reviewing the emergence of the concept of a "liturgical spirituality" in the early twentieth century, the presentation explored the development of the *Ordo Missae* of the Roman Rite, pausing at the introduction of *apologiae* attached to rubrics in the Carolingian manuscripts beginning in the mid-eighth century. The codification of the *Ordo Missae* with the *Missale Romanum* of 1570 and its reform after Vatican II led to a final consideration of the liturgical spirituality contained in the reformed *apologiae* of the Eucharistic celebration.
- Tyler Sampson: "On Ordo in Early and Medieval Christian Thought." Gordon Lathrop's emphasis on ordo as a normative source for liturgical theology has been highly influential in both ecumenical liturgical reform and in ecumenical liturgical theology. His presentation of *ordo,* however, has also faced criticism for its inattention to historical specificity and lack of emphasis on the divine initiative. This paper situates *ordo* first as a theological concept in order to then understand its liturgical function. To situate *ordo* theologically, Sampson turned to Scriptural and Patristic sources, namely Paul and Augustine. Augustine's *De vera religione, De ordine,* and *De civitate Dei* are exemplary of and foundational for the Christian West's understanding of *ordo*. He drew on examples of *ordo,* liturgically and theologically, from other First Millennium sources, e.g., the *Rule of Benedict* and the *Ordines Romani.*
- Rebecca Maloy: "The Liturgical Role of Martyrs in the Old Hispanic Rite."

- Barbara Haggh-Huglo: "Problems of Authorship in the Visitation Office '*Exurgens autem Maria'* of Cambrai and its Alleluias." In 1455, the feast of the Visitation of Mary was introduced at Cambrai Cathedral. In her book she demonstrates that Gilles Carlier, dean of the Cathedral, brought the office of Jan of Jenstein back from Prague—a city to which he was deputed by the Council of Basel. Yet the chant to Jenstein's texts finds no match in manuscripts from Prague, raising the possibility that this chant was composed in Cambrai and by Du Fay. In this paper she analyzed the music and compared it with other manuscripts and with the plainchant she has securely attributed to Du Fay. She concluded that the chant was not by Du Fay but composed in a city other than Prague that Carlier may have visited. When Jenstein's office was revised, as is known, it was transmitted to other locations without chant and local composers added new melodies—that could explain the variants. She has since the Annual Meeting learned that new chant in the vernacular from Bohemia also more often than not has local variants. She also spoke about the alleluias ending every single chant in the Cambrai Visitation office, which are found in the very earliest layers of Gregorian chant. Thomas Kelly published a series of melismas ordered by mode in the 13th c. but these do not match the Visitation alleluia melodies.
- Anne Yardley: "The Curious Inclusion of Prime in Monastic Horae at Amesbury Priory and Shaftesbury Abbey." This paper explored the liturgical landscape of Amesbury Priory and Shaftesbury Abbey through the lens of the antiphons sung at prime noting the variation of antiphons in Benedictine English houses. It also asked the question of why prime would be included in a book of hours.
- Samantha Slaubaugh: "The Ascent of the Virgin: Douceline of Digne and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary." This paper examined Douceline of Digne's ecstatic rapture on the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary described in her Old Occitan hagiography. During this narration of rapture, Douceline processed into the choir of Franciscan friars, interrupted their office of compline, and then began leading them with chant in a procession in the church. She argued that this narrative promotes a model of beguile liturgical leadership and a liturgical imitation of Mary that also built support among the beguine community and Franciscan community in Marseille at the turn of the fourteenth century.
- Katie Bugyis and Cara Aspesi: "Medieval Liturgy: Tutorials for Students, Teachers and Researchers." This presentation introduced their teaching website in development, *Medieval Liturgy: Tutorials for Students, Teachers & Researchers,* giving an overview of the structure and scope of the project, demonstrating the teaching-tutorial format, and explaining how scholars can get involved in the project by creating a teaching tutorial (or a series of tutorials) on a topic within their area of expertise. They also highlighted that all tutorials will undergo peer review and, therefore, count as publications in the Digital Humanities.

- Kate Steiner: "Report on the Canadian Chant Database Project within the Digital Analysis of Chant Transmission." She presented the goals and scope of the Canadian Chant Database Project within the Digital Analysis of Chant Transmission (DACT) partnership project funded by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). She offered an update on the project so far. Debra Lacoste joined as the Project Manager of DACT to provide context for the larger DACT project and work done so far.
- Daniel DiCenso: "Teaching Chant in the Undergraduate Context." This was a presentation on how to teach Gregorian chant in the undergraduate context, including how to attract and retain students in the course and what teaching resources to use. It was modelled on the successful course at the College of the Holy Cross, with Latin sung Vespers as the final exam with over sixty students enrolled per year in two sections.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Continued work on existing projects and discussion about future formats for NAAL. Concern about bringing in new members.

Liturgical Hermeneutics

Convener: Ron Anderson (Ron.Anderson@garrett.edu) is Styberg Professor of Worship and Associate Dean for Institutional and Educational Assessment at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

Members in Attendance: Ron Anderson, Michelle Baker-Wright, Brian Butcher, Virgil Funk, Gordon Lathrop, Jennifer Lord, Hwarang Moon, Melinda Quivik, Kathryn Rickert, Don Saliers, Tom Schattauer, David Stosur, Allie Utley, Michelle Whitlock

Visitors: Julia Canonico, Seyeom Kim, Lorenzo Penalosa, Sean Thomas, Michael Wilke

Description of Work: The Liturgical Hermeneutics seminar focused the first part of its work on a conversation about liturgy and imagination, using a short article by Tom Schattauer ["Training Liturgical Imagination," *Living Lutheran* (December 31, 2019)] as a reference point.

Various members, including Schattauer, presented chapters or papers related to this theme and engaging the different types of imagination Schattauer set out in his article: scriptural, sacramental, ecclesial, eschatological, contextual, ritual. Schattauer noted that that these categories emerged from his seminary teaching, in which he regularly asked students to talk about the liturgical practices and piety, worshiping communities, and understandings of worship, that had shaped them—a "liturgical genealogy," the formative factors in their understanding of Christian worship. Chapters and papers by Anderson, Lathrop, Quivik, Schattauer, and Whitlock then engaged this theme in some way. Stosur led a discussion of two chapters from Erin Kidd and Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, eds., *Putting God on the Map: Theology and Conceptual Mapping* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018) to explore the place of metaphor and conceptual mapping in liturgical imagination. Additional papers were present by Moon, Rickert, and Thomas.

Papers and Presentations:

- Thomas Schattauer: "Training Liturgical Imagination," *Living Lutheran* (December 31, 2019) and "Loehe's Liturgical Legacy: Imagination for Identity and Mission" (slated for publication).
- Gordon Lathrop: *Saving Images: The Presence of the Bible in Christian Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2107), chapter 2.

- David Stosur: Discussion of Steven Shaver, "Eucharistic Spirituality and Metaphoric Asymmetry" and Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, "Conceptual Mapping and Reception in Ecumenical Theology" in Erin Kidd and Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, eds., *Putting God on the Map: Theology and Conceptual Mapping* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 127-188.
- Michelle Whitlock: "Narrative Imagination."
- Ron Anderson: "Hymnody and/as a Social Imaginary."
- Melinda Quivik: "Michael Polanyi and Personal Knowledge."
- Kathryn Rickert: "A Tongue Understanded of the People."
- Hwarang Moon: "The Ten Commandments in Public Worship: A Liturgical Perspective."
- Sean Thomas: "The (Extra)-Ordinary Theology of TLM-goers and its Implications for Mainstream Liturgical Aesthetics."

Other Work and Plans for the Future: The 2025 seminar will focus the first part of its work discussing the 2023 statement developed by the Seminar on the Way "On the Way to Full Communion: Thinking About Christian Unity from Liturgy" (https://www.naal-liturgy.org/seminars/seminar-on-the-way/) to continue exploring Christian unity from the perspective of the liturgy and considering whether there is a liturgical ecumenical hermeneutic that can be applied in our churches. We may also draw on recent keynote papers from the 2023 session of Societas Liturgica, which focused its meeting on liturgy and ecumenism.

Reading and discussion of other publications may also be considered, including a chapter by Brian Butcher on music and hermeneutics from the *Oxford Handbook of Music and Theology,* Christina M. Gschwandtner's recent book *Reading Religious Ritual with Ricoeur,* and David White's *Tending the Fire that Burns at the Center of the World,* which explores the role of aesthetics in Christian spiritual formation.

Liturgical Language

Convener: Jennifer Baker-Trinity (bakertrinityj@augsburgfortress.org) is Program Manager for Worship Resource Development, a joint position with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and 1517 Media (Augsburg Fortress Imprint). 1517 Media is the publishing ministry of the ELCA.

Members in Attendance: Cheryl Lindsay, Gail Ramshaw, Martin Seltz

Visitors: Stephen Burns, Michael Wilke

Description of Work: We discussed two papers and joined with the Liturgical Music Seminar for a presentation and discussion.

Papers and Presentations:

- Gail Ramshaw: "God the Fire" from her forthcoming book, *Mystery Manifest* (Fortress Press).
- Stephen Burns: "Acknowledging First Peoples: Searching for Language."
- The Liturgical Language and Music Seminars met jointly to discuss the 2022 article "Our Journey with Just and Faithful Language" by Sarah Johnson and Adam Tice.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: We discussed possible joint seminar opportunities in the next year or two, perhaps on issues related to language and ecology or language and music. We may consider lament and the use of language to address systemic evil.

Liturgical Music

Convener: Carl Bear (editor@thehymnsociety.org) is Editor of *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song,* Project Coordinator for the National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Director of Music at St. Helen's Anglican Church in Ottawa, Ontario.

Members in Attendance: Carl Bear, Kim R. Harris, Alan Hommerding, Steve Janco, Heather Josselyn-Cranson, Jason McFarland, Mike McMahon, John Weit

Visitors: Ivar Hillesland, Daniel Schlorff, Jonathan Tan, Mykayla Turner, J. J. Wright

Description of Work: Much of the meeting was spent discussing chapters from the Seminar's recent edited collection, *Living the Church's Song: Propositions for an Ecumenical Theology of Liturgical Music.* There were also presentations by Mykayla Turner on "Songs of the Raging Grannies" and Ivar Hillesland on "Liturgy and Music at Church of the Apostles, Seattle." We had a joint session with the Liturgical Language Seminar discussing an article by Sarah Kathleen Johnson and Adam M. L. Tice, "Our Journey with Just and Faithful Language."

Papers and Presentations:

- Mykayla Turner: "Songs of the Raging Grannies: Religious or Not?" Respondent: Kim Harris
- Ivar Hillesland: "Liturgy and Music at Church of the Apostles, Seattle."

Presentations Related to Living the Church's Song:

- Jason McFarland: "Is an Ecumenical Theology of Liturgical Music Possible?"
- Heather Josselyn-Cranson: "Common Threads in Contributions to Living the Church's Song."
- Alan Hommerding: "A Publisher's Perspective on Living the Church's Song."
- Jason McFarland: "Liturgy Is Inherently Musical—Music Is Integral to Christian Worship."
- Steve Janco: "Music Functions Sacramentally to Disclose God's Presence and Action in the Midst of the Gathered Community."
- Heather Josselyn-Cranson: "Scripture, Especially the Psalter, Provides a Foundational Source for Christian Congregational Song."
- Carl Bear: "Musical Genre and Ritual Have a Reciprocal Relationship."
- Jonathan Tan: "The Church's Liturgical Music Is Countercultural."

- Kim Harris: "The Use of Music of Various Times and Places in Local Liturgical Celebrations Connects the Community to the Universal Church."
- Mike McMahon: "The Primary Music Maker in Christian Worship Is the Entire Gathered Community."
- Alan Hommerding: "The Local Assembly Offers Music of High Quality in Its Worship."
- Daniel Schlorff: "Presidential Ministry in Liturgy Has a Musical Dimension."
- John Weit: "Liturgical Music Ministers Play a Role in Teaching and Leading Congregations to Join Their Voices in the Church's Song."

Joint Session with Liturgical Language Seminar:

- Sarah Kathleen Johnson and Adam M. L. Tice, "Our Journey with Just and Faithful Language: The Story of a Twenty-First Century Mennonite Hymnal and Worship Book," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song* 73:2 (Spring 2022): 17-27. Panelists: Jennifer Baker-Trinity, Alan Hommerding, Stephanie Budwey

Other Work and Plans for the Future: The Seminar will continue its work of discussing recent and ongoing publications and projects related to liturgical music.

