

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ANCIENT WORSHIP FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH:  
REENACTING GOD'S STORY FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP

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## Doctor of Ministry Dissertation Approval

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We, the undersigned, determined that this dissertation has met the academic requirements and standards of Nazarene Theological Seminary for the Doctor of Ministry program.



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## ABSTRACT

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### Ancient Worship for The Contemporary Church: Reenacting God's Story for Corporate Worship

Many Christian congregants are not being adequately formed and shaped as disciples of Christ, because many contemporary churches have a distorted philosophical anthropology, and therefore approach spiritual formation primarily from an intellectual standpoint. These churches view spiritual formation as a matter of disseminating Christian ideas and information. According to Smith, this view “assumes that human beings are primarily thinking things, or maybe believing animals.” As a result, these churches neglect many of the ancient worship practices that involve bodily practices and rituals which train the hearts of believers in God's story.

This paper supports the basic arguments made by several scholars including James K. A. Smith, and Robert Webber in advocating for a twofold solution to spiritual formation and development. First, they suggest churches adopt a philosophical anthropology of human persons not radically dualistic, but rather monistic. Smith, in *Desiring the Kingdom*, teaches a philosophical anthropology that understands human persons as defined by love—as desiring. agents and liturgical animals whose primary mode of intending the world is love, which in turn shapes the imagination.” Adopting his view of human beings will help contemporary churches approach Christian formation in a holistic manner—one which involves the whole person, including the body and the mind.

Secondly, in connection with the understanding that human beings are primarily lovers, contemporary churches need to incorporate embodied worship practices each week in their corporate worship services for spiritual formation. Integrating a weekly blend of embodied worship practices such as the Eucharist, recitation of the Creed, observance of the Christian calendar, and rituals, such as baptism, will help to provide a holistic approach to spiritual formation.

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## Chapter One: Problem Statement

### Introduction

The context for this project is Fulton First Church of the Nazarene in Fulton, Kentucky. I have observed that this church, as with many contemporary churches I have attended and pastored, approach spiritual formation primarily through cognitive methods (mainly through disseminating information in a sermon). By cognitive methods, I am referring to the mug-jug theory of learning referenced by Carl Rogers in *Freedom to Learn*.<sup>1</sup> The mug jug teaching style is a one-way communication of information in which a jug of information is poured into a mug-learner. In the cognitive method approach to spiritual formation, the congregants are the mugs and Christianity is being reduced to a jug of ideas and facts that can be poured into the minds of congregants for spiritual formation. Those who use this practice neglect to incorporate in their weekly worship services many of the embodied worship practices of the ancient church. For example, many contemporary churches: do not participate in the Eucharist each week; do not observe the Christian calendar; do not recite the Creed; and do not offer baptismal services on a regular basis. These churches rely solely on the music and the sermon to proclaim God's story and form their people into Christlikeness.

This minimalist form of worship is problematic, because public worship is a sensuous experience which involves speaking and hearing, touching and tasting, seeing and doing, motion and emotion.<sup>2</sup> As a result, all five senses of the body are needed to worship and process information through the nervous system for the purpose of spiritual formation. The five senses of

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<sup>1</sup> Carl R. Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994), 196.

<sup>2</sup> Frank C. Senn, *Embodied Liturgy: Lessons in Christian Ritual* ([N.p.]: Fortress Press, 2016), xi-xii, <https://0-search-ebcsohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1246305&site=ehost-live>



the body are our hearing, visual, olfactory, taste, and our sense of touch. Preaching and the use of music only uses one's sense of hearing; thus, the other four senses are omitted.

Consequently, this approach to worship and/or spiritual formation is insufficient. However, this is the approach that many contemporary churches undertake in worship week after week. For example, worship practices which involve: the smell of candles; the taste of bread and wine; the touch of water; and the vision of colors have been replaced for information that traffics only in ideas and concepts. As a result, many contemporary churches have a philosophical anthropology of the human person which is radically dualistic, and this in turn affects the way churches approach spiritual formation.

### **Dualism: Body-Soul or Body-Mind**

#### **Defined**

The approach and practices of Christian formation in many contemporary churches have been wrong because of the dualistic view of the nature of human persons. This dualistic view is defined as the view of a person as composed of two separate parts: (1) a physical body and (2) an immaterial soul (or an immaterial mind). The dualistic view is in opposition to the view of a person as composed of only one part—a physical body that includes a material soul or mind.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the view of a human person being composed of one substance is also referred to as monistic or physicalism.<sup>4</sup>

However, many Bible scholars and other professionals have indicated that a radical dualistic view of a human person as well as a radical monistic view (called Ontological Reductionism) does not give an accurate account of the nature of human persons. As a result,

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<sup>3</sup> Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Murphy, 1.

scholars have proposed alternative views on the nature of human persons. These alternative views stand as a middle ground between dualism and monism. For example, some of the alternative views of the nature of human persons are a nonreductive physicalism view, an Emergent view, and a dual-aspect monism view.<sup>5</sup> All of these views take the position that humans have only one substance, and it is physical. However, these views do not reduce the human person only to the physical functioning of the body but believe there is a nonreductive component in humanity which allows for the existence of a higher being that supervenes upon us.<sup>6</sup> More will be discussed later in this project on several of these alternative views of the nature of human persons. The next two sections, however, will discuss the major sources of radical dualism.

### **Platonic Influence**

One of the main sources of radical dualism is the influence Platonism has had on the church throughout history. The father of Platonism and idealism is the great Athenian thinker, Plato, who lived 427-347 B.C.<sup>7</sup> Plato taught what is called the doctrine of the forms or ideas—the view that concepts have a real existence and are eternal.<sup>8</sup> He argued that the soul is divided into a rational part (mind) and an appetitive or impulsive part (body). The rational part of the soul (mind) pre-exists the body and dwelt in a transcendent realm or other world and will return there at death.<sup>9</sup> He also described a person as an “immortal soul imprisoned in a mortal body,”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mark A. Maddix and Dean G. Blevins eds., *Neuroscience and Christian Formation* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2016), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Richard S. Taylor, ed., *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City, MI: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 403.

<sup>8</sup> Murphy, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Murphy, 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Murphy, 12.

and he taught that the human body as well as all materiality is evil.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Platonism teaches that reason, concepts and ideas are higher and greater than the physical and bodily. As a result, Platonism separates the mind or soul from the body, and thereby gives a dualistic view of the human person.

In contrast, this division of the soul into a pre-existent rational part and a bodily part is not the view of the Bible. The Bible does not teach that the mind existed somewhere in another world before a person was born. Furthermore, the Bible can be understood as teaching that the body, soul, and spirit are different ways of regarding the same complex whole.<sup>12</sup> In this view, biblical authors spoke of each part as representing a different angle of viewing the whole person—this is especially true in the Old Testament. However, one of the problems of interpreting the Bible through the lens of Platonism is the translation. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures that reveals the influence Greek philosophy (Platonism) had on the translators.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Biblical interpretation through the lens of Platonism influenced writings and teachings of St. Augustine, further complicating the problem, because St. Augustine was a very influential teacher in both Protestant and Catholic theology.<sup>14</sup>

Another example of how platonic dualism affected early Christianity is through the heresy of Gnosticism—which was a product of radical platonic dualism. Maddix and Belvins write, “Gnosticism claims that the soul and the body remain completely separate substances, and

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor, 403.

<sup>12</sup> Craig Keen, “Anthropology, Theological” in *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 55.

<sup>13</sup> Murphy, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Murphy, 14.

the material must be rejected. The body serves as just a shell.”<sup>15</sup> As a result, Gnosticism denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his bodily resurrection.<sup>16</sup> This heresy goes against what the Bible teaches and what traditional Christianity believes. The Apostle John was writing against some false teachings in his time that look a lot like Gnosticism when he wrote these words in 1 John 4:2-3, “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world” (NIV).

### **Cartesian Influence**

A second major source for radical dualism which caused many contemporary churches to adopt a spiritual formation program that centers primarily in abstract, disembodied ideas (mug-jug theory) is the influence of Rene Descartes. Although his philosophy is a rebirth of Platonism, he is the father of the modern era (1750-1980), which began after the Reformation.<sup>17</sup> His emphasis on reason, rationalism, and his empirical method of scientific observation came from an existential crisis that he experienced.<sup>18</sup> This crisis caused him to question if anything could be known for certain. Therefore, Descartes judged that the body and the senses were sources of deception and doubt.<sup>19</sup> However, Descartes caught an intellectual beacon of hope when he decided that the only thing he could know for certain was that he exists, because he was able to

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<sup>15</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, 235.

<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1999), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 19.

<sup>19</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 41.

think, even if he was not certain of the truth of his thoughts.<sup>20</sup> As a result, his famous dictum was, “I think, therefore I am.”<sup>21</sup> This philosophy ushered in the age of reason, also known as the Enlightenment period.

The three most central features of this modern thought are: “(1) individualism, which asserts the ultimate autonomy of each person; (2) rationalism, which is characterized by a strong confidence in the power of the mind to investigate and understand reality; and (3) factualism, which insists that the individual, through the use of reason, can arrive at objective truth.”<sup>22</sup> In addition, Cartesian influence developed “a critical methodology that affirmed the ability of the mind to understand truth through science and reason. This method of rational interpretation was applied to the study of Christianity.”<sup>23</sup> Soon, critics of Christianity began to raise questions about contradictions between Scripture and science, reason, and history.

Christian conservatives responded to these attacks upon the Bible by adopting the same principles and teachings of the modern era. Conservatives followed the modern era’s “emphasis on individualism, reason, and objective truth to build edifices of certainty drawing from the internal consistency of the Bible, the doctrine of inerrancy, the apologetic use of archaeology, critical defense of the biblical text, and other such attempts at rational proof.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, Christianity was wedded to modernity, and it became only natural for Christians to view the Bible and the teachings of Christianity through the lens of individualism and reason.

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<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 18.

<sup>23</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 19.

Consequently, many Christians naturally adopted the Cartesian deception that the mind was separate and superior to the body.

### **Dualistic Movements**

Platonism and Cartesianism are the two major sources of radical dualism which view the nature of human persons as consisting of a separate body and soul or mind. As already described, a radical dualistic view makes the mind or soul superior to the body, and this is what has led to spiritual formation efforts that are targeted primarily at the mind (ideas and concepts). Although Platonism and Cartesianism are the major sources for radical dualism, there are other movements that have been rooted in these sources and are a product of these sources. The next several sections will describe some of these movements which are either influenced by radical dualism or helping to promote dualism. As a result, these movements approach worship and spiritual formation not in a holistic approach (body and mind or soul as one substance), but in a dualistic approach that primarily focuses on the mind or soul.

### **Western Individualism**

Although the roots of western individualism stem from Cartesianism and modernity, it is one of the major reasons why many contemporary churches approach spiritual formation only through the cognitive and not through the bodily senses. It is an understatement to say, “Today’s western, individualistic mindset is predominant in American culture.” The values of popular culture, particularly the high worth placed on self, have so pervaded the church that the historical roots of theological rationale and corporate character of worship have greatly diminished in the consciousness of church members.<sup>25</sup> In fact, “The dominant American culture assumes that

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<sup>25</sup> Carol Doran, and Thomas H Troeger, “Reclaiming the Corporate Self: The Meaning and Ministry of Worship in a Privatistic Culture,” *Worship* 60, no. 3 (1986): 200, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000964216&site=ehost-live>

religion, and especially worship, is a private matter, something of the mind and heart of each individual apart from others.”<sup>26</sup>

Although many contemporary churches should be counteracting this individualistic mindset with worship practices that form and shape believers according to what the Bible teaches, these churches offer worship practices that mimic the culture of the world. For example, many contemporary churches approach spiritual formation by entertaining the congregants with what is called a *Concert/Sermon* service. These services offer approximately forty-five minutes of singing and approximately twenty minutes of preaching. Though popular with western culture, this type of structure is a weak platform on which to provide spiritual formation for the church, because it represents an inadequate theology of worship. The *Concert/Sermon* service misleads individuals into thinking that the act of worship begins and ends with the music and singing, using musical lyrics as the main vehicle to communicate the revelation of God and his acts.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the *Concert/Sermon* service mirrors what is seen in the entertainment world in which a person or persons take on the role of passive spectator.<sup>28</sup> This cognitive-centric approach to worship is inhospitable to the ideal of corporate worship and makes the feelings of individuals the deciding factor of what is appropriate worship.<sup>29</sup>

## **The Protestant Reformation**

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<sup>26</sup> Terry K. Boggs, *A Pastor's View. Acoustics and Meaningful Places for Worship*, Meeting House Essays, no. 2, ed. Paul Westermeyer (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991), 53-54.

<sup>27</sup> Wayne H. Johnson, “Practicing Theology on a Sunday Morning: Corporate Worship as Spiritual Formation,” *Trinity Journal* 31, no. 1 (2010): 34-35, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001782666&site=ehost-live>

<sup>28</sup> Mary L. Bellman, “Corporate Worship as Hospitality,” *Liturgical Ministry* 11 (2002): 176, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001539320&site=ehost-live>

<sup>29</sup> Bellman, 176.

A second reason why many contemporary churches approach spiritual formation primarily through the intellect and not through bodily senses is the result of the Protestant Reformation. Although the Protestant Reformation may not have been a direct result of Platonism and Cartesianism, it has been a catalyst for many contemporary churches to adopt a spiritual formation program that is radically dualistic. The Protestant Reformation was a movement that began in the 16th century in Europe as a response to a variety of unbiblical practices that had developed in medieval Roman Catholicism. For example, during this time, the Roman Catholic Church no longer preached and taught from the Word of God in the worship services, and the Mass became shrouded with many false teachings, like the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>30</sup> As a result, Martin Luther and several other church leaders led the way in reforming the church. This reformation finally ended in a separation from the Roman Catholic Church.

Protestant reformers like “Martin Luther and John Calvin wanted to strip the church of unnecessary traditions and return it to the purity of the early church, both in doctrine and in worship. However, the Swiss Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, went too far in restoring balance in the worship services and declared all of the rituals and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church as pagan...He was convinced that faith came through the Holy Spirit alone apart from physical channels or external means.”<sup>31</sup> Zwingli refused to return to the ancient practice of Word and Eucharist, as preferred by some of the other reformers.<sup>32</sup> His emphasis on the Word only

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<sup>30</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Worship: Old & New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1994), 110-111.