Liturgical Theology

Convener: Jan Schnell (jrippentrop-schnell@wartburgseminary.edu) is Assistant Professor of Liturgics at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa

Members in Attendance: Dennis Abraham, Lorraine Brugh, Julie Canlis, Hans Christoffersen, Bruce Cinquegrani, Matt Cortis, Cory Dixon , Joris Geldhof, Todd Johnson, Kelli Joyce, Judith Kubicki, Bruce Morrill, Neal Presa, Melanie Ross, Jan Schnell, Rhoda Schuler, Frank Senn, Shannon Sigler, James Starke, Mark Taylor, Porter C.Taylor, David Williams, Andrew Wright

Visitors: Unavailable

Description of Work: Our seminar discussed two books and one chapter: *Broken Bodies: Eucharist, Mary, and the Body in Trauma Theology* (Karen O'Donnell's connection of somatic memory to the annunciation and incarnation while articulating bodily, liturgical, spiritual, and theological impacts of traumas), *The Mystery of Sacrifice* (Evelyn Underhill's writing in Christian mysticism emphasizing the centrality of Eucharist in liturgies), "Sacrament and Sacrifice" in *Worship* (Evelyn Underhill's poetic description of spiritual and physical dimensions of sacrifice that moves toward love and changes reality). We also discussed four papers by seminar members.

Papers and Presentations:

- Cory Dixon: "The Implications of the Priest Standing *In Persona Ecclesiae*." Dixon led the seminar in considering how clericalism can inhibit the voice of the assembly and whether conceiving of a priest *in persona oikumene* or *in persona Christi* might lessen focus on priest alone and help restore a sense of being in solidarity with all Christians and the marginalized.
- Shannon Sigler: "Liturgical Aesthetics and the Freedom to be Formed: Charles Wesley and the Means of Grace." Sigler developed a Wesleyan perspective on liturgical aesthetics, noting that after conversion Charles Wesley stopped chronicling his achievements and started writing poetry as a form of worshipping God; she also listened to contemporary artists of faith as they (struggle to) name connections between faith and life work.
- Porter C. Taylor: "Jesus' *Leitourgia* and Paschal Mystery: Foundations for Eucharist and Liturgical Theology." Taylor traced of multiple lines of historical thought development in liturgical theology as he worked toward a eucharistically centered and ecumenically viable methodology.

- Bruce Cinquegrani: "Empathy and the *ars celebrandi*." Cinquegrani explored how the philosophy and psychology of empathy (both among human subjects and toward liturgies themselves) impact the presiding role of ritual leaders.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Looking ahead to the 2025 meeting, we decided to continue our pattern of reading two books (one historic, one contemporary) as well as discussing group members' works-in-progress. Five members (Bruce Morrill, Benita Lim, Joris Geldhof, Neal Presa, and David Williams) have expressed interest in offering papers in 2025.

So far ideas for our historically-impactful author for 2025 include
- 1-3 chapters from *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy* by Vagaggini
- A writing on the Nicene Creed

Our contemporary author for 2025 will be one of the following:
- Pavol Bargar, *Embodied Existence: Our Common Life in God*
- David Power, *Love Without Calculation*

Liturgy and Cultures

Convener: Ruth Meyers (rmeyers@cdsp.edu) is the Hodges-Haynes Professor of Liturgics at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty at the Graduate Theological Union, both in Berkeley, California.

Members in Attendance: Dan Anderson, Joseph Donnella, Nathaniel Marx, Ruth Meyers, Hyuk Seonwoo, Julia Upton

Visitors: Dennis Abraham, Kai Ton Chau, Deborah Jungmi Kang, Benita Lim, Marissa Sotos

Description of Work: The seminar takes a broad approach to "cultures," this year including children's participation in worship and liturgy in the context of the COVID pandemic. Other papers explored concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism, and justice-seeking as an essential component of multicultural worship.

Papers and Presentations:

- Kai Ton Chau: "Teaching Cultural Intelligence" introduced syllabi for new courses on cultural intelligence and ministry leadership.
- Nathaniel Marx: "Adaptation of Prayers of the *Roman Missal* for Congregations with Children" discussed plans for a grant funding the project Children's Revival of Participation at Sunday Mass.
- Ruth Meyers: "Worship in Multiracial Congregations in the Episcopal Church" reported preliminary findings of case studies and plans for continuing research.
- Hyuk Seonwoo: "Finding Rhythm for Multicultural Worship" introduced the Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push" as a metaphor for embodied worship and justice-seeking lives.
- Julia Upton: "Learning from the Distanced Church" considered online worship and community-building that was introduced during the COVID pandemic and continues in many places.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: In 2025, the seminar plans to hear updates on research by seminar members, continuing to consider a broad range of topics related to cultures and worship.

Modern History of Worship

Conveners: The Rev. Shawn Strout (sstrout@vts.edu) is Assistant Professor of Worship and Associate Dean of Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia.

Members in Attendance: Kent Burreson, Allan Ferguson, Tim Gabrielli, Katie Harmon, Bill Johnston, Kristian Kohler, Sarah Mount Elewononi, Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, Shawn Strout, Karen Westerfield Tucker

Visitors: Hilary Bogert-Winkler, Matt Cortese

Description of Work: The Modern History of Worship seminar welcomes papers exploring the liturgical history of the modern era (c. 1500-present) by considering its theological, socio-cultural, and practical/pastoral aspects. We are committed to dialogue and interaction between denominations. This year, the papers and presentations involved a range of topics. We discussed the liturgical thought of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. We considered some of Bonhoeffer's writings on secularity and their potential impact on grassroots liturgy. We looked at the proscription of the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer* for the Church of Ireland during the English Commonwealth. Wesley's teaching on the "Catholic Spirit" and its impact on liturgical ecumenism among Methodist/Wesleyan churches was discussed. The impact of communion without baptism on the Episcopal Church's ecumenical relationships was probed. Luther's understanding of receiving the Eucharist as both remembrance and thanksgiving were topics of discussion, and a presentation on a potential doctoral dissertation proposal on Lutheran/Episcopal worship concluded our time.

Papers and Presentations:

- Bill Johnston: "The Liturgical Thought of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI." This paper introduces a book of essays on Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's liturgical thought especially surrounding his motu proprio *"Summorum Pontificum."*
- Allan Ferguson: "Bonhoeffer and Grassroots Liturgy." This paper argued that Bonhoeffer's understanding of the rise of a general spirituality untethered from the church explains the rise in grassroots liturgies but would not endorse them.
- Hilary Bogert-Winkler: "'A Free National Church': The Church of Ireland and the Prayer Book Proscription of 1647." This paper analyzes how the Church of Ireland reacted to the English Parliament's attempt to proscribe use of the *Book of Common Prayer* during the English Commonwealth.

- Karen Westerfield Tucker: "Methodist Liturgical Ecumenism: Worship and the 'Catholic Spirit.'" This paper argues that John Wesley's views on the "Catholic Spirit" influenced the development of an ecumenical spirit among Methodists/Wesleyans regarding liturgical sources for worship.
- Shawn Strout: "Baptism and the Eucharist Connect the Church: Ecumenical Perspectives." This paper contends that the practice of communion without baptism would negatively impact the ecumenical relationships of the Episcopal Church.
- Kent Burreson: "Two Ways of Receiving the Sacrament: Luther's Understanding of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in the Lord's Supper." This paper suggests that Luther taught receiving the sacrament as both remembrance of Christ's work on the cross and thanksgiving for his sacrifice.
- Kristian Kohler: "Presentation on Lutheran/Episcopal Worship." This presentation sought feedback on a potential doctoral dissertation proposal centered on Lutheran/Episcopal worship.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: At present, proposed projects for next year include:

- Tim Gabrielli: Marshall McCluen and the liturgy
- Hilary Bogart-Winkler: Anglican preaching during the interregnum
- Kent Burreson: Continuation of Luther's work on receiving the sacrament
- Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero: Healing rites in the twenty-first century
- Matt Cortese: Early Jesuits and the Liturgy of the Hours
- Bill Johnston: The dynamic between formed and formless prayers in ecumenical worship

Problems in the Early History of Liturgy

Convener: Jim Sabak, O.F.M. (jimsabak@gmail.com) is a Franciscan Friar of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Atlanta, Georgia). Jim currently holds the position of Director of Worship for the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, and an episcopal emcee for the bishop of Raleigh.

Members in Attendance: John Baldovin, Paul Bradshaw, Harald Buchinger, Glenn Byer, Nathan Chase, Charles Cosgrove, Rick Fabian, Robin Jensen, Max Johnson, Vassa Larin, Lizette Larson-Miller, Martin Lüstraeten, Anne McGowan, Anna Petrin, David Pitt, Jim Sabak

Visitors: Julie Canlis, Reed Miller

Description of Work: The work of this seminar involves a variety of topics on celebration and significance of the liturgy in the early centuries of the common era. At this meeting the seminar fielded papers on the Egyptian origins of the *Apostolic Tradition,* extracanonical tradition in the stational liturgy in Jerusalem, public Christian psalmody in late antiquity, the use and purpose of the "oil of exorcism," what may have occurred in the transition of non-Christian spaces into Christian spaces in antiquity, and the category of "mystagogy" in Christian preaching and writing.

Papers and Presentations:

- Anna Petrin: "Reassessing Early Christian Mystagogy." This paper explored the category of "mystagogy" in early Christian preaching and writing. The paper first explored the challenges of defining mystagogy as a genre, and suggested that instead mystagogy be approached as a mode of theology. The paper went on to argue that this approach would help us to better interpret evidence suggesting that Christians other than neophytes were present at mystagogical preaching as well as evidence that the content of many mystagogical homilies exceeds simple description and offers instead a rich theological banquet.
- Robin Jensen: "Temples into Churches: Destruction and Conversion of Pagan Cult Sites in Roman North Africa." Documentary sources, including sections of the Theodosian Code indicate that, across the Roman Empire, altars, cult images, and even temples were destroyed or transformed into churches in the late fourth and early fifth century. However, recent scholarship has proposed a more nuanced survey of the evidence that includes archeological and mate-

rial remains alongside the often-conflicting textual references to such events. This study of pagan temple transformation, particularly in North Africa, considered the issues of date, the extent, and the specific features of such temple transformations in the fourth and fifth centuries CE.

- Martin Lüstraeten: "The 'Oil of Exorcism': Its Preparation and Its Function." The *Traditio Apostolic*a is known for giving the pre-baptismal anointing an exorcistic function by first exorcizing the oil prior to baptism, then calling it the "oil of exorcism" and then directing an exorcistic/apotropaic formula to be spoken during its application. Seen in context it becomes obvious that the "oil of exorcism" is the invention of a late redaction of the *Traditio Apostolica,* that it is technically superfluous. The derivative documents such as the *Canones Hippolyti* or the *Testamentum Domini* retain the "oil of exorcism" but apparently reduce other pre-baptismal exorcistic elements. Different ideas about the reason for introducing an exorcistic anointing on exorcized catechumens were discussed but none of them seems satisfactory.
- Charles H. Cosgrove: "Singing in the Streets: Public Christian Psalmody in Late Antiquity." In the decades following the Edict of Milan, the Christian church grew dramatically, and the public presence of Christians was increasingly apparent in various social settings. These included street parades such as funeral processions, episcopal advents, and martyr translations. Psalmody was a distinguishing mark of all of these. Mass public singing in Christian processions united the Christians of a city and its surrounding villages, drawing in people from multiple congregations and more than one language group. Indeed, the singing throng of a martyr parade was as large a body of Christians as someone of that era might ever encounter at a single event.
- Harald Buchinger: "Extracanonical Traditions as Heterotopias in Stational Liturgy: Ritual, Material Culture and Lived Religion in Late Antique Jerusalem." Although the development of the liturgical year in late antique Jerusalem was not only "biblifying time," extracanonical traditions (apocrypha) stand both at its early roots and played a role in its later development. It appears that Mount Sion was profiled in competition on the one hand with the Eleona church on the Mount of Olives with its early tradition of the handing over of the mysteries by Jesus to the Apostles, and on the other hand with an alternative localization of the Last Supper near Gethsemane.

  While the throne of James the Brother of the Lord on Sion as symbol of the apostolic tradition competed with the burial of the actual bishops in the Eleona, other relics housed on Sion competed with the cathedral and other churches (such as St. Stephen's). Inventions of relics could be both the cause and the consequence of liturgical veneration, and respective literature often are cult aetiologies. Not least, the imposition of a Marian layer in late antiquity demonstrates the ongoing importance of parabiblical traditions and illustrates the interplay between ritual, apocryphal literature and material culture. Although changing attitudes in liturgical spirituality and pilgrims' piety can be observed, the distinction between "First" and "Second Church" does not

do justice to the complexity of ritual observances which offer varieties of options employed by all kinds of people.

- Nathan Chase and Maxwell Johnson: "The Egyptian Origins of the Canons of Hippolytus" (presentation of a draft of a forthcoming study). In response to the recent translation and commentary by Alistair Stewart, who claims a Cappadocian origin, with a possibly later Egyptian redaction, Chase and Johnson look at the relevant canons and argue for an Egyptian origin. There is no reason, they conclude, to revise previous assertions regarding the Canons' Egyptian, though not necessarily "Alexandrian" origins. The Canons of Hippolytus thus remain the earliest derivative document of the so-called Apostolic Tradition.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: In addition to presentations on current research and publications, the seminar will consider discussion of current published texts in the field in future gatherings.