<sup>31</sup> Webber, *Worship: Old & New*, 112.

<sup>32</sup> Webber, *Worship: Old & New*, 111.



diminished the practice of many ancient worship sacraments and rituals that were once used to help spiritually form and shape believers.

One major purpose of the Protestant Reformation was to help restore a balance of the Word and Table approach to worship, not to do away with the Eucharist and other embodied worship practices. However, the negative outcome of the Reformation's influence can still be seen today in the attitude of many Protestants who are afraid of participating in many of the worship practices of the ancient church, because they appear to be associated with Roman Catholicism. These Protestants do not know that the worship practices of the ancient church were established centuries before the Roman Catholic Church was formed.

### **Free Church Worship**

A third reason why many contemporary churches today focus on a cognitive-centric approach to spiritual formation is the result of what has been called "Free Church" worship. The Free Church movement is a movement and tradition of many contemporary churches within Protestant Christianity. Free Church worship began at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, and it can be identified by three distinct characteristics, first, such worship demands freedom to reform worship exclusively based on scripture. Secondly, the ordering of worship is determined locally by each worship community.<sup>33</sup> As a result, many churches have differences of opinion and interpretations of Scripture.

The third distinct characteristic of the Free Church movement is in its emphasis on personal salvation and how it is received. For example, the Free Church movement shifted the understanding of salvation as being a work of God toward being a personal choice and decision. This shift toward individualism diminished many of the embodied ancient worship practices in

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<sup>33</sup> James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 80.

favor of a more cognitive approach to salvation. Thus, ancient worship practices like baptism and the Eucharist were viewed less as God's action and more as a sign of faith and acceptance by the believer.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, this individualistic, cognitive approach to salvation caused many Protestants to view signs, symbols, bodily postures and gestures that accompanied many of the non-cognitive, ancient worship practices as images of idolatry.<sup>35</sup> As a result, all signs, symbols, bodily postures, and gestures were soon abolished, and were not viewed as a means of grace for worship.

### **Frontier/Revival Worship**

The Frontier/Revival worship tradition is a fourth reason why many contemporary churches in American Protestantism have primarily adopted a cognitive-centric approach to spiritual formation. This type of worship came about as a response to a practical pastoral problem: "how to minister to a largely unchurched population scattered over enormous distances of a thinly settled country."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, large groups of people meeting under tents, in fields, and at campgrounds became the vehicle for gathering people for worship during this time. Preaching and singing became the main method of communicating God's story, and the focus of the Frontier/Revival Tradition was to get the lost saved.<sup>37</sup> This evangelistic approach of worship with singing, preaching, and prayer still influences how many contemporary churches structure their worship services.

### **Summary**

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<sup>34</sup> Webber, *Worship: Old & New*, 114.

<sup>35</sup> Webber, *Worship: Old & New*, 114.

<sup>36</sup> White, *Protestant Worship*, 173.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Protestant Worship*, 183.

So far, we have discussed several sources of radical dualism, and movements that operated within those realms. Implications that can readily be seen from the spiritual formation approach of the groups mentioned above include the following:

(1) the most important part of the person is an inner non-material soul/mind; (2) the body is presumed to be less important and unreliable; (3) the body is distanced and subordinate to the soul/mind; (4) all the really important events—all that is essential about the person—are inside; (5) our obligation as Christians is inward not outward; (6) since the hierarchically privileged inner soul/mind is private, persons are isolated and essentially independent of their outward behavior and community; and (7) in the end we become committed to inward privatized spirituality, and thus to individuality.<sup>38</sup>

These implications are an actual picture of where many contemporary churches find themselves today—with their philosophical anthropology, and with their approach to Christian formation.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Both the Platonic and Cartesian influences provoked several dualistic movements which resulted in many contemporary churches adopting a dualistic anthropology of humanity as either individual thinker or individual believer. Both models approach spiritual formation primarily through the intellect and neglect many of the embodied ancient worship practices. Consequently, both models are reductionistic and do not give an accurate account of the complexity and richness of human persons as God created them. However, many contemporary churches operate from some form of these two models.

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<sup>38</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 88.

## Dualism: The Human Person as Thinker

The Cartesian model of the human person as a thinker date back to Plato. This model pictures the human person as fundamentally a thinking thing, “a cognitive machine defined, above all, by thought and rational operations.”<sup>39</sup> The result of adopting this philosophical anthropology is a worship model which emphasizes cognitive information instead of the formation of believers. Therefore, Christianity has been reduced to a set of ideas and beliefs without embodied practices. Smith describes this kind of Christianity as “bobblehead Christianity, so fixated on the cognitive that it assumes a picture of human beings that look like bobble heads: mammoth heads that dwarf an almost nonexistent body.”<sup>40</sup>

The model of humans as primarily thinkers is not congruent with a biblical understanding of humans. This model reduces the value and importance of the body in favor of the mind. The Bible states in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body” (NIV). The importance God places on the body as an instrument through which the Christian can serve and live for God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is demonstrated in this and many other Biblical Scriptures.

One of the greatest truths in the Bible is the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in a body that God had prepared for him. The Bible states, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Jesus Christ declared the human body as sacred and holy to God by his incarnation, death, and resurrection. The good news of the gospel is that just as Jesus

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 42-43.

<sup>41</sup> Heb. 2:9 (NIV).

Christ rose from the dead, he has promised a bodily resurrection for Christians when he comes again. Therefore, the reductionistic, human being as a thinker model does not consider the biblical importance of the human body.

### **Dualism: The Human Person as Believer**

Many within Christianity, especially the Reformed tradition, contested the model of the human person as thinker in favor of a nuanced model of the human person as believer.<sup>42</sup> This model was adopted in an effort “to recognize the degree to which thinking operates on the basis of faith, that thought is not a neutral, objective activity but rather a particular way of seeing the world that is itself based on prior faith or trust.”<sup>43</sup> So before a human person is a thinker, he or she is a believer: before a human person can give a rational explanation of the world, he or she has already assumed a whole constellation of beliefs that governs and conditions his or her perception of the world.<sup>44</sup> The model of the human person as a believer defines a person not by what they think, but by what they believe.

Although this model appears to be biblical, it consistently fails in three measures: (1) it does not capture the fullness of how God created the human person, (2) it still traffics in a cognitive approach in the understanding of human persons, (3) and it still tends to operate with a disembodied picture of the human person.<sup>45</sup> Many contemporary churches have adopted this model, and as a result, have reduced Christianity to a mere set of doctrines to be believed without any real life commitment and transformation. Furthermore, as Brent Peterson implies in his book, *Created to Worship*, this kind of cognitive anthropology leads the church to assume an

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 43.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 43.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 44.

incorrect understanding of the doctrine of soteriology. The church assumes the human problem of sin as simply a matter of poor thinking which leads to wrong behavior, and therefore seeks to evangelize people by offering right ideas to be believed.<sup>46</sup> As Smith argues, this understanding of the human person as primarily a believer leads to an inadequate model in approaching the spiritual formation of Christians.<sup>47</sup>

### **A Monistic View of the Nature of Human Beings**

Contrary to dualism, an alternative view of the nature of human beings is monism. Monism claims that humans are made of one substance, and it is physical.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, monists do not believe, based upon Scriptural and neurological evidence, that humans possess a separate substance called a soul...instead, they believe the word ‘soul’ identifies the *functionality* of our physical matter, namely the brain-body relationship.”<sup>49</sup> In addition, “neuroscientists have presented data showing that many of the faculties, such as religious experience, once attributed to the mind or soul can now be explained as complex functions of the human brain.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, neuroscientists claim that spirituality is a process which occurs in the physical body.

Many Christians and Bible scholars hold to the position of monism but reject the extreme end of monism called “ontological reductionism.” This position states that everything we are as human persons (our ontology, our being) can be reduced to an explanation of our neurological

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<sup>46</sup> Brent D. Peterson, *Created to Worship: God’s Invitation to Become Fully Human* (Kansas City, Mo: Beacon Hill Press, 2012), 24-25.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 36.

functioning without belief in the Christian faith or in a God who exists outside of oneself and acts within this world.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, some Christian views teeter between extreme monism and extreme dualism. One example of such a position is called “nonreductive physicalism.” Although this position states that humans have only one substance (physical), it does not reduce human beings to only the physical functioning of the body. Instead, it allows for a “nonreductive” component in being human that explains our spiritual relationship with God.<sup>52</sup>

Two variations of a nonreductive physicalism view that are very similar are called dual-aspect monism and emergent monism. Dual-aspect monism does not single out either the physical or mental aspect of the whole of the human, mysterious nature, but claims that both aspects are necessary in order to do justice to reality.<sup>53</sup> Emergent monism describes how the “human personhood arises as an emergent property of a hyper complex organism (brain and body) as it interacts within a physical and social environment.”<sup>54</sup> This view takes into account the embodied and embedded nature of the human person. Human persons are embodied—meaning the body and the brain, and human persons are embedded—meaning always contextualized within interactions within the world.<sup>55</sup> *Contextualized action* implies that it is impossible to accurately describe or account for a person outside of their context.<sup>56</sup> One important version of emergent monism is called embodied cognition: “Embodied cognition argues that mental

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<sup>51</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Malcolm Jeeves and Warren S. Brown, *Neuroscience Psychology and Religion: Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature*, (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009), 130-131.

<sup>54</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89.

<sup>55</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

<sup>56</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

processes are founded and grounded in actions of the body, which means that cognition is rooted in sensory-motor interactions of the body with the world.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, we think and learn not through abstract concepts (information processing), but by interacting with the world in and through our bodies.

### **An Embodied Model: Smith and Wesley**

The proposal of these models has led churches to develop a need for a philosophical anthropology that is not reductionistic, and one that is in agreement with how God created and designed human beings to function. The combined theological approach of Smith and Wesley emanate such a philosophical anthropology. Their model proposes humans as primarily embodied agents of desire or love. As a result, their model of the human person is primarily heart centered, noncognitive, and gives an account of the rich complexity in which humans were created.

Although Smith and Wesley share a similar understanding of how human persons are spiritually formed and shaped (heart centered), their path in describing Christian formation is somewhat different. Each takes a different approach in his understanding of the human person as primarily a creature of love. Their model advocates a balanced philosophical anthropology of the human person which offers sound, spiritual formation of Christians. Therefore, I will be interweaving Wesley’s and Smith’s work in this next section to provide the recommended solution for many contemporary churches today—a robust model of the Christian as lover.

### **The Human Person as Lover**

According to Smith, the model that accurately gives a biblical account of the essence or identity of human beings is the understanding of the human person as lover.<sup>58</sup> Human persons

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<sup>57</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51.



inhabit the world not primarily as thinkers or believers, but as “more affective, embodied creatures,” who love.<sup>59</sup> Jesus states in Matthew 22:37-39, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments,” (NIV). These verses not only imply that humans have the capacity to love, but that humans were created as embodied creatures for the purpose of love.

Wesley states in his sermon, *The Law Established Through Faith: Discourse Two*, “Love existed from eternity, in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation. They received at once from their gracious Creator to exist, and to love.”<sup>60</sup> He indicates that the human person was created as an embodied creature to be an agent of love in the world.<sup>61</sup> Love was God’s intention at creation, and love is His intention in the new creation. Wesley further states these words:

Faith, then, was originally designed of God to re-establish the law of love. Therefore, in speaking thus, we are not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due praise; but on the contrary showing its real worth, exalting it in its just proportion, and giving it that very place which the wisdom of God assigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself, (as neither is any other means whatsoever,) yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts; and as, in the present state of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it; it is on that account an unspeakable blessing to man, and of unspeakable value before God.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 47.

<sup>60</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 36. “The Law Established Through Faith: Discourse Two.” Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 2:3. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-36-the-law-established-through-faith-discourse-two/>

<sup>61</sup> Wesley, Sermon 36, 2:3.

<sup>62</sup> Wesley, Sermon 36, 2:3.

Wesley specifies that the purpose of faith is to restore the image of love in which humans were created. The objective in his moral theology and doctrine of entire sanctification is to renew a believer's heart in God's holy love.

Many Scriptures support the human person as a lover model. These include Scriptures which teach human beings were made in the image of God, and God is love. For example, 1 John 4:16 states, "Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them," (NIV). This verse indicates that to be a follower of Jesus Christ is to be a lover of God and humanity. Another example is in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (NIV). In addition to supporting the human person as a lover model, these Scriptures teach how humans should be oriented in the world and towards each other, considering the richness and complexity with which humans were created.

### **James K. A. Smith's Model of the Human Person as a Lover**

#### **Introduction**

The next several sections will evaluate different components in Smith's model of the human person as a lover. His model will begin first with the heart because it is the center and essence of the human being as a lover. Next, his model will discuss the desires of the heart and how a human being's desires are aimed at some end or vision of the good life.<sup>63</sup> Lastly, his model will discuss how the desires of the heart are shaped and formed by habits, and how these habits are formed and shaped by liturgical practices.

#### **The Heart**

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51.

The human being as a lover model shifts the center of gravity of human identity down from the heady regions of mind to the central regions of the heart or gut.<sup>64</sup> The Greek word for heart is *kardia*. It is defined as the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life.<sup>65</sup> *Kardia* is also used in Scripture to describe the “whole inner man, including motives, feelings, affections, desires, the will, the aims, the principles, the thoughts, and the intellect.”<sup>66</sup> A Scripture that shows the centrality of the heart in relationship to the body is Proverbs 4:23. It states, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (NIV). This verse, as well as others, points to the heart as the source from which spiritual life flows.

When Wesley, Smith, and biblical writers use the term *heart*, they are not referring to the muscle that pumps blood throughout the body. Instead, they are referring to the center of the human being, the core identity of who we are.<sup>67</sup> Scripture uses the term *heart* as a metaphor to describe who we really are, what we are after in life, and what brings our greatest fulfillment.<sup>68</sup> Scripture indicates the heart as the source from which desires and affections operate. For example, when Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Matthew 15 concerning the washing of the disciples’ hands before they ate, he answered, “It is not what goes into a person’s mouth that makes him or her unclean, but it is what comes out of the mouth. Whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body. However, the things

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<sup>64</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 47.

<sup>65</sup> Taylor, 249.

<sup>66</sup> Taylor., 249.