Queering Liturgy

Convener: The Rev. Daniel Rodriguez Schlorff (daniel@schlorff.com) serves as Senior Minister of Third Congregational Church in Middletown, Connecticut.

Members in Attendance: Stephanie Budwey, Bryan Cones, Scott Haldeman, Jason McFarland, Marcia McFee, J. Michael McMahon, Geoffrey Moore, Daniel Rodriguez Schlorff

Visitors: Chris DaSilva, Maren Haynes Marchesini

Description of Work: The Queering Liturgy Seminar celebrated the publication of a book, which was birthed in our seminar. *Queering Christian Worship: Reconstructing Liturgical Theology* was published by Church Publishing and speaks across traditions.

Papers and Presentations:

- Stephanie A. Budwey: "Liturgies of Livability or Liturgical Violence: What Kind of Space Is Christian Congregational Song Creating for LGBTQIA2S+ and Nonbinary People?"
- Scott Haldeman, Stephanie A. Budwey, Bryan Cones, and Jason J. McFarland: Discussion of salient points of the book *Queering Christian Worship,* the publication process, and perceived growing edges.
- W. Scott Haldeman, Stephanie A. Budwey, Jason J. McFarland (and Lis Valle-Ruiz, in absentia): Brief presentation of "Contemplating Queer Futures for Liturgical Studies: A Conversation" published in *Liturgy* 38:1 (2023): 24-32.

Other Work and Plans for the Future: Prior to 2025, the Seminar is reaching out to seminaries and divinity schools that have a strong LGBTQIA+ representation to solicit fresh voices for seminar presentations.

In January 2025, Queering Liturgy has plans for two joint sessions with the Feminist Studies in Liturgy Seminar.

Beyond 2025, the Seminar will look to voices in Asia, Africa, and South America to draw upon more diverse creativity for a second volume of *Queering Christian Worship.* This will be a process of creating cross-continental relationships, first and foremost, followed potentially by a second volume.

Part 3
Select Seminar Papers

Re-Writing Wesley: An Advent Intervention

William H. Petersen

The Very Rev'd William H. Petersen is Emeritus Dean and Professor of Bexley Hall (Episcopal) Seminary and a member of the Internation Anglican Liturgical Consultation, the Consultation on Common Texts, and the English Language Liturgical Consultation. He is the founder of NAAL's Advent Project Seminar.

Background

At the appointment of The Episcopal Church's (TEC) Presiding Bishop, I served from 2009-15 as the TEC's representative to the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT). This body is the developer, publisher, and custodian of *The Revised Common Lectionary* (*RCL*). During this period, I was concomitantly on TEC's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM). Just over a decade ago this latter agency commissioned me to convey to CCT a deep concern for the potential of the Holy Week lectionary to foster anti-Judaism, especially in the Year A proclamation of the Matthean Passion on Palm Sunday and the invariable yearly use of the Johannine Passion on Good Friday. The concern of the SCLM resolution to CCT was underscored with a paper by the late Louis Weil who explored the subject in depth.[1] Both as an ecumenically noted liturgical theologian of the Anglican Communion and as himself of Jewish heritage, Fr. Weil was particularly qualified to address the issues involved. Subsequently, as similar representations from other member traditions were communicated, CCT undertook to study and make recommendations for the mitigation of the potential for both tacit and explicit anti-Judaism in the *RCL* as well as any other common liturgical texts. These initiatives are presently reaching fruition through CCT's 2023 resolution to establish a task force to bring a report and recommendations on "Anti-Semitism in the Lectionary" to its annual meeting in April 2024.[2]

Meanwhile, work on questions of Anti-Semitism has expanded well beyond an exclusive focus on Holy Week. Indeed, when other "common texts" are added to lectionary considerations, the field is widened considerably. This is particularly true of hymns and, specifically, Charles Wesley's Advent hymn "Lo! he comes with clouds descending."[3] Since its composition it has appeared in over 680 hymnals and now is published in an ecumenically wide range of contemporary hymnals.[4] A problem arises, however, as a verse of Wesley's hymn is juxtaposed with the desideratum of avoiding Anti-Judaism in Christian liturgy.

In the summer of 2023, Stephen Kennedy, music director of Christ Church, Rochester, NY, and a teacher of sacred music at the Eastman School of Music in the University of Rochester, brought a related specific concern before me.[5] Last Advent, choir members of Christ Church, replete with Eastman graduate students as well as parishioners, were articulating discomfort with the prospect of singing the second verse of Wesley's otherwise beloved Advent hymn. In particular, the patent Anti-Judaism character of that verse was represented as problematical. Knowing of my own involvement with such concerns, Kennedy asked me to consider a potential rewriting of the verse so as to alleviate the difficulty. The result of my reflections is set forth in the next section. Though the rationale for the rewriting is established by the concerns indicated here, specific reasons for certain changes will be presented in the commentary to follow.

Original Verse Juxtaposed with the Rewritten Verse

For the purposes of understanding the place of the old and new second verse in the poetic schema and development of the hymn, it will be useful first to lay out the entire hymn.

> Lo! he comes with clouds descending, once for our salvation slain;
> thousand thousand saints attending swell the triumph of his train:
> Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
> Christ the Lord returns to reign.
>
> Every eye shall now behold him, robed in dreadful majesty;
> those who set at naught and sold him, pierced and nailed him to the tree,
> deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
> shall the true Messiah see.
>
> Those dear tokens of his passion still his dazzling body bears,
> cause of endless exaltation to his ransomed worshipers;
> with what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture,
> gaze we on those glorious scars!
>
> Yea, amen! let all adore thee, high on thine eternal throne;
> Savior, take the power and glory, claim the kingdom for thine own:
> Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
> Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.[6]

Especially as paired with the tune *Helmsley*, the thrice-repeated words or phrases of the third line in each verse crescendo toward the final emphatic claims of the last lines. Thus, in the second verse, that refrain line literally nails the damnation of those who conspired to crucify the Christ/Messiah. And, although the authorities and military of the Roman Empire were co-conspirators in this result, they are no longer around. The Jews, however, are, and the all-too-easy imputation of collective guilt in the matter can detrimentally serve to foster Anti-Semitic attitudes and actions.

Here, then, is a proposed remedy to the problem in the rewriting of that second verse, laid out side-by-side with the original.

Every eye shall then behold him,
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

Every eye shall then behold him,
robed in splendorous majesty;
we who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
all repentant, all repentant,
all repentant,
shall our God's Anointed see.[7]

Rationale and Commentary

Like so many others before and after him, Wesley as hymnographer maintains an imaginary frame of reference informed by ancient (and therefore Scriptural) cosmology.[8] The universe is three-tiered with heaven above, hell beneath, and the world flat. At any particular location on the face of that earth, the sun rises daily in the east and sets in the west. This pre-Newtonian imaginary for hymnody would not begin to change until the late 19th century. Among the examples that might be adduced, one of the first such efforts is to be found in John Ellerton's evening hymn "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended."[9] The missionary context of the hymn led Ellerton to an imaginary that, while still not Einsteinian in its cosmology, is yet more like the vast universe in which we live today than the ancient cosmological imaginary. Thus, in making his theological and liturgical point, Ellerton states in verses 2 and 3:

> We thank thee that thy Church, unsleeping while earth rolls onward into light,
> through all the world her watch is keeping and rests not now by day or night.
>
> As o'er each continent and island the dawn leads on another day, the voice of prayer
> is never silent, nor dies the strain of praise away.[10]

The point here is not so much to choose between imaginaries, but to recognize their limitations. In other words, we may still use the ancient/Scriptural imaginary to acknowledge in everyday speech a glorious sunrise or sunset. Who would exclaim, "What a magnificent earth turn!"? The problem lies in taking the older imaginary literally, or as fact. If Wesley's commonly shared imaginary of Christ's *parousia*, however scriptural, were so taken, then a difficulty arises. Since the world is a globe in a heliocentric system, it is always half in day and half in night as it turns on its axis. No matter, then, the day or hour when the *parousia* occurs, "every eye" could not behold it. The older imaginary also depends on locating heaven as above, beyond the skies. If, then, this older imaginary continues to be employed, its figurative theological meaning must be preferred over any literal interpretation so dear to a scriptural fundamentalist world view.

Again, this is not so much a criticism of the company of hymnographers that Wesley joins in his poem; it is, rather, to lay the foundation for an excellent develop-

ment in his imaginary of the *parousia*.[11] In that *parousia*, Wesley does not imagine Christ as showing alone. The text conjoins with the fulfilling appearance of Christ the "thousand thousand saints attending" as part and parcel of the completion. In this he echoes the Apostle in I Corinthians 15:

> . . . for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. Christ the first fruits, *then at his coming [parousia]* those who belong to him.[12]

In the event of the kingdom's fulfillment there is, by Wesley's great image, a reuniting of the Church militant and triumphant. But the Church struggling on earth along with those "who swell the triumph of his train" only do so by virtue of the salvation offered through the cross. And to that theme the second of the hymn's verses turns, along with the occasion of the contemporary problematic that has led to the proposed rewriting. The theme of judgment is articulated in the second line of verse two. Hence, Christ appears "robed in *dreadful* majesty." As this theme is introduced, the salvific effect of the cross in offering salvation for the entire human community tends to be eclipsed by the image of judgment upon "those who set at naught and sold him" and their fate.[13] Such considerations lie behind the alternative construction of verse two where the word "splendrous" is substituted for "dreadful," thus rendering the final judgment welcoming rather than fearful. The difference of nuance here is thoroughly exhibited, for instance, in God's judgment as extensively explored in that longest of Psalms *Beati immaculati*, no. 119.[14] The distinction here rests upon the difference between judgment and judgmentalism.

This recasting of the quality of judgment attendant upon the *parousia* leads directly to the proposed change of pronoun at the outset of the third line in verse two. The "those" of the verse immediately brings to mind in the first place the ones who "sold" Jesus to be crucified as well as, secondly, the Roman authority and its agents who executed him. Included in the first group is everyone from Judas, to the crowd calling for Jesus' crucifixion, to the condemning Sanhedrin that handed Jesus over. Nor should it be forgotten that according to the Gospels, even Jesus' disciples either deserted or, as in Peter's case, directly denied him. The Roman authority and its agents are, of course, no longer around, but in the history of Christianity it has been, almost from the beginning, all-too-easy to impute continuing guilt to the Jews for the whole crucial episode. This is the foundation of Christian anti-Judaism and has effectively promoted persistent anti-Semitic attitudes and the outbreak of pogroms or other violence against Jews.[15] Insofar as the "those" of Wesley's hymn participate in such attitudes or their incitement to violence, a change of pronoun in the verse is indicated.

The clue for the proposed change can be found in a standard Holy Week hymn particularly appropriate to the Good Friday liturgy with its Johannine passion: "Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended?"[16] The hymn asks the rhetorical question about the crucifixion, "Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?" and answers, "Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee. 'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it

was denied thee, I crucified thee."[17] The use of this hymn on Good Friday brings home the point of human solidarity in sin over time: the confession of personal guilt relieves the temptation to impute the rejection of a divinely proffered salvation to others, in this case the Jews collectively, but, rather, leads to the proposed change in Wesley's hymn from others to oneself.

More, however, is involved here than individual piety acknowledging guilt and repenting the sin of separation from God in the person and work of Jesus as the Christ. The corporate nature of the sin attendant upon the crucifixion undergirds the change from "those" (pointing the finger at others) to "we" as participating in the willful rejection of the salvation offered to all. The anatomy of sin as moving through human history reflects the theological fact that, in the economy of salvation, atonement is not limited to a past (a *then*) but is a choice in the present (a *now*). All of this is aptly summarized in an Advent hymn by Walter Russell Bowie:

> Lord Christ when first thou cam'st to earth, upon a cross they bound thee,
> and mocked thy saving kingship then by thorns with which they crowned thee:
> and still our wrongs may weave thee now new thorns to pierce that steady brow,
> and robe of sorrow round thee.
>
> O aweful love which found no room in life where sin denied thee,
> and, doomed to death, must bring to doom, the powers which crucified thee,
> till not a stone was left on stone, and all those nations' pride, o'erthrown
> went down to dust beside thee!
>
> New advent of the love of Christ, shall we again refuse thee,
> till in the night of hate and war we perish as we lose thee?
> From old unfaith our souls release to seek the kingdom of thy peace,
> by which alone we choose thee.
>
> O wounded hands of Jesus, build in us thy new creation;
> our pride is dust, our vaunt is stilled, we wait thy revelation:
> O love that triumphs over loss, we bring our hearts before thy cross,
> to finish thy salvation.[18]

Among other considerations, this hymn provides ample emphasis for the corporate as well as personal repentance that is necessary to the appropriation of the divine salvation offered in, with, and through Jesus as the Christ. And, in this regard, it exhibits the inspiration that led to replacing the thrice repeated "deeply wailing" of Wesley's penultimate line to a triple singing of "all repentant." But to be clear, the word "all" here is not meant to imply universal salvation. It remains always a matter of choice whether humanity, individually or taken as a whole, accepts the proffered salvation and acts upon its implications. The "all," rather, refers to the totality of a remorse that blossoms into repentance and lived participation in the fulfilling of the Reign of God/Kingdom of Christ/Commonwealth of the Holy Spirit.

In regard to Wesley's quintessential Advent hymn, then, a penultimate point about judgment stands to be made at the intersection of the three elements of kingdom, salvation, and judgment itself. It concerns the matter of universal salvation that has been a vexed question in the history of Christian doctrine. From a strictly orthodox point of view, universal salvation has been deemed heretical. However, there are nuances beyond the usual considerations of those who are saved and therefore included in the Divine Realm, and those who are excluded. This discussion has maintained that salvation is freely offered to all. Judgment comes into play, nevertheless, in consideration of whether that salvation is accepted and proves subsequently transformational for those involved. As Divine judgment has been her restated in a positive light, it has appeared not so much as a condemnation from God, but rather, the result of a stubborn human refusal to enter into the terms of salvation for living the life of the Kingdom. From the Hebrew tradition influencing Christian doctrine, for instance, this refusal is seen as preferring the things of death rather than opting for the proffered redeemed life.[19] Similarly, from the influence of classical tradition on Christian doctrine, judgment can be viewed as the human propensity to prefer habits of deceit, dissolution, and disfigurement rather than entering into and living by the true, the good, and the beautiful.[20]

As a final matter of commentary on the proposed rewritten verse, the last line in Wesley's version nails down (to put a fine point on it!) the potential exclusion of the "those who set at naught and sold him" from any hope of salvation. The proposed alternative serves at once to maintain the emphasis on Jesus as the Christ in effecting a salvation based on a profound change in the human heart and mind as well as avoiding the anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism implied by the contrast of seeing "the true Messiah" to the vision of "our God's Anointed" as redeemer.

With such a focus on the cross as the means of the proffered divine salvation, worshipers can then enter more positively into the vision of Wesley's concluding two verses. The penultimate verse reminds the singing assembly of the cost of salvation ("those dear tokens of his passion still his dazzling body bears"). And finally, making reference to the doxological ending to the Lord's Prayer,[21] the last verse repeats the threefold "Alleluia!" and finishes with the acclamation of Christ's sovereignty in that kingdom as intended for the common good not only of the human community but of a renewed creation.

Concluding Reflection

The exercise of this essay has intended to reiterate the importance in our worship of paying attention to how we speak or sing of the Divine Realm. Worship is that locus wherein basic attitudes for Christian life and mission are formed, as well as the place where the energies of grace nourish their growth for exhibition in the world. The present effort has also relied on a corollary to this liturgical theory. Succinctly put, it is that people tend to believe what they sing. Taken together, then, it remains crucial that worshipers stay alert to said or sung language that we

employ in our celebration and appropriation of God's salvation through the presence and practice of the Divine Realm. We should not then fear to carefully alter even texts that have been hallowed by wide-ranging or long-time usage. After all, like the Sabbath, the texts were made forus, not we for them.[22]

Notes

1. Weil's paper was attached to my 2013 Denominational Report to CCT (part II. C.). The minutes of CCT meetings are archived on the CCT website: www.commontexts.org.
2. See CCT's website at www.commontexts.org under News & Events. It appears that the preferred term in reference to these questions has changed from anti-Judaism to anti-Semitism.
3. Wesley's hymn was itself a re-composition of John Cennick's "Lo, he cometh, countless trumpets" first published in 1752. The text we have from Charles Wesley first appeared in his 1758 *Hymns of Intercession for All Mankind.* Wesley gave it the title "Thy Kingdom Come." Almost from the beginning the text was associated with the tune *Helmsley* and it remains so in an ecumenically wide-ranging number of hymnals today. *The Hymnal 1982* does, however, provide the tune *St Thomas* as an alternative. See Raymond F. Glover, gen. ed., *The Hymnal 1982 Companion,* vol. 3A (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 106-111. This hymn is in the public domain.
4. See the entry for this hymn at http://www.thehymnary.org.
5. Christ Church is a cathedral-sized building in the heart of the city. It features magnificent organs, and a superb musical program influenced greatly by its proximity to the world-renowned Eastman School of Music. As developed by Stephen Kennedy, the Sunday evening *Schola Cantorum* is often featured in syndicated broadcasts and with the general choir has also made a number of recordings. The choir field-tested the substitute verse with approbation during Advent 2023.
6. Text at *The Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1985), nos. 57, 58. The tunes are, respectively *Helmsley* and *St Thomas,* each metrically 87.87.12.7.
7. © 2023, William H. Petersen. All rights reserved. This text may be used in service bulletins or hymnal supplements with acknowledgement.
8. An *imaginary* or *imaginaries* are iconic frames of reference that serve to enable a social construction of reality. They are more comprehensive than *world views* which tend to be limited as solely intellectual concepts. As such, *world views* tend to neglect the basic anthropological fact that human beings are primarily desiring animals and only secondarily intellectual ones. This is, however, not to denigrate the intellectual: we would not know ourselves to be primarily desiring creatures if not for our intellectual capabilities as reflected in the self-complimentary designation we give ourselves as *homo sapiens,* in distinction to other life forms. *Imaginaries,* then, as more comprehensive in scope, allow for the presence and operation of affect and will as interacting with the intellectual. For a fuller, in-depth discussion of *imaginaries* as over against *world views,* see James K. A. Smith, *Worship, World View, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), especially pp. 39-73.
9. Ellerton's text first appeared in 1870, revised slightly in 1875, and reached definitive form by 1889. Though other tunes have been employed, the text has virtually been wedded to *St Clement* from its inception. See *Hymnal 1982 Companion,* vol. 3A, 44-45.
10. *Hymnal 1982,* no. 24. Emphasis added.
11. In this discussion, I am purposely avoiding any use of the phrase "second coming" in reference to Christ's *parousia*. As I claimed in *What Are We Waiting For? Re-Imagining Advent for Time to Come* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017), "second coming" language does not appear until two-and-a-half centuries into the development of Christianity. It also has the immense difficulty of begging many questions about Christian claims and understandings of the permanence of Christ's post-resurrection presence. The point of the *parousia* is a looking forward to the ultimate *fulfillment* of the Reign of God/Kingdom of Christ/Commonwealth of the Holy Spirit that Jesus as the Christ in his earthly ministry proclaimed as present, accessible, and effective. See especially pp. 10-28 of my book for a fuller discussion of the point.

12. I Corinthians 15:22-23. NRSV (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Emphasis added.
13. The scope of the salvation proffered through the cross indicated in this sentence, of course, rejects any hint of the Calvinist view articulated by the Synod of Dort in 1619 in its key article 'limited atonement' i.e., that the cross is only effective for the pre-determined elect. This stands in stark contrast to the view expressed by the Anglican poet and preacher John Donne in the same period. See especially the line in Donne's poem *La Corona,* "Salvation to all that will is nigh" in the segment entitled "Annunciation."
14. As found in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* (pp. 763-780), the 176 verses of Psalm 119 are divided into sections of eight verses, each an acrostic on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. God's judgment/judgments are extensively articulated and praised in a welcoming fashion, e.g., Ps 119:20, "My soul is consumed at all times with longing for your judgments." In terms of Last Judgment imagery, this positive view is echoed in the words of the late Old Testament scholar R.B.Y. Scott's Advent hymn, "O Day of God." See *Hymnal 1982,* 600, 601: "O day of God, draw nigh in beauty and in power, come with thy timeless judgment now to match our present hour," or again, in the last verse, "O day of God, draw nigh as at creation's birth, let there be light again, and set thy judgments in the earth." This is a view of the divine judgment(s) that leads to the attractiveness of "robed in *splendrous* (rather than *dreadful*) majesty," as Christ appears "to judge the living and the dead" as in the Nicene Creed.
15. Though the Romans are no longer around, the persistence of judicial murder of individuals or of acts of genocide carried out by secular and/or religious authority has been and is a continuing scourge in subsequent human history. As to the early appearance of anti-Judaism, see the Matthean Gospel's passion narrative ("let his blood be upon us and upon our children," Mt 27:25) or in the Johannine Gospel, the unrelenting use of the pejorative "the Jews" who stand in finally fatal opposition to Jesus and his disciples (as if these latter were not themselves Jews!).
16. That this hymn is a standard is evidenced by its inclusion in 134 contemporary hymnals (see http://www.thehymnary.org). Appearing as a pietist meditation in both Latin and German in 1630 by Johann Herrmann, it was set from the beginning to the affective Johann Crüger tune *Herzliebster Jesu.* The words are based on a medieval meditation jointly attributed to St. Anselm and Jean de Fecamp (†1078). See *Hymnal 1982 Companion,* vol. 3A, 319-321. Robert Bridge's translation of the text has appeared in English-language hymnals since 1899.
17. *Hymnal 1982,* no. 158.
18. This 20th-century hymn is found in thirty-four contemporary hymnals (see http://www.thehymnary.org). Bowie, a priest of the Episcopal Church, wrote the poem in 1928 and it appeared in 1931 linked to the 1529 tune *Mit Freuden Zart.* The text was slightly altered for *Hymnal 1982* to remove any hint of anti-Semitism in the second verse by changing "and all a nation's pride o'erthrown" to "and all those nations' pride o'erthrown." Emphasis added.
19. The central locus of this distinction is found near the conclusion of the Torah at Deuteronomy 30:19 as Moses speaks for God: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death.... Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you..."
20. The typical recasting of judgment in the light of this classical distinction is found in the Johannine Gospel at 3:19: "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." This follows directly on John 3:17: "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."
21. "For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen." This conclusion is a liturgical addition to the prayer Jesus gave to his disciples as indicated twice in the New Testament, with slight variations: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Some Matthean manuscripts add the doxology. Luke's version does not include the final phrase "but deliver us from evil." See *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* vol. 3: K-Q (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 154.
22. The reference, of course, is to Jesus' saying "The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

From Pragmatism to Doctrinal Commitment: An Evangelical Megachurch Embraces "Sacrament"[1]

Emily Snider Andrews

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The corporate worship of Evangelicals serves to anchor core conceptions of Evangelicalism, even as other important aspects of the tradition serve to explain it. To be sure, Evangelical worship is plural and diverse, akin to a mosaic[2]—a reality that common references to the group sometimes belie. This diversity has informed my own work in that I aim to look at particular congregations and entities within Evangelical life before I aim for generalizations of the tradition. This paper stems from an effort to study a particular Evangelical megachurch that embraces the category of "sacrament," a theological concept not typically embraced by self-identified Evangelicals. By investigating a community's embrace of the term, this paper contributes to the growing study of Evangelicals at worship while also acknowledging the diversity sometimes discovered within their ranks.

Church of the Highlands, Birmingham, Alabama: Background

A megachurch known throughout the southeast of the US, with some national recognition as well, the Church of the Highlands constitutes the second largest church in the United States according to some surveys,[3] and is by far the largest church in the Evangelical Bible-belt of Alabama. Its senior pastor, Chris Hodges, is also its founding pastor. Pastor Hodges reports that God gave him the vision to begin Highlands in 2000 during a period of prayer and fasting. At the time, Pastor Hodges was already in ministry with colleagues who expressed a strong call for church planting and had consolidated their energies toward that effort.[4] After receiving the vision, Hodges was committed.

Pastor Hodges launched Church of the Highlands in February of 2001with thirty-two charter members, gathering in the auditorium of Mountain Brook High School. For several months, attendance regularly numbered between two- and

three-hundred. Then, on the first Sunday following the September 11, 2001, attacks, attendance was over 1,000. The numbers kept growing so that, six months later, they were holding multiple weekend services and soon after that opening multiple branch locations, with new branches opening as recently as 2023. Now with twenty-six campuses, the church typically provides a video of Pastor Hodges preaching to all campuses, with music and other elements led live in each gathering. Attendance has grown to between 55,000 and 60,000 people weekly.

Church of the Highlands was not the first church in which Hodges held a pastoral role. Before moving to Birmingham, he had been serving Bethany World Prayer Center (now Bethany Church, in Louisiana), formerly Bethany Baptist Church. The congregation left the Southern Baptist Convention to pursue a more charismatic-influenced mission, an influence Hodges has identified as central for him.

There are three notable influences on Pastor Hodges' ministry and leadership—guiding inspirations he has shared publicly. The first is John Maxwell, leader of the Maxwell Leadership Corporation, and author of many books on the subject, most notably *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.*[5] Hodges claims Maxwell as a friend and colleague, and Maxwell joins a group gathered by Hodges almost annually to develop the leadership culture of Highlands. The second influence is Hillsong Church and its former senior pastor, Brian Houston. Hodges has expressed appreciation for the growth emphasis of Hillsong and reportedly has a relationship with Houston, having sought to learn from Houston's approach at Hillsong. The third influence is the Association of Related Churches, or ARC.[6] Hodges is one of six founding members of ARC, which is a loose connection of churches that are especially focused on church planting and related resourcing. The Association began in 2000 and its leadership team provided part of the motivation and much of the financial support for Hodges' founding of Church of the Highlands in 2001. Hodges remains on the leadership team of ARC today. Since 2000, ARC reports having planted more than 1,000 churches.[7]

Worship at the Church of the Highlands follow what has come to be recognized as a typical "contemporary" worship service pattern, centering especially on music composed in popular idioms and the preaching of lengthy sermons. Highlands' worship team has followed the model of other Evangelical megachurches, having released some twenty-five albums of original music over the past two decades.