<sup>67</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered: A Wesleyan Spirituality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014). <https://0-search-ebscohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=834369&site=ehost-live>

<sup>68</sup> Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered*.

that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a person unclean.”<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the next sections will discuss the function of desires and affections in the heart.

### **Desires of the Heart**

Desire is a very key component in the model of the human person as a lover. According to Smith, “desire shapes how one sees and understands the world, and so the key question for the Christian in pursuit of knowledge is first to consider the shape and aim of one’s desire, and to specifically seek to increase one’s desire for God.”<sup>70</sup> The Scriptures explain and describe how the heart desires and longs after God as a lover long for the object of his or her love. Psalms 42:1-2 states, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God, My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (NIV). These verses use the metaphor of a deer longing for the life-giving source of water to demonstrate how drastic the desires and the longings of the heart are for God. The desires and longings of the spiritual heart is the very essence and identity of a person. Therefore, the human person as a lover is defined by that which they love and long for.

The first chapter of the book of John further demonstrates that Scripture is not only in agreement with the understanding of the human person as a creature of desire, but that it leads the way in teaching this model. Jesus Christ enters the scene to begin his earthly ministry and is baptized by John the Baptist. Next, John declares him to be the Lamb of God, and two of John’s disciples begin to follow Jesus. Then, John 1:38 says, “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’” (NIV). This question of desire and longing demonstrates the human person’s orientation to the world is love and desire. Jesus did not ask them, “What do you know?” but “What do you want?” The concept of discipleship in this

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<sup>69</sup> Matt. 15:1-19.

<sup>70</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 71.

passage is not approached through the cognitive model of knowing and believing, but through the model of humans as lovers with their intentional desires and longings.

Therefore, human beings are “primordially and essentially agents of love, which takes the structure of desire or longing.”<sup>71</sup> In connection, St. Augustine, a fifth-century philosopher, theologian, and bishop from North Africa helped the early church to capture a holistic picture of the human person as lover.<sup>72</sup> In the opening paragraph of his spiritual autobiography, he penned these famous words, “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”<sup>73</sup> Augustine strongly endorsed human persons as created lovers who desire and want to know God, their creator.

### **Love is always Intentional and Teleological**

This next section will focus on the aim and end to which a human person’s desire and love is directed. As strings on a guitar, desires, affections, tempers, spiritual senses, and dispositions make up the human being as a lover. Each string can be picked for a particular sound or strung together for a combined sound. A person’s desires, affections, tempers, spiritual senses, and dispositions all make different sounds that compose melody or song. They all say something about who we are and the direction that we are heading. The model of the human being as a lover function in the world not with a static love but with an intentional love.

Nevertheless, love is always being aimed at some object that is desired. It is not a matter of whether human beings love, but what they love. At the heart of a human’s identity is a love

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<sup>71</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 50.

<sup>72</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 7.

<sup>73</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1.1.1., quoted in James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 7-8.

pump that is never turned off.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, to say that human persons are dynamic, intentional creatures entails another characteristic—human persons are teleological creatures, their love is aimed at different ends or goals.<sup>75</sup> In other words, what human people love is a specific vision of the good life, an implicit picture of what human beings think human flourishing looks like.<sup>76</sup>

Smith writes:

Such a picture of human flourishing will have all sorts of components: implicit in it will be assumptions about what good relationships look like, what a just economy and distribution of resources look like, what sorts of recreation and play we value, how we ought to relate to nature and the nonhuman environment, what sorts of work count as good work, what flourishing families look like, and much more.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, human beings inhabit the world primarily in a noncognitive, affective mode of intentionality, and implicit in their love is an end, or *telos*.<sup>78</sup> The *telos* that a human being lives toward is not something he or she primarily knows or believes or thinks about; rather, the human person's *telos* is what he or she wants, what the human person craves and longs for.<sup>79</sup> As a result, human beings *telos* become their ultimate goal, and it becomes what they worship. According to Smith, “we become what we worship because what we worship is what we love.”<sup>80</sup> As the great Reformer Martin Luther once said, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really

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<sup>74</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>75</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>79</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*, 11.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*, 23.

your god.”<sup>81</sup> Therefore, every human being is worshipping some vision of what he or she thinks human flourishing looks like. The question is, “What vision are we worshipping?”

The identity of a human being is defined by the vision of the good life that he or she loves and is worshipping. However, not all visions of the good life are the same, because there are many different targets that are drawing upon the love of individuals. Therefore, for Christians, Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God is the target and vision of the good life. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (NIV). This verse gives a vision of the good life with all a believer's needs being met.

Another Scripture that gives a vision of the good life in the kingdom of God is in John 6:35. It states, “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty’” (NIV). Again, this verse reveals Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God as the true *telos* and vision of the good life for those who are hungry and thirsty. Notice the language Jesus uses in describing this vision of the good life. He describes this *telos* not in words that would align with a cognitive anthropology, but with words that describe the human person as a lover with desires and longings. Most of all, Jesus declares himself as the fulfillment of the human heart’s hungering and thirsting.

### **Images of The Good Life**

It is important to point out that the *telos* of human love is aimed not at a list of ideas or propositions of doctrines, and it is also not a list of abstract, disembodied concepts or values.<sup>82</sup> On the contrary, “Our ultimate love is oriented by and to a picture of what we think it looks like

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<sup>81</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Large Catechism*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Minneapolis: Luther, 1908), 44.

<sup>82</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

for us to live well, and that picture then governs, shapes, and motivates our decisions and actions.”<sup>83</sup> The human heart functions primarily with an affective, imaginative nature that is oriented to visions of the good life. Therefore, the reason why stories, legends, myths, plays, novels, and films are more powerful in capturing the imagination of the heart than dissertations, messages, and monographs is because they offer the heart a picture and image of how a good life looks.<sup>84</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, captures the power of the imagination with these words, “If you want to build a ship,” he counsels, “don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea”<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the human person is shaped through the power of the imagination.

Another good example of how the imaginative nature works within the affections and desires of the heart is demonstrated when we go shopping. When we go to the mall and look at all the beautiful outfits on the slender mannequins that stand in the window shops, our hearts are pulled to an imagination of what we would look like if we were to wear those outfits. This is what is described as a vision of the good life. Marketing and advertising know that the human person operates primarily as a creature of desire, and that is why marketing and advertising operate in the realm of images and pictures. Intellectually, we are less likely to buy the beautiful outfits that are being displayed by the manikins out of need, but rather, at a precognitive level, we are attracted to a vision of the good life that has been displayed before us through an image or

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<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>85</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Wisdom of the Sands* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950), quoted in James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 11.



vision.<sup>86</sup> Smith articulates further on this topic when he asks, “What are the mechanisms by which particular visions of the good life get infused in our hearts such that they could motivate and govern a way of life (decisions, actions, pursuits, relationships)?”<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, when our imagination is captured, we are drawn into whatever vision of the good life that is stirring our imagination. These visions of the good life have a way of seeping into the noncognitive being of who we are.<sup>88</sup> As a result, “we begin to emulate, mimic, and mirror the particular vision that we desire. Attracted by it and moved toward it, we begin to live into this vision of the good life and start to look like citizens who inhabit the world that we picture as the good life.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore, it is important to examine the telos of the visions that are being pictured and displayed for our imaginations, because embedded in every picture and image is some vision of the good life.