How, though, does Church of the Highlands describe its theology? According to its leaders, Church of the Highlands is:

- a historic, Christian church that it sees itself as in the lineage of great tradition, "orthodox" Christianity, and not a "restoration" church.
- a Protestant church that especially emphasizes the cross, resurrection, and the Bible, along with the five *solas* of grace, faith, Christ, Scripture, and "all for God's glory alone."

- a baptistic church that affirms believer's baptism, constituting a believers' church where church members covenant with one another.
- an Evangelical church that emphasizes "Bible and gospel people," alongside Bebbington's quadrilateral emphases of Bible, cross, conversion, and activism.[8]
- a charismatic church that emphasizes the indwelling and continued filling of the Holy Spirit in believers in ways that are manifest through concrete gifts, including the miraculous healing of the sick, and one in which the Holy Spirit dwells especially with the gathered church at worship, resulting in the faithful worshipers experiencing the real presence of God.

In keeping with increasingly popular manifestations of Evangelicalism,[9] Church of the Highlands is also known for its affirmation of conservative politics. Some of Pastor Hodges actions in the political sphere have been among the church's chief scandal-inducing controversies. For instance, in 2020, Hodges liked several social media posts from conservative personality and founder of Turning Point USA, Charlie Kirk, including the statement, "white privilege is a myth." This particular episode garnered local notoriety and resulted in Church of the Highlands losing a lease agreement with the city of Birmingham for one of its campuses. While Hodges did later apologize for his social media behavior and his engagement related to topics such as this has since diminished, his participation in this kind of politicking in public spaces is in sync with popular understandings of Evangelicalism and its political leanings and associations in the United States.

Affirmation of "Sacrament" at Highlands

Church of the Highlands exemplifies a lot of what is common in megachurch Evangelicalism. In terms of its faith and practice, its priorities and emphases, its liturgical order and ethos—there are many American Evangelical megachurches that look and feel like Church of the Highlands. A crucial exception, however, is that in its Statement of Faith, Church of the Highlands affirms its faith in and through "sacraments." This is atypical of Evangelical megachurches, especially ones that also claim to be "baptistic." Baptistic churches would more often affirm the language of "ordinance" than "sacrament"—that is if they refer at all to baptism and the Lord's table in their Statements of Faith. To be sure, the language of "sacrament" is uncommon in Evangelicalism. What's more, at Church of the Highlands the "sacraments" are three:

- water baptism of the professing believer in the name of the triune God;
- the Lord's Supper, described as "a unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and grape juice (the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) are taken in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross;"[10]
- and marriage, described as "a covenant, a sacred bond between one man and one woman, instituted by and publicly entered into before God."[11]

While there is a great variety across history, in recent centuries churches in the West have usually numbered sacraments as two (baptism and Lord's Supper) or seven (as in the Catholic Church). In rare instances when there are three, they have not often included marriage. What's going on at Highlands?

Since its beginning in 2001, Church of the Highlands has affirmed the language of "sacrament" in regard to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Church leaders attest to the intentionality behind using the language and category of "sacrament." According to them, it is especially the charismatic position of Church of the Highlands that makes it particularly open to sacraments and sacramentality, described by them as a theological emphasis on God's presence and agency in the rituals Christ himself ordained. That God is present in these rituals has been a consistent point in their teaching.

Marriage, though, was not included in the original 2001 list of sacraments. It was added in 2013 in reaction to what church leaders at the time perceived to be evolving views of marriage in American society—a change notably evident in the June 26, 2013, US Supreme Court ruling that deemed parts of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" to be unconstitutional in that the government cannot discriminate against married lesbian and gay couples regarding benefits and legal protections.

According to some of its leaders, Church of the Highlands' decision to list marriage as a "sacrament" was initially driven by a pragmatic effort to establish protections around their views on marriage, namely that it constitutes "a sacred bond between one man and one woman."[12] To reflect this view they changed not only their public-facing "Statement of Faith," but also their church bylaws, which legal experts had informed them carry more weight in a court of law. Put simply, in 2013 church leaders feared that the federal government could begin forcing churches like Church of the Highlands to recognize and/or officiate marriages they deemed unbiblical. By utilizing the language of "sacrament" for marriage, and by including this in their bylaws, they believed they were in a better legal position to continue affirming and practicing their view of marriage.

Seeing in "Sacrament" a Pathway for Theological Exploration and Renewal

At this point, it would be easy to stop the narrative, seeing in this change and its origins a highly pragmatic move—one that has had little theological impact on Church of the Highlands. If the change in regard to marriage as "sacrament" was indeed merely pragmatic, this would reinforce the critiques of some outside the Evangelical church who see in its worship practices the principles of pragmatism, consumerism, and other ideas that are seemingly a-theological and unrelated to faith, practice, and worship. However, what Church of the Highlands leaders have gone on to describe is how this pragmatic turn led to a period of reflection and subsequent intentionality regarding the Church's affirmation of "sacrament" more

generally and in its particular application to marriage. A pragmatically-inspired turn in practice led to subsequent deliberations and decisions that effectively catalyzed the engagement with a more historical, ecumenical form of Christianity—at least in terms of how the church's leaders envision Church of the Highlands' position in society and its relation to the broader Christian tradition.

The affirmation of marriage as a sacrament led to renewed reflection on the agency of God in the sacraments and in worship more broadly. "Sacrament" became understood as a practice in which God's presence is active, providing grace to the participant who will, as a result, experience God's presence and be spiritually nourished with divine grace through the act of participating in the sacrament. Church leaders called this move a "theological advantage" for the church, one in which God's presence and agency could be more intentionally recognized as that which undergirds the entire ritual.

In broader terms, many church leaders believe the move to a more robust embrace of "sacrament" supported Highlands's move toward charismatic worship. Indeed, queries came from some as to whether additional practices, such as "healing of the sick," should also be categorized as "sacraments." They saw "sacrament" as a way to name God's presence as the key factor supporting worshipers' spiritual growth without negating the agency and participation of the believer. As they have come to understand it, their vision of "sacrament" in no way negates the agency and full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful worshiper. The quality of reception on the part of the participant matters in that it makes the grace of the sacrament effective. Indeed, church leaders confirmed explicitly that they do not affirm the idea of *ex opere operato*.

In conversations with leaders at Highlands College, the ministerial education arm of Church of the Highlands, they indicated that they embraced the borrowed metaphor of a "sailboat" to describe the dynamic of "sacrament." In this view, a sacrament is neither a rowboat nor a motorboat, but a sailboat. The sail depends entirely on God who, through the Holy Spirit, catalyzes, sustains, and guides the boat. But the fact that the boat is in the water sailing, and that it has a proper sail to begin with, depends on the sailors—on human agency. This dual emphasis on objectivity and subjectivity is in line with other baptistic thinkers who have adopted the terminology and category of "sacrament."

In summary, church leaders' reflections on their affirmation of marriage as a "sacrament" led to their deepening theological commitment to several key points:

- efficacy of the sacrament is dependent neither on the worthiness of the person officiating nor the quality or type of the elements used.
- God is always ready to meet us in sacramental rituals, and uses imperfect people to do so.

- God is the primary agent in sacramental rituals. Human participants and leaders are secondary, effecting the extent to which grace makes an impact, but not the provision of grace through Godself.
- To some extent, the rite of the sacrament, matters—a point not always emphasized among Evangelicals. In the case of marriage, the ritual should take place in a church, performed publicly before a body of believers, and officiated by a licensed pastor of Church of the Highlands in order to receive their full blessing. "A legal marriage doesn't cut it," church leaders iterated. This is because "marriage is not just a legal status, but a spiritual reality"—one which is ultimately only effected through Christ's action.
- The Lord's Supper and baptism, similarly, should be celebrated publicly, in and with a body of covenanted believers, and presided over by a licensed pastor.

Sacrament's Effects on Ordination Status

There are two ordained offices at Church of the Highlands: church elder and senior leader. Those ordained consider applicants for ordination on a quarterly basis. In part due to Church of the Highlands' expansion of the status and definition of "sacrament," as well as because of the growing number of members seeking ordination, the church's senior leadership has increasingly systematized their teaching on and process for ordination.

Licensure is the initial step toward ordination to senior leadership and in practice constitutes another office in the church. Currently, nearly all who become licensed pastors have received some training at Highlands College and have already served Church of the Highlands in some formal capacity. Those who become licensed pastors can preside at all sacraments and can occasionally preach. Regular preaching, however, is reserved to those who are fully ordained as senior leaders. Typically, a licensed pastor will only become ordained if he or she is needed for regular preaching in the church. While Pastor Hodges preaches the Sunday morning service, which is recorded and/or streamed for all campuses, there are other weekly gatherings at each campus that often include preaching and teaching.

Currently, Church of the Highlands leaders receive more applicants for licensure than they are prepared to approve, and ordination to senior pastoral leadership is quite rare. As a result, they encourage those considering this step to evaluate with others in leadership if ordination will better equip them to minister in and for the church. In some cases, church leadership does not approve candidates for licensure because their work does not clearly require licensure and/or ordination. Activities clearly requiring ordination include presiding at baptism, the Lord's Supper, or a marriage ceremony, or offering regular preaching.

One exception to these guiding norms is the status of the senior worship leader at Church of the Highlands who is ordained as "pastor" even though he typically

does not preside at sacraments and does not preach. The senior worship pastor operates at the main campus. Others who lead in worship, even if they are primary worship leaders at their respective campuses, are not ordained or licensed.

Church leaders have related the increasingly rigid and formal process leading to ordination to the church's teaching on and practice of "sacrament." They recall an earlier time in the Church's history when licensure and ordination were more readily available to interested candidates. Now, senior leaders aim for a small number of candidates approved for licensure and subsequent ordination. The way in which ordination has become more systematized has also resulted in a more obvious and, according to church leaders, intentionally hierarchical model of leadership—one which impacts worship and sacramental practice. While those licensed can, in theory, preside over the sacraments, this responsibility is typically undertaken only by those ordained as senior leaders. Senior leaders are also the ones who make decisions about how sacramental rituals are to be performed, even if a licensed pastor is the one presiding.

This dynamic stems, in part, from Pastor Hodges' decision that he himself is to be ultimately responsible for Sunday worship at all twenty-six campuses. He is known to be particular about what goes on at the various sites, at times even including himself in song selection. This is also true of the sacramental rituals, including marriage. While Church of the Highlands has no publicly available guides or scripts for these rituals, church leaders report that Pastor Hodges has outlined particular ways in which they should be practiced at all campuses. This means that couples who will be married at Highlands will be asked to follow the ceremony as outlined by the Church, which may result in less flexibility than in other Evangelical contexts.

Acknowledging the Nuance Present at Highlands

A number of church leaders attested to the pragmatic route Church of the Highlands took to embrace marriage as a sacrament. They said that including marriage initially solved what they viewed to be an "urgent problem," that of maintaining assurances that the Church would be allowed to practice and affirm their particular view of marriage. But they also saw in this view a renewed theological embrace of "sacrament" in ways that were more tangible and relevant for worshipers at Church of the Highlands than they initially conceived—a point of both pastoral and theological significance.

At the same time, it remains apparent that this perspective is not unanimous among church leaders, some of whom have voiced objections to the church's current position. These leaders, for one, note that, while the "Statement of Faith" has actually changed little since the Church's inception, it is in theory a dynamic document. Church leaders see in it room to evolve, edit, clarify, revise, and deepen Highlands's public description of its faith. This means that they do not see current

teaching as set in stone. Others leaders have articulated that they prioritize simplicity and value clarity. Some are not comfortable with the inclusion of marriage as a "sacrament" and a few in leadership would prefer not to use the category of "sacrament" at all—not because they disagree with the teaching, but because they believe use of this terminology creates unnecessary complexity and potential confusion.

While church leaders would officially eschew the label "seeker service" and believe their gathering constitutes one for and among believers who have covenanted together as a result, in part, of their participation in the Church's sacramental life—e.g., in believer's baptism—in fairly typical Evangelical fashion they still aim to assimilate outsiders easily, to prioritize the salvation of those who are "lost," and to efficiently orient worshipers toward the public worship life and culture of Highlands. Some have thus found the affirmation of "sacrament" in general and of marriage in particular (and the resultant theology) to add unnecessary complexity, detracting from efforts toward simplicity in the church's teaching of its faith and in the process of bringing in new members.

Evidence of Growing Pains, Institutionalization, and Openings for Ecumenism

Other church leaders have read into this particular moment the inevitable growing pains of the Church of the Highlands movement, or of any such movement. With age, growth, formalization of structures, increasing professionalization, etc., has come a clear increase in institutionalization. They thus read in this reality a tension they believe will become a mainstay in the Church's life, at least in the near future—a tension between "academic" explanations and teachings around church life, and those who want to "simply know God." Of course, this move toward institutionalization at Church of the Highlands is not unique, nor is the presence of those suspicious of the one who may "know about God," but not really "know God." Still, the discussion of "sacrament" and the inclusion of marriage as a sacrament has made these underlying tensions more apparent at Highlands.

While some church leaders attest to sensing strongly the present tension, it can also be read as a sign of increasing ecumenical engagement from at least some church leaders and administrators at Church of the Highlands and Highlands College. Certainly, the College has been a driving factor. A number of faculty at the College have not been a part of the Church of the Highlands community for long, and many received their training from institutions affiliated with other denominations and theological traditions. To be sure, this ecumenical engagement is minimal when compared to the ecumenical efforts of many other Christian denominations, but in a church known for its insularity, wherein nearly all theological reflection and practice of faith is self-referential, drawing from theological traditions and thinkers outside of Church of the Highlands is noteworthy.

Church of the Highlands's ability to find in external traditions resources to interpret and guide their faith may ultimately contribute to its ability to enter ecumenical spaces. Given the influence of Church of the Highlands, not only in its own ARC network but also in the wider Evangelical world of the southeastern United States, its new openness to churchly theology has the potential to influence other Evangelical megachurches toward the same.

The affirmation of "sacrament" at Church of the Highlands and that community's subsequent journey into deeper theological reflection subverts many commonly held assumptions about Evangelicals. As evidenced here, some Evangelicals engage theology deeply and demonstrate an openness to a variety of theological and ritual traditions, even those typically eschewed by Evangelicalism, if they can be engaged in ways that support their efforts to understand their faith and worship experience. Close readings of particular Evangelical communities—this paper being an effort toward such a reading—that pay attention to the ways in which church leaders and worshipers describe their own experiences are essential and a means by which the academy can engage Evangelicalism with greater clarity and nuance.

Notes

1. This paper remains part of an ongoing effort to better understand Church of the Highlands and its educational arm, Highlands College. It should not be read as a final say on the congregation and its teachings. Information on Church of the Highlands was gathered through one-on-one conversations with church and college leaders on May 19, 2023 and November 6, 2023. Information gathered is provided here anonymously so as to adhere to ethical requirements for research.
2. See, for instance, Melanie C. Ross, *Evangelical Worship: An American Mosaic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 2-4.
3. This statistic is according to "Outreach 100: 2023 Largest Participating Churches," accessed January 1, 2024, https://outreach100.com/largest-churches-in-america, which centers on attendance averages (rather than membership) through surveys performed by a Lifeway-sponsored research team alongside research performed by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. The 2023 report listed Church of the Highlands as the second largest church in the United States, with average weekly attendance of 60,000.
4. In a conversation with one dean at Highlands College (the ministerial education arm of Highlands) who was also a staff member at the Church for nearly fifteen years, the dean recalled how Pastor Hodges and a colleague, Pastor Billy Hornsby, a fellow leader in the Association of Related Churches (the connectional entity of which Highlands is a part) both set out to plant churches at the same time. They created a pact, of sorts, that if one of their church plants did not succeed, then that pastor would go to support the other congregation that was thriving. Both of these churches, actually, went on to become sustained, in part thanks to their cooperative and connectional efforts.
5. John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership,* 25th Anniversary Edition (Nashville: Harper Christian Resources, 2022).
6. See "Association of Related Churches," accessed January 2, 2024, https://www.arcchurches.com/.
7. "Our Story," Association of Related Churches, accessed January 2, 2024, https://www.arcchurches.com/about/our-story/.
8. See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).
9. See, for example, Kristen de Groot, "Nationalism, American Evangelicals, and Conservatism," *Penn Today,* May 19, 2021, https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/nationalism-american-evangelicals-and-conservatism.

10. Church of the Highlands, "Statement of Faith," accessed January 2, 2024, https://www.churchofthehighlands.com/about/faith.
11. Church of the Highlands, "Statement of Faith."
12. Church of the Highlands, "Statement of Faith."

Hymnody and the Social Imaginary

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Our liturgical practices—the things we do as well as the things we sing and say—contribute to the formation of what Charles Taylor calls the "social imaginary." As Taylor and others make clear, however, there are other systems and practices in which we are embedded that create and reinforce competing imaginaries. So, from the start any claims we make about liturgical practices and the social imaginary will require us to ask whether our liturgical practices are persistent and powerful enough to compete with those other systems. This may be no more evident than when we consider the broad range of musical influences that shape our acoustic experiences in worship and in our daily lives as well as the diverse contexts in which we encounter music.

In an exploration of the church and its liturgical practices as a context for spiritual formation, which I would argue is also about the cultivation of a social imaginary, David Lonsdale offers a suggestive starting point from which to connect the social imaginary and Christian worship. In Christian worship, Lonsdale notes, a community gathers to "recall and renew, celebrate and ponder" its foundational story in God's saving work through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In worship, we remember, retell, and relive that story, "celebrating it with gratitude and praise."[1] In worship we are "schooled in the beliefs, attitudes, and practices which constitute Christian identity and discipleship."[2]

What, then, might it mean to consider hymnody (or congregational song more broadly) as an instrument for the formation and sustaining of a Christian social imaginary? To answer this question, I proceed in three steps: first, to first briefly describe what Taylor means by "social imaginary," the role of language in its construction, and how it connects to liturgical practices; second, to look at how music functions in everyday life and might contribute to the social imaginary; and third, to discuss several specific examples of Christian hymns and the ways in which they contribute to the formation of a social imaginary.

The Social Imaginary[3]

Political philosopher Charles Taylor uses the concept of the "social imaginary" to describe the ways in which "people imagine their social existence" as it comes

to be expressed in "images, stories, and legends" rather than in theoretical terms. His use of the term "imaginary" here is not to suggest that the social imaginary is a condition of "make-believe" or wishful thinking. Rather, Taylor is clear that the social imaginary is "an essential constituent of the real," shaping, conditioning, and organizing the way we live together and understand our world. [4]

In Taylor's understanding, the social imaginary is "shared by large groups of people" rather than a limited few and is a "common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy."[5] It has a communal and public character. These initial descriptions are certainly true of most if not all religious traditions. At a more practical level they are suggestive of what we encounter in Christian and Jewish liturgical practices as we think of the communal and public character of our Sabbath and Lord's Day gatherings, the aesthetic/architectural environments in which we worship, the images conveyed through our reading and interpreting of scripture, the ways in which we handle sacred books, and the ways in which concepts come to be embedded in our imaginations through hymns and songs. The social imaginary is both "factual and normative," providing a sense of "how things usually go" and "how they ought to go."[6] Yet this optimistic perspective requires caution. As Taylor notes, the social imaginary can be "full of self-serving fiction and suppression," as has increasingly become evident in US politics. In such cases, it leads to practices that are more death-giving than life-supporting.[7] Of course, the church has not been exempted from such practices; we need only look to the many ways Christians have used scripture to support and continue practices of anti-Judaism, slavery, and racial discrimination.[8]

Taylor connects his understanding of the social imaginary to the constitutive character of language in his 2016 book *The Language Animal*. There Taylor argues that language is more than the encoding of information; language, like the social imaginary, is *constitutive* of reality. As such, it makes "possible new purposes, new levels of behavior, new meanings."[9] Thus, "to learn the language of society is to take on some imaginary of how society works and acts, of its history through time; of its relation to what is outside: nature, or the cosmos, or the divine."[10] When we learn a new expression, that new expression "reveals a new way of inhabiting the world, and the new significances which this way responds to."[11] Through linguistic constitution, "we are given a new way of describing, or a new model for understanding, our human condition and the alternatives it opens for us; and through this we come to see and perhaps embrace a new human possibility."[12] Some might be familiar with cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) which, though oriented toward the individual, operates along similar principles. Through CBT persons learn to recognize distortions in their thinking and re-narrate life events. The re-narration process enables them to re-interpret past events and see new possibilities for their lives. What CBT does not acknowledge is that such re-narration not only corrects distortions in thinking but, from Taylor's perspective, constructs

a new reality. Taylor describes this process as "a regestalting of our world and its possibilities, which opens a new (to us) way of being."[13] The acquisition and development of language, Taylor argues, and our engagement with "certain expressions or enactments open us to certain meanings and ways of being, and thus widen the range of what is possible for us."[14] What Taylor is describing here is not new to those concerned with the development, translation, and revision of liturgical language or to those who over the past generation have sought to develop inclusive and emancipatory language in our liturgical texts. We continue to wrestle with how we name and describe God with some trinitarian coherence, work to find common translations of shared liturgical texts, and are confronted with changing language to describe non-binary human identities. In each situation, the constitutive character of language confronts us with new ways of being and new ways of understanding (or at least naming) the human condition.

One more point that deserves attention in Taylor's discussion of language is his discussion of *joint attention* as a necessary condition for communication with others. Drawing on the work of developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello,[15] Taylor notes that "language doesn't just develop inside individuals, to be then communicated to others," which would limit language in some way to the sharing of information. Rather, it "evolves always in the interspace of joint attention, or communion,"[16] "in a context of intense sharing of intentions"[17] that establishes "a relation of potential communion with others."[18] In joint attention, "not just you know and I know [individually], but it is understood between us that we know together."[19] I think here of the simple exchange "The Lord be with you. And also with you." This is not simply an exchange of ideas or of information; it is an enactment of a reality that summons us to joint attention with the one we worship. Such speech events and conversational exchanges (ritualized or not) set up "a circle of communication, of joint attention. But its 'creativity' goes far beyond this inaugural force. In the way we exchange, talk to one another, treat one another, we establish and then continue or alter the terms of our relationship, what we might call the 'footing' on which we stand to each other."[20] From a Christian perspective, we are offering a normative social claim about the gathered community. This perhaps explains why (or perhaps how), as Taylor notes in his conclusion, our encounter with "divergent ethical or religious ways of life, or distinct political structures and social imaginaries" is not simply an encounter between differing ideas *about* the world but with "different human realities" in our construction of the world.[21]

James Smith has picked up on many of the themes Taylor introduces in his discussion of the social imaginary and the constitutive character of language. In a series of books produced over the past fifteen years, Smith explores what he calls our "cultural liturgies" and the tensions between those cultural practices (paradigmatically for Smith the "liturgy" of the shopping mall) and our lives as Christians. Smith reminds us that "there are no private stories; every narrative draws upon tellings that have been handed down (*traditio*)." As Smith alludes to here,

tradition concerns an active process of handing down or handing on and receiving that which has come before us. The social imaginary, then, is "received from and shared with others" and becomes "a vision *of* and *for* social life."[22] Here Smith captures Taylor's description of the social imaginary as both factual/descriptive and normative/anticipatory. In doing so, Smith emphasizes the transmission of the social imaginary and the catechetical character of liturgical practices. Yet, he is clear, as is Taylor, that there is a connection between language and enactment: "Christianity is a unique social imaginary that 'inhabits' and emerges from the matrix of preaching and prayer. The rhythms and rituals of Christian worship are not the 'expression of' a Christian worldview, but are themselves an 'understanding' implicit in practice—an understanding that cannot be had *apart from* [his emphasis] the practices."[23] Smith's concluding commentary in *Desiring the Kingdom* on the Christian liturgical practices of song (to which I return below), confession, scripture and preaching, creed, intercession, Baptism, and Eucharist suggests connection to Taylor's understanding of joint attention as they shape a way of life and, in doing so, construct a Christian worldview. In language familiar to liturgists, Taylor's and Smith's claims about the constitutive role of liturgical practice and language point us again to consider how the church's liturgy is especially a "fount" from which a Christian worldview emerges.

Music and the Social Imaginary

My concern to link the social imaginary to music and, especially to hymnody, was prompted by John Wesley's claim that the Methodist hymnals (and especially the 1780 *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist*) constituted "a little body of experimental [i.e., experiential] and practical divinity." Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver Beckerlegge note that the main purpose of the 1780 hymnal was to serve "as a primer of theology for the Methodist people and a manual both for public and private devotion."[24] Through the hymns as well as the structure of the hymnal—ordered not by the church year or other liturgical purpose but by Wesley's understanding of the shape of Christian experience—practical divinity—"the Methodist people were not only brought to religious convictions: they came to understand their Bibles better, a secure foundation of evangelical theology was laid upon their minds, and they were built up in the Christian faith."[25] Wesley commends the hymnal "as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion, of confirming his faith, of enlivening his hope, and of kindling or increasing his love of God and man."[26] These claims undergird the historic Methodist emphasis on hymnody for worship and doctrine.