### **Habits**

A desire for an orientation to a particular vision of the good life becomes operative in us by becoming an integral part of the fabric of our dispositions—our precognitive tendencies to act in certain ways and toward certain ends.<sup>90</sup> These fixed dispositions are also called *habits*—things we have done over and over, and therefore do not require conscious reflection; good habits are called *virtues*, whereas bad habits are *vices*. These habits constitute a kind of second nature: while they are learned, they can become so intricately woven into the fiber of our being that they

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<sup>86</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

<sup>87</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

<sup>89</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 55.

function as if they were natural or biological.<sup>91</sup> Our habits incline us to act in certain ways without our having to consciously think about what we are doing. They become our default tendencies or our automatic dispositions to act in certain ways, and to mirror some vision of the good life that has become embedded in our hearts.<sup>92</sup> This is also true about visions and images of the good life. Therefore, desires and affections, in response to some vision of the good life, can become fixed dispositions or habits that are being practiced without our conscious reflection.

John Wesley's moral theology of divine participation is connected to and centered in the concept of holy habits being formed in individuals. Wesley believed that the spiritual senses of human persons are illuminated at the new birth, and as a result, human persons are enabled by God's grace to form holy affections, tempers, dispositions, and desires.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, Wesley believed that these holy affections and tempers did not have to be temporary, but could be habituated into enduring dispositions.<sup>94</sup> The ability to form holy habits is what it means to participate in the divine nature—also called sanctification or inward holiness. As a result, forming the divine nature through holy tempers and holy affections will keep our love aimed at the vision of the good life in Jesus Christ.

Fixed dispositions or habits work in the realm of the noncognitive. Driving is an example. Our bodies can be trained to do certain behaviors automatically and by default without our conscious reflection. Many have had an experience of driving home safely from work without

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<sup>91</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

<sup>92</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

<sup>93</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God." Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 1:9. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-19-the-great-privilege-of-those-that-are-born-of-god/>

<sup>94</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 69.

remembering specifics of the route because their minds were busy thinking about something else. The reason one can drive home safely is because driving becomes a habit; one does not need to consciously decipher each detail of the trip. Thus, driving demonstrates how habits work on a non-cognitive level without conscious reflection.

It is important to point out that not all habits are identity forming habits. For example, the habit of brushing our teeth every day or eating a certain cereal every morning would be called very thin, or mundane habits, because they do not operate on a deep heart level of love or desire.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, habits like going to church every Sunday or reading our Bible everyday would be called thick habits, because these habits operate in the realm of love and desire.<sup>96</sup> Thick habits have embedded in them some particular end or vision of the good life. They aim our love and desire toward a goal or target and form our identity.

### **Liturgical Practices**

The human person as a lover operates primarily in the world as a creature of desire and habit. Habits and dispositions are formed and shaped through bodily practices or rituals. These train our hearts to desire certain ends.<sup>97</sup> According to Smith, “Different kinds of material practices infuse non-cognitive dispositions and skills in us through ritual and repetition precisely because our hearts (site of habits) are so closely tethered to our bodies. The senses are portals to the heart, and thus the body is a channel to our core dispositions and identity.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 82.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 82.

<sup>97</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58-59.

He describes thick bodily practices or rituals that form our identity and inculcate visions of the good life as liturgies.<sup>99</sup> Liturgies comes from the term *liturgy* which is derived from the Greek word *leitourgia*. The word *leitourgia* was used in Hellenistic Greek to describe an act of public service, and used in the Septuagint to denote the services of the priests and Levites in the Tabernacle and Temple.<sup>100</sup> The New Testament also uses the term *liturgy* in several places: as temple services (Luke 1:23, Heb. 9:21), as Christian worship (Acts 13:2), and as works of love and devotion (2 Cor. 9:12, Phil. 2:30).<sup>101</sup> Consequently, liturgy is the participation with God in his work—our words, actions, postures, spaces, and symbols are liturgies of worship.<sup>102</sup>

All liturgies are informed by beliefs and reflect the values of an individual or people.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, action in worship is important, because one is shaped by worship.<sup>104</sup> Smith describes *liturgical* practices as a reflection of what one loves and one's greatest desire. Identity shaping rituals (also known as thick practice habits) reflect what we love and desire; these practices work as liturgies. According to Smith, “liturgies are the most loaded forms of ritual practices because they are after nothing less than our hearts. They want to determine what we love ultimately. Our ultimate love is what defines us, what makes us the kind of people we are.”<sup>105</sup> However, not all embodied practices are liturgical, only those that shape our love and

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<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86.

<sup>100</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>101</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>102</sup> Timothy Brooks, *The Formational Power of Worship: Leading Your Community with Intention* (Kansas City, MO: The Foundry Publishing, 2020), 9.

<sup>103</sup> Scott Aniol, “Practice Makes Perfect: Corporate Worship and the Formation of Spiritual Virtue.” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2017): 93–104. <https://0-search-ebscohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=33h&AN=12685&site=ehost-live>

<sup>104</sup> Brooks, 8.

<sup>105</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87.

desire for some vision of the good life. Furthermore, not all liturgical practices are religious, because there are secular liturgies that are drawing the hearts of people to different ends and not to the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is important for Christians to examine their own liturgical practices and determine what vision of the good life is embedded in them.

### **Overview of James K. A. Smith's Model**

Two main points in Smith's model of the human person as a lover are the following: The first key point is that Smith is arguing for the center of formation to be changed from the mind to the heart (or *kardia*). To change the center of formation from the cognitive region to the bodily realm of the heart is very radical. This goes against the way many institutions of learning and against the way many contemporary churches have approached educational learning and spiritual formation for centuries. Therefore, to place the center of formation in the heart and not the mind requires a drastic change in the way one views how the senses, desires, bodily practices, and many other components work in the formation of human persons. The second important point in Smith's model is his argument on the direction that formation practices, liturgies, and rituals are shaping one's desires. Smith argues that people are formed and shaped primarily not by ideas or thoughts, but by embodied, liturgical practices that are training one's heart to desire a certain end.<sup>106</sup>

## **John Wesley's Christian Formation Model**

### **Introduction**

Wesley's approach to Christian formation has been described by theologian Randy Maddox as an affectional moral psychology.<sup>107</sup> Others like Albert Outler and Gregory Clapper

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<sup>106</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58.

<sup>107</sup> Randy L. Maddox, "Reconnecting the Means to the End: A Wesleyan Prescription for the Holiness Movement." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33.2 (1998): 25.

agree that Wesley's approach to Christian formation is best described as "the renewal of the human heart."<sup>108</sup> For example, it has been said, "anyone who reads the works of John Wesley will immediately be struck with how often he refers to the 'heart' or the 'affections' or the 'tempers'."<sup>109</sup> Wesley's approach to Christian formation is focused on an inward holiness or a transformation of the heart. His language demonstrates very practical and useful theology in the process of spiritual formation. The next sections of this paper will seek to explain Wesley's moral theology, as it is described by Stephen Long, in his book, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*, and how it is very similar to Smith's model of the human person as primarily a lover.

### **Wesley's Moral Theology**

Long indicates that Wesley's sermon, *The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God*, along with 2 Peter 1:4 is at the heart of Wesley's understanding of Christian formation as moral theology.<sup>110</sup> His sermon focuses on two scriptures: 2 Corinthians 4:6, which states, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (NIV).; and 2 Peter 1:4, which states, "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (NIV). These two Scriptures help constitute Wesley's theology of how the new birth gives the power and grace to participate in the divine life of God.

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<sup>108</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, *The Renewal of The Heart is The Mission of The Church: Wesley's Heart Religion in The Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 27.

<sup>109</sup> Clapper, *The Renewal of The Heart*, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Stephen D. Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 130.

Similarly, it was Augustine and Aquinas who influenced Wesley to understand that divine knowledge was given by God in the form of an awakening or what Wesley described as illumination.<sup>111</sup> Wesley describes this spiritual illumination in his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*:

"The eyes of his understanding" are now "open," and he "seeth Him that is invisible." He sees what is "the exceeding greatness of his power" and of his love toward them that believe. He sees that God is merciful to him a sinner, that he is reconciled through the Son of his love. He clearly perceives both the pardoning love of God, and all his "exceeding great and precious promises." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined," and doth shine, "in his heart," to enlighten him with "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance.<sup>112</sup>

Wesley's sermon describes from 2 Peter 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 4:6 how the love of God in Jesus Christ illuminates his darkened soul and brings him into the light of Jesus Christ. Scripture says that light is given at God's command, just as God spoke in the beginning of creation, "Let there be light, and there was light." Wesley believed the giving of light to the darkened soul is a result of the grace and mercy of God. As a result, the understanding of the illumination of the soul from these Scriptures is the first component for the basis of Wesley's moral theology.

A second component in Wesley's moral theology is participation. Again, in his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, Wesley describes this participation:

But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed! His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say, by sure experience, "Thou art about my bed, and about my path;" I feel thee in all my ways: "Thou besettest me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me." The Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; and the same breath which comes from, returns to, God: As it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving; love and praise, and prayer being the breath of every soul which is truly born of God. And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day, together with

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<sup>111</sup> Long, 13 & 133.

<sup>112</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

spiritual strength, and motion, and sensation; all the senses of the soul being now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.<sup>113</sup>

Here, Wesley indicates that the great privilege Christians have in being born of God is a participation in God's divine life. He describes this participation by pointing out how Christians are enabled by the Spirit of God to respond to God in love, thanksgiving, prayer, and praise. Wesley's words emphasize that this divine participation is only possible through spiritual illumination, or what Wesley describes as being born of God and His Spirit. Therefore, the basis of Wesley's moral theology is that because of God's illumination into individual hearts, they are now able to participate in a moral life that is Christ-like.

Wesley states, "all the senses of the soul are now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil."<sup>114</sup> These awakened spiritual senses are coming from the heart (or kardia), and they allow the Christian to participate in the divine nature. A good example of this concept is in Wesley's description of his own salvation experience at Aldersgate:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change in which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.<sup>115</sup>

Wesley's description of his heart being strangely warmed points to how God's illumination in his heart brought about an awakening in his spiritual senses. His sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, describes this illumination of the inner life as a new kind of spiritual respiration that can grow in strength, motion, and sensation.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, Wesley describes an

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<sup>113</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>114</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>115</sup> Percy Livingstone Parker, ed., *The Journal of John Wesley* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), 64.

<sup>116</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.



affectionate, moral theology that is built upon the soul being first illuminated by God and then given the ability to participate in the divine life. Scripture supports this idea in 1 John 4:19; the Christian is only able to love and participate in the divine life of God, because God has first loved and brought new birth or spiritual illumination to one's heart.

Faith is a key point in understanding Wesley's moral theology. In his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, the new birth is received by faith, and it is by faith that a Christian continues to participate in the divine life. Wesley views faith as an infused gift from God that lets the Christian see what physical sight alone cannot see.<sup>117</sup> As Long states, "This gift of faith is a participation in the 'candle of the Lord' that illuminates the eternal, invisible reality..."<sup>118</sup> Therefore, as scripture teaches, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8-9, NIV). Grace gives both faith and salvation, and faith keeps a human being grounded in the grace of God and allows the person to continually participate in the divine nature by grace and not by human works.

Continual participation in God's divine nature by grace is very important to the understanding of how holiness, sanctification, and Christian growth fits into Wesley's moral theology. Sanctification and holiness are reached by participating in the divine nature through the *means of grace*. Furthermore, continual growth in the divine nature of God fosters participation in God's love. As a result, participation in God's love as a *telos* is the connection to Smith's model of the human person as a lover.

## Affections

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<sup>117</sup> Long, 132.

<sup>118</sup> Long, 132.

The heart is the home of the affections. Gregory Clapper notes, “However, Wesley does not refer to heart-realities exclusively in terms of the *affections*. He also uses language that includes *tempers*, *dispositions*, *feelings*, and (though rarely) even *emotion*.”<sup>119</sup> These words describe the level on which the desires and longings of the heart function and operate. Consequently, in Wesley’s model, these words represent a list of the *spiritual senses* that are awakened in the heart through the illumination of the new birth.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, Wesley uses these words interchangeably in most of his writings to explain what is taking place in the inward part of the human person. Wesley’s focus on the importance of the affections of the heart is the same language Smith uses in his model when speaking of the desires of the heart.

The heart’s desires and affections are rich and complex and can be multidirectional. Therefore, understanding its function is one of the major key components to understanding Smith’s and Wesley’s model of the human person as a lover. For example, Wesley states in his sermon: “If thine eye be thus single, thus fixed on God, thy whole body shall be full of light. Thy whole body: —all that is guided by the intention, as the body is by the eye. All thou art, all thou doest thy desires, tempers, affections, thy thoughts, and words, and actions. The whole of these shall be full of light; full of true divine knowledge.”<sup>121</sup> Here, two things are implied: (1) the state and disposition of the human person’s affections, desires, and tempers represents the identity of

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<sup>119</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, “John Wesley’s Language of the Heart.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (2009): 94–102. <https://0-search-ebSCOhost-com.kc-towers.searchmobiUS.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001745927&site=ehost-live>

<sup>120</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>121</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 28, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse Eight.” Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 3. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-28-upon-our-lords-sermon-on-the-mount-discourse-eight/>

the human person, and (2) these affections, desires, and tempers are shaped by that which the human person loves. As Smith indicates, we are what we love.<sup>122</sup>

Wesley further implies that a person's tempers, affections, and desires can be aimed in a different direction (away from God). He states, "Yea, if thine eye be not single, if thou seek any of the things of earth, thou shalt be full of ungodliness and unrighteousness, thy desires, tempers, affections, being all out of course, being all dark, and vile, and vain. And thy conversation will be evil as well as thy heart, not seasoned with salt, or meet to minister grace unto the hearers; but idle, unprofitable, corrupt, grievous to the Holy Spirit of God."<sup>123</sup> Consequently, a person's affections, tempers, and desires can be evil or good based on the direction or end to which these desires are aimed. Nevertheless, the purpose of Christian formation is to bring about the transformation and the continual growth of a person's affections, tempers, and desires into Christlikeness.