James Smith picks up on this Wesleyan understanding of the formative role of hymnody and connects it to his discussion of the Christian social imaginary. He notes, "singing is a mode of expression that seems to reside in our imagination more than other forms of discourse. Partly because of the rhythms of music, song seems to get implanted in us as a mode of bodily memory. Music gets 'in' us in ways that other forms of discourse rarely do."[27] He continues by noting that a song

gets absorbed into our imagination in a way that mere texts rarely do. "Because of its nature as a 'compacted' theology, coupled with the way that singing knits a vision into our bodies, song has a catechetical role to play in the formation of our understanding and the emergence of a Christian worldview."[28] Taylor offers a similar observation in *The Language Animal*, especially as we consider the ways in which music and text influence each other and our understanding: "Music accompanied by words can acquire a certain semantic direction. We understand it through the contextualization provided by the words. This is what we see in opera, in cantatas, in liturgical music…. That is, certain musical forms: melodies, harmonies, rhythms, become expressive of finely nuanced meanings,"[29] Taylor argues, less through "assertion but of portraying through expression."[30]

Tia DeNora, through a series of case studies in her book *Music in Everyday Life*, provides a substantive analysis of the ways in which music plays a role in the constitution of aesthetic and affective agency. While she focuses her study primarily on how music functions in the lives of individuals and, therefore, in the construction of personal agency, her overall argument connects well to the ways in which Taylor and Smith talk about the social imaginary. Three themes in her book are relevant here: music as a technology of the self, music as a means of "entrainment," and music as a device of social ordering.

Technology of the self

One of DeNora's primary claims is that "music is appropriated by individuals as a resource for the ongoing constitution of themselves and their social psychological, physiological and emotional states."[31] Notice here that her focus is not on what music "means" but "what it 'does' as a dynamic of social existence"[32] as it constitutes, modulates, structures, and re-structures our emotional states, our feelings, motivations, desires, comportment, and energy.[33] We have all experienced this in some way, whether we use music to relax or to get energized, when music helps us name how we are feeling or allows us to linger with a feeling, when we are brought to tears we did not know we were withholding or to outbursts of joy. Sometimes we seek music that "matches our mood," but from DeNora's perspective it seems our moods more often come to match the music we listen to. Of course, we do not all respond to particular forms or events of music in the same way. As DeNora notes, "music's 'effects' come from the ways in which individuals orient to it, how they interpret it and how they place it within their personal musical maps, within the semiotic web of music and extra-musical associations … such as occasions and circumstances of use, and personal associations."[34] Why is this piece of music "meaningful" or important? Because of where we were, what we were doing, or who we were with when we heard it; because it was part of a wedding, funeral, ordination service, or some other significant life event. I think, for example, of the way in which Dan Schutte's song "Here I am, Lord," especially its refrain, has become in important ritual song in the ordination service for Minnesota United Methodists:

> Here I am, Lord.
> Is it I, Lord?
> I have heard You calling in the night.
> I will go, Lord,
> If You lead me.
> I will hold Your people in my heart.[35]

This refrain never fails to evoke some emotional response in me, perhaps from the tension between "Is it I" and "I will go." Or consider how the different musics experienced in our adolescence continue to shape our listening and emotional connections decades later. These personal experiences seem consistent with DeNora's assertation that "music can be used as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is, a technology for spinning the apparently continuous tale of who one is. To the extent that music is used in this way it is not only … a device of artefactual memory … it is a device for the generation of future identity and action structures, a mediator of future existence."[36] Here, in DeNora's argument that music serves to shape future identity and action, we get a sense of how the "personal imaginary" and the social imaginary might intersect.

Entrainment

A second concept in DeNora's work is *entrainment*, which she defines as "the alignment or integration of bodily features with some recurrent features in the environment."[37] DeNora reminds us that we are not simply bundles of emotion but bodies through which we experience and encounter music—in our ears, in the vibrations under our feet, in our visual and sometimes emotional engagement with a performer, and through the performer's embodied engagement with the music. She points to the ways in which music accompanies or initiates marching in step (as some might experience in singing "Onward, Christian soldiers"), how it may lead to synchronized bodily movements, such as in dance or swaying in rhythm, tapping our feet or snapping our fingers in rhythm with the music—responses not uncommon in some Christian worship settings. Through entrainment, our bodies "are aligned and regularized in relation to music, they are musically organized, musically 'composed'."[38] Such organization or composition may come to be "regularized and reproduced over time"[39]—we might even say ritualized. DeNora's primary case study for this argument explores how music is used to shape the *flow* of aerobics classes—shifting the emphasis from the individual to a social group. We might consider, from a similar perspective, how music is used to shape the flow of worship in contemporary Christian worship events, the regularity of that shape for some communities, and the association of that shape with specific emotional states, or religious feelings.[40] Although her discussion of entrainment focuses primarily on the relationship between an individual and music, the shift to its use in social settings like exercise classes and worship may open the way to consider entrainment as one form of *joint attention*.

The bodily character of entrainment does not shift us into what Taylor calls the "linguistic dimension." Yet, as we come to share in an event of entrainment, we do seem to come to a place of joint attention and a sense of "knowing together." Rather than sharing words, what we know and how we feel is expressed in the shared actions of our bodies, whether cycling, swaying, or dancing. Where a form of entrainment does seem to shift toward the linguistic dimension is in congregational song, as we align not only bodies through breath and intonation but also through speech and text in common rhythms. Nathan Myrick picks up on this in a discussion of entrainment during "musical worship." He notes, first, "that musical activity embodies our social imaginaries through entrainment." Second, he sees in his congregational studies that "the music acts as the 'coupling factor' for the entraining phenomenon." In contrast to DeNora's emphasis on entrainment between music and the individual, however, Myrick argues that it is not music that 'synchronizes' with people "but rather people entrain *with other people* [my emphasis] through the presence of musical rhythms." He is nevertheless cautious about entrainment, noting that "the quality of this formation is contingent on the enculturation of the individual (the cultural proficiency one possesses) and the negotiation of relational power dynamics inherent in any ritual activity."[41]

Device of social ordering

Myrick's caution points us, in a way, to a third theme in DeNora's work: music may function as a device of social ordering. DeNora builds on a case study of how music is used in the retail sector and the ritual space of the shopping mall. She draws our attention to the ways in which music is used, at times unwittingly and often at the subconscious level, "as a means of organizing potentially disparate individuals such that their actions may appear to be intersubjective, mutually oriented, co-ordinated, entrained and aligned."[42] Music is used as a "device of scene construction"—a sonically imagined world that "may entail realignment of bodily comportment … a realignment of emotional state … or a realignment of social conduct."[43] As a result, identity comes to be "construed as put together in and through a range of identifications with aesthetic materials and presentations."[44] That is to say, I may shop at one store because of the quality, character, or style of a product but I also do so, DeNora would argue, because this store aligns with my sonic identity (or because my identity has come to be aligned with this soundscape). There is a reason why Abercrombie & Fitch *sounds* so different from Brooks Brothers. Some shopping areas have used this same principle to dissuade the presence of certain groups as well—broadcasting classical music in areas where adolescents have started to hang out. It is only a small step to see how this applies to decisions about where Christians choose to worship, particularly the ways in which the "soundscapes" of congregations not only reflect but shape and embody racial, social, and economic identities.[45] DeNora takes this step herself as she concludes her discussion of music helps to order consciousness, imagination and memory."[46]

DeNora invites consideration of two critical points in the ways both profane and sacred soundscapes contribute to social identity. First, given the importance of music as an aesthetic resource for the shaping of social identity, "for entrainment and for the shaping up of embodied aesthetic agency," she notes the consequences when particular communities—which she names as "micro- or idiocultural settings"—are deprived of access to these aesthetic resources through various forms of artistic censorship. Through the removal of "materials that had hitherto provided the tacit reference points for collective identity work, for entrainment and for the shaping up of embodied aesthetic agency … actors are deprived of a resource for the renewal of a social form and the modes of arousal, motivation and readiness for action that go with these forms."[47] Here we might point to the ways in which Christian missionaries excluded (and, in some cases, continue to exclude) local musical idioms and traditions from Christian worship.

Second, DeNora points to cultural differences expressed in the production of music, especially differences in music production between what she names as modern and traditional cultures. She invites us to consider "how and where music is created, how musical forms undergo change, how music is performed and the quality of the performer-consumer relationship … how music distribution is controlled and, in modern societies, consolidated, as with the large record production forms and the burgeoning empires of music distribution."[48] Her questions about the means of production invite further questions for those concerned with liturgical music: Who controls the creation, production, and distribution of music for Christian worship? Is there a difference between what a denomination does in the production of a hymnal and what a recording company/recording artist does in the development and promotion of contemporary worship music? What are the consequences of these production practices for the development of a Christian social imaginary? What is the place of the church in the development of that social imaginary? In many ways, the "worship wars" of the 1980s and 1990s, which seemed focused on competing styles of music and patterns of worship in predominantly white congregations (and seemed to ignore the development of Black gospel music and its influence on African-American worship), not only avoided such questions about production and distribution but failed to attend to the ways in which these competing repertoires have also contributed to competing social imaginaries.

Hymnody and the Social Imaginary

I noted earlier that my thinking about these questions was prompted, in part, by John Wesley's claim that the Methodist hymnals constituted "a little body of experimental and practical divinity." Emma Salgård Cunha, in her recent book *John Wesley, Practical Divinity and the Defence of Literature*, explores some of the ways Methodist hymnals served not only the spiritual formation of Methodist people but also the ways in which these hymnals began to construct a particular religious and political identity that increasingly distinguished the Method-

ists from the dissenting churches and the Anglican establishment in England. As she notes toward the conclusion of her discussion, "from the earliest model of the Davidic psalms, sung worship replicated the impulse of its singers towards group self-definition based on shared experience."[49] On the one hand, that group self-definition developed from the ways in which the Methodist hymns (which included the texts of the Wesleys, Isaac Watts, John Newton, and others) were excluded from the Anglican liturgies—even as hymns began to acquire a "semi-liturgical status" among the Methodists.[50] On the other hand, Methodist hymnody became an active means of self-definition. As Cuhna argues, "Wesley's deliberate depiction of the Methodist hymnals as exemplarily practical and experiential comes to resemble a defensive strategy through which he unites his readers by criticizing both the dissenting churches and the Anglican hegemony."[51] Methodist liturgical and theological identity developed from these experiences of exclusion and resistance and came to be "encapsulated by the communal act of hymnody" through the "combination of an outward-looking message of free grace and of an active life of faith" with a structure of social organization—the class meetings, bands, and societies—in which that message was proclaimed and practiced.[52]

What Cunha describes seems consistent with Taylor's understanding of the constitutive role of language and the place of the linguistic dimension in constructing a social imaginary, as well as with Smith's understanding of the catechetical/formational role of hymnody in that construction. For the early Methodists, the hymns offered language, imagery, biblical interpretation—a web of meaning—that, in Taylor's words, not only suggested "new purposes, new levels of behavior, and new meanings" but that also provided a framework for "new feelings, desires, goals, relationships, and values,"[53] as we see in DeNora's discussion of music as a technology of the self. The Methodist hymns became, within the early Methodist movement, constitutive of a new social as well as religious identity. Wesley himself, in his preface to the 1780 collection, framed the importance of the hymns and the hymnal this way: "In what other publication of the kind have you so distinct and full an account of scriptural Christianity? Such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical? So strong cautions against the most plausible errors; particularly those that are now most prevalent?"[54] They are, as Taylor argues, performatives that "help to bring about what they (at least in part) represent."[55]

Awet Andemicael makes a similar argument in an insightful discussion of the function of hymnody in Richard Allen's theology and liturgical practices.[56] As part of her discussion, Andemicael reflects on John Newton's hymn "How lost was my condition." The hymn was first published in 1779 in *Olney Hymns* among a series of hymns based on Isaiah (in this case most likely Is 53:4-5); it found popularity in African-American and other hymnals of the early 19th century but largely disappeared by the end of that century. The hymn portrays Jesus as the physician who cures "sin-sick souls" (leading some hymnal editors to add the

refrain "There is a balm in Gilead" at the mid-point and end of the stanza). The four stanzas below are from the 1801 African-American hymnal *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns Selected from Various Authors*, which omits Newton's second stanza.

> How lost was my condition,
> Till Jesus made me whole;
> There is but one physician
> Can cure a sin sick soul:
> Next door to death he found me,
> And pluck'd [orig: snatch'd] me from the grave;
> To tell to all around me:
> His wond'rous power to save!
>
> Of men great skill possessing,
> I thought a cure to gain,
> But that prov'd more distressing,
> And added to my pain:
> Some said that nothing ail'd me;
> Some gave me up for lost,
> Thus every refuge fail'd me,
> And all my hopes were cross'd.
>
> At length this great physician,
> How matchless in his power (orig: grace),
> Accepted my petition,
> And undertook my cure (orig: case),
> First gave me sight to view him,
> For sin my sight had seal'd,
> Then bid me look unto him,
> I look'd and I was heal'd.
>
> A dying, risen Jesus,
> Seen by the eye of faith;
> At once from danger frees us,
> And saves the soul from death:
> Come then to this Physician,
> His help he'll freely give;
> He makes no hard condition,
> 'Tis only—look and live.[57]

Andemicael writes, "Unlike personal testimonies in sermons and autobiographies, which people could read or hear, hymns containing similar testimonies invite listeners to participate personally, singing themselves into the role of the convert-

ed sinner and co-living the spiritual journey to salvation."[58] DeNora's concept of bodily entrainment may not strictly apply to Andemicael's claim, but Andemicael is describing, at the least, a kind of emotional and spiritual "attunement" between the individual and the narrative of the hymn. Where in DeNora the emphasis remains on the individual and the individual's aesthetic agency, with music serving as a technology of the individual self, Andemicael helps press us toward an emphasis on the development of a social identity in relationship with others through text and tune. Through communal singing, the emotional and spiritual "attunement" she describes aids in the construction of a social identity, shaping "the way we perceive and believe our relationships with others to be" as it "affectively index[es] memories of relationships with others."[59]

Newton's more familiar Olney hymn "Amazing Grace" seems, in some ways, a doxological response to the healing received from that physician. Yet unlike "How lost was my condition," "Amazing Grace" has become in many ways *the* expression of an American evangelical piety shared by evangelical and mainline Protestantism, Roman Catholic communities, and beyond the church.[60] Bill Moyers' 1990 documentary provides some sense of how "Amazing Grace" has functioned—and continues to function—to shape the social imaginary of American life.[61] It has remained in hymnals for over two hundred years, is present in more than seventy hymnals published in the 21st century, and appears at or near the top of any Google search of "top ten" hymns. It is played by bagpipers at funerals for police and firefighters, made its way into American popular music through a recording by Judy Collins, was the focus of a much-discussed documentary performance by Aretha Franklin, has been sung by presidents,[62] and is being used for PSAs addressing teen homelessness. As Kevin Lewis argues, it has become a "cultural icon"—but one that functions as a "comfort song" akin to "comfort food."[63] He notes both the positive and negative aspects of such comfort as it "sounds" in the American social imaginary. One the one hand, its comforting power "would seem to rise out of persisting needful personal and local community negotiation with identity-strengthening (or identity-threatening) traditional beliefs and values…. The song plays over and over again,… into the construction, re-construction, maintenance and repair of adult identities: fluid, shaky, and threatened, as of course identities must be, in a free-market culture of free-for-all individualism."[64] On the other hand, he argues, it "functions in our lives all-too-often to purge and to render passive. Its weightlessness consists in its harmlessness, in its function of letting off steam, in reducing emotional pressure and energetic resolve. It celebrates the static: me, 'just as I am.' It does not lead me to be and to do better. It confers an ever-renewable blessing on things as they are."[65] Whether we agree with Lewis or not, we cannot deny the place "Amazing Grace" occupies in the American religious imagination.

What of more recent hymnody? The "hymn explosion" that began in the 1960s in the US and England was, in part, a response to the (perhaps dysfunctional) Chris-

tian social imaginary of the mid-twentieth century and to the growing concern for social, economic, and racial equality. Hymn-writers in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have continued that work, offering in poetic form a way to imagine and nurture a different ordering of Christian life. There are many examples we might explore from Mary Louise Bringle, Dan Damon, Shirley Erena Murray, Adam Tice, and others included in recent hymnals. I have chosen one very recent example, not (yet) in contemporary hymnals and communal repertoires. In "When Life Becomes a Contest" David Bjorlin helps us name the reality of modern life and begin to re-imagine our relationship to one another, to creation, and to God. Bjorlin described his purpose in writing it this way: "the way unfettered competition, consumption, and growth (all hallmarks of late capitalism) have negatively impacted our relationship to ourselves and with our neighbors, our planet, and our churches needs to be recognized and renounced so we can begin to imagine new ways of living in community with one another and the earth."

When life becomes a contest
for new and better things,
when markets speak as prophets
and cynics rule as kings,
when children are exploited
to fund our lavish schemes,
God, give us broader visions
and nurture deeper dreams.

When earth becomes a product
to buy, abuse, and sell,
when woods are turned to wastelands
where creatures cannot dwell,
when we inflame your climate
to dangerous extremes,
God, give us bold solutions
and nurture deeper dreams.

When church becomes a business
that only seeks to grow,
when Christ is voted chairman,
our sacred CEO,
when faithis one more racket
and wealth alone redeems,
God, give us greater wisdom
and nurture deeper dreams.

Till captives caged by money
are fully freed to give,
till all of us live simply

so all can simply live,
till peace cascades like waters
and justice finally streams,
God, give us hopeful visions,
and nurture deeper dreams.[66]

Bjorlin offers no consolation for, no softening of, no evasion from reality in his description of the economic, ecological, and social contexts experienced by much of humanity. Rather, he brings back to our imagination the prophetic vision of Joel 2:28 / Acts 2:17-18—sons and daughters who prophecy, young men who see visions, old men who dream dreams of a community and world restored to God's order. In doing so, he helps us name the brokenness of our world and of our way of being in the world; the "deeper dreams" remain implicit until the final stanza which describes a world of freedom, simplicity, peace, and justice. As communal song, we are brought together in protest and prayer, imagining a social order that contrasts with what so many experience and framing a Christian vision for that order.

Bjorlin proposes setting the text to "King's Lynn," an English folk tune adapted and arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams for the 1906 *English Hymnal* and set there with G. K. Chesterton's "O God of Earth and Altar," which begins "O God of earth and altar, / bow down and hear our cry, / our earthly rulers falter, / our people drift and die…." Bjorlin notes the thematic connections between Chesterton's text and his own. Several contemporary hymnals, including *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELCA) and *Glory to God* (PCUSA), use the tune to set Horatio Nelson's 1864 text "By All Your Saints Still Striving." The tune, like Bjorlin's text, offers neither consolation nor softening; rather, it has a kind of assertiveness or insistence in melody and rhythm that accompanies the assertiveness of the text, focuses our attention, and unites the singing community in protest and petition. Less a new way of describing the human condition than an honest assessment of that condition, text and tune help unite us in naming the distortions in our way of living and imagining a new and more faithful way of being—the reconstruction of a Christian social imaginary.

These few examples demonstrate, I believe, that over time and with sustained practice hymnody can and does contribute to the construction of the social imaginary. Uniting images, sounds, and rhythms in mind, breath, and body, hymnody has the potential to constitute a new vision of the real even as it may function as a "technology of the self." It evokes the joint attention of a community and draws that community into a kind of communion. It constructs a "soundscape" that may be peculiar to a community or that may be more broadly shared. It can shape our affective lives and be "encoded" in our bodily memory. Through repeated practice our singing can evoke new desires, goals, and values or bring back to life desires, goals, and values we once had. It has a contribution to make to the ongoing shaping of a Christian social imaginary.

Notes

1. David Lonsdale, "The Church as Context for Christian Spirituality" in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality,* ed. Arthur Holder (New York: Blackwell, 2005), 244.
2. Lonsdale, 244. Although my focus here is on Christian liturgical practices, similar claims can be made about the place of Jewish liturgical practices. See, for example, Steven Kepnes' discussion of liturgical selfhood in *Jewish Liturgical Reasoning* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 45-77. Kepnes writes, "In liturgical acts, people practice the ideal relations of brotherhood and sisterhood. In liturgy, people not only imagine ideal relations but get to act them out in a kind of theater of the ideal" (76).
3. This initial discussion draws on my chapter "Individualism and Community within Worship Practices" in *Theological Foundations for Worship,* ed. Khalia J. Williams and Mark A. Lamport (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 218-231.
4. Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 183.
5. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 23.
6. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 24.
7. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 183. As William Cavanaugh notes, "Once the imaginations underlying modern political processes have been exposed as false theologies, we can begin to recover true theological imaginings of space and time around which to enact communities of solidarity and resistance…. Precisely as a *body,* the body of Christ is not confinable to a spiritual 'meaning' secreted away in the soul of the individual believer. In the Eucharist people are gathered into a community in which the calculus of individual and group is overcome by a mutual participation." *Theopolitical Imagination* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 4.
8. Lauren Winner analyzes several historical examples of death-giving (or life-defeating) Christian practices in *The Dangers of Christian Practice: On Wayward Gifts, Characteristic Damage, and Sin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).
9. Charles Taylor, *The Language Animal* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 4.
10. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 22.
11. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 29.
12. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 46.
13. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 46.
14. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 47.
15. Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008). See also Cathal O'Madagain and Michael Tomasello, "Joint attention to mental content and the social origin of reasoning," *Synthese* 198 (2021): 4057-4078.
16. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 50.
17. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 56.
18. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 90.
19. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 90.
20. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 265.
21. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 328.
22. James A. K. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 66. Smith continues his exploration of these themes in *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013) and *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).
23. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom,* 69.
24. *The Works of John Wesley,* Vol. 7, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist,* ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 1.
25. J. Wesley, *Collection of Hymns,* 61-62.
26. J. Wesley, *Collection of Hymns,* 75.
27. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom,* 171.
28. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom,* 172.
29. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 242.

30. Taylor, *Language Animal,* 244. Some contemporary musicologists push against the notion of music as "language." Julian Johnson, for example, argues that "music does not say; it takes place. It puts its participants into *communion,* in the sense of partaking in something shared, but it does not convey information or communicate any extraneous content; it does not pass messages, tell stories, express emotions, or represent things." Julian Johnson, "Music Language Dwelling" in *Theology, Music, and Modernity: Struggles for Freedom,* ed. Jeremy Begbie, Daniel K. L. Chua, Markus Rathey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 309.
31. Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47.
32. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 49.
33. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 53.
34. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 61.
35. Daniel Schutte, "Here I am, Lord,"© 1981, OCP Publications.
36. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 63.
37. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 77-78.
38. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 78.
39. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 79.
40. For a brief discussion of flow in contemporary worship, see Zachary Barnes, "How Flow Became a Thing" in *Flow: The Ancient Way To Do Contemporary Worship,* ed. Lester Ruth (Nashville: Abingdon, 2020), 13-23.
41. Nathan Myrick, *Music for Others: Care, Justice, and Relational Ethics in Christian Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 67.
42. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 109.
43. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 123.
44. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 131.
45. Melanie Ross picks up on this at several points in *Evangelical Worship* (New York: Oxford, 2021) as she considers the "soundtrack" of particular congregations and liturgical traditions.
46. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 146. Yet Clive Marsh and Vaughan Roberts suggest that "as social imaginaries became disembedded from theological and religious worldviews, becoming more fragmented in the process, one of the ways in which integration could be maintained was by locating it in personal experience…. In contemporary Western society … music creates a social imaginary which functions as religions have in the past (and still do for many) and it is therefore not unreasonable to speak of the 'spirituality of music'." Clive Marsh and Vaughan S. Roberts, "Listening as Religious Practice (Part Two): Exploring Qualitative Data from an Empirical Study of the Cultural Habits of Music Fans," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 30:2 (2015): 304.
47. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 127.
48. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life,* 156.
49. Emma Salgård Cunha, *John Wesley, Practical Divinity and the Defence of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 136.
50. Cunha, *John Wesley,* 117.
51. Cunha, *John Wesley,* 118.
52. Cunha, *John Wesley,* 136.
53. Taylor, *Linguistic Dimension,* 4, 33.
54. J. Wesley, *Collection of Hymns,* 74.
55. Taylor, *Linguistic Dimension,* 74.
56. Allen (1760-1831) was the first African-American to be ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church and became the founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
57. *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns: Selected from Various Authors,* ed. Richard Allen and John Ormrod, (Philadelphia: John Ormrod, 1801), 6-7.
58. Awet Andemicael, "The Theology of Richard Allen's Musical Worship" in *Theology, Music, and Modernity,* 273.
59. Myrick, *Music for Others,* 122.
60. https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/amazing-grace (accessed November 10, 2023) provides a helpful overview of the origin and history of the text and its tunes as well as an analysis of the text.

61. See https://billmoyers.com/content/amazing-grace-bill-moyers/ (accessed November 9, 2023) for the video and a transcript.
62. Vincent Lloyd, noting the place of "Amazing Grace" in the national social imaginary, presses against the sentimental and affirming responses to President Obama's singing of "Amazing Grace" at the funeral for Clementa Pinckney at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston: "Obama's performance of grace, like his rhetoric of hope, pacifies. It turns attention away from the depths of white supremacy, as not just an individual vice or a subculture but a pathology of the United States as a whole, infecting everything from laws and policies to ways of seeing, knowing, and feeling. And it distracts from the grassroots organizing work that would be required to rightly address racial injustice. Grace promises unity in transformation, but from a position of power." Vincent Lloyd, "Afterword: Amazing Grace," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 40:1 (Spring 2022): 122.
63. Kevin Lewis, "America's Heirloom Comfort Song: 'Amazing Grace,'" *Implicit Religion* 16:3 (2013): 277.
64. Lewis, "America's Heirloom Comfort Song," 282.
65. Lewis, "America's Heirloom Comfort Song," 286.
66. Quote and hymn text as provided by David Bjorlin in an email of 8 September 2023. "When Life Becomes a Contest"© 2023 GIA Publications, Chicago, IL. Used by permission.