### **Means of Grace**

The *means of grace* is important in understanding how Wesley's moral theology works in forming and shaping Christians into the image of Christ. Moreover, Wesley's means of grace is the same as Smith's liturgical practices which form habits in a person and aims his or her heart toward the kingdom of God. Wesley defines means of grace in his sermon, *The Means of Grace*:

By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace. I use this expression, means of grace, because I know none better; and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages; —in particular by our own Church, which directs us to bless God both for the means of grace, and hope of glory; and teaches us, that a sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*.

<sup>123</sup> Wesley, Sermon 28, 7.

<sup>124</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace." Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 2.1. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john->

Therefore, means of grace are liturgical or spiritual practices which Christians use to train their hearts and desires toward the things of Christ. They are not works to earn salvation, but they are channels of grace for the nurturing and developing of the Christian life. Furthermore, the means of grace are not an end in themselves but are viewed as a means to an end—to love God and others out of a pure heart. Therefore, Wesley’s moral theology understands the means of grace as the way through which a Christian is enabled to participate in the divine nature.

The importance of the means of grace in developing the life of a Christian is based upon the understanding of grace. Wesley viewed grace as relational—both enabling and inviting one to participate in an ongoing personal relationship with God.<sup>125</sup> According to Knight, “Wesley envisioned a free and dynamic relationship with God in which divine activity enabled and invited human activity, and human participation was essential if the relationship was to grow and deepen.”<sup>126</sup> Therefore, divine illumination and human participation through the means of grace is how Wesley understood a relationship with God to be possible.

For grace to be relational and to enable a person to have a relationship with God, it must involve the presence of God and the identity of God. Wesley used this framework of the presence of God and the identity of God to organize the different types of *means of grace* into different categories. For example, “the means of grace which encourage openness to the presence of God include Christian community, works of mercy, extemporaneous prayer, fasting, and the general means of grace. These involve practices which enable and encourage us to be attentive to

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[wesley-1872-edition/sermon-16-the-means-of-grace/](https://www.wesleyan.edu/wesleyan-1872-edition/sermon-16-the-means-of-grace/)

<sup>125</sup> Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in The Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*. (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1992), 8.

<sup>126</sup> Knight III, 8.

God's presence."<sup>127</sup> On the other hand, "the means of grace which encourage the experience of the identity of God include scripture, preaching, the eucharist, and the prayers of the tradition. These describe the character and activity of God."<sup>128</sup>

Therefore, means of grace are any worship practices or spiritual channels through which the Holy Spirit uses to shape and form a Christian's life. As a result, the means of grace are the same as liturgies, and liturgies are not new. The Ancient Church practiced Christian liturgies in their worship services for centuries to promote spiritual growth. Consequently, Wesley was very passionate in his understanding of how these same ancient liturgies worked as a means of grace in developing the desires, the tempers, and the affections of the heart toward holiness.

## **Ancient Church Worship**

### **Introduction**

The ancient church's worship was structured to tell God's story—creation, incarnation, and recreation. This story was told by biblical remembrance and anticipation using liturgical practices. Historical recitation and dramatic reenactment use liturgical practices as the building blocks of worship to provide biblical remembrance and anticipation in telling God's story. The telling of God's story through a balance of embodied liturgical practices, as well as other liturgical practices, builds anticipation of what God can and will do for his people.

### **Ancient Church Theology of Worship**

The ancient church understood worship to be the acknowledgment of the "worth-ship" of God, and the human response to divine nature.<sup>129</sup> Worship was viewed first about God, and what

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<sup>127</sup> Knight III, 9.

<sup>128</sup> Knight III, 13.

<sup>129</sup> Taylor, 551.

he had revealed.<sup>130</sup> The ancient church focused on creation, incarnation, and recreation as God's story. It was in this divine activity that the ancient church participated in "biblical remembrance and anticipation."<sup>131</sup>

### **Biblical Remembrance**

Biblical remembering is much more than an intellectual recalling of past events. Biblical remembering brings God's saving events to mind, body, and soul, and makes the power and the saving effect of the event present to the worshipping community.<sup>132</sup> The Greek word for remembrance is *anamnesis*; it has the force of making present, making alive, and making real.<sup>133</sup> Most of all, remembrance is directed to God; it says, "God, remember your saving deeds—remember how you delivered us from the power of the evil one and conquered death."<sup>134</sup> Therefore, remembrance is a powerful tool in worship, which encourages faith in God's ability to save, protect, and keep. Moreover, ancient Israel and the ancient church participated in biblical remembrance of God's saving events through historical recitation and through dramatic reenactment. Consequently, ancient church liturgies were developed as a form of biblical remembrance.

The church and Israel were able to engage in historical recitation and dramatic reenactment using liturgies. Historical recitation is demonstrated in scripture by King David. His liturgical practice was the reading of the Word of God. The book of Psalms is filled with passages of Scripture which tell how David participated in the historical recitation of the saving

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<sup>130</sup> Wayne Johnson, 31-32.

<sup>131</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2008, 107.

<sup>132</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.

<sup>133</sup> Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.

<sup>134</sup> Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.

acts of God in ancient Israel. David read how God created the world, and how God delivered the nation of Israel out of Egypt. The liturgical practice of reading and reciting the saving events of God caused David to anticipate how God would work in his life and bring deliverance (recreation). Therefore, through historical recitation, David was able to worship God and tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation.

The liturgical practice of reciting the creeds, preaching the Word of God, and reading the Scriptures are liturgical forms of biblical remembrance used in historical recitation to tell God's story. Moreover, embodied liturgical practices, such as baptism and the Eucharist work to tell God's story through dramatic reenactment. Therefore, when the church participates in the Eucharist and baptism, God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation is being remembered and reenacted. In summary, all forms of ancient liturgical practices work as a means of grace. Through participation in them the church fosters growth in their love and desire for the kingdom of God. Moreover, these are the same liturgical practices which Smith uses in his model of the human person as a lover.

### **Anticipation**

Biblical remembrance and anticipation are two forms of worship in telling God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation. However, the whole story of God is not contained completely in past events.<sup>135</sup> A connection exists between remembering past events of God's creating and saving power to what theologians call eschatology.<sup>136</sup> Eschatology is the study of future events which God will bring about through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These future events are foretold in the Word of God and are a part of God's story of creation, incarnation, and

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<sup>135</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 57.

<sup>136</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 57.

recreation. Historical recitation and dramatic reenactment of the whole biblical story teaches and imagines God's work in the future and builds anticipation in the community of faith. Therefore, worship practices, including embodied ancient worship practices, are used not only to remember past events, but to anticipate God's recreation of this world in the future.

### **Order of Worship or Liturgical Practices**

Liturgical practices are the building blocks of worship. They tell God's story through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment. The ancient church arranged these liturgical practices in a particular worship order. The main structure was around "Word and Table," which provided "revelation and response." Revelation and response are the heart of Christian worship.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the structure of "Word and Table" provided both illumination and divine participation through the hearing of the Word of God and participation in the Eucharist.

Scripture and the Eucharist were the focus of the ancient worship service.<sup>138</sup> In addition to the reading of Scripture and the Eucharist, the ancient church worship order consisted of gathering and sending.<sup>139</sup> Luke 24:13-35 best demonstrates this order of service in Scripture. Jesus gathered with the two disciples as they walked the road to Emmaus. Christ then spoke to them from the Old Testament Scriptures and revealed himself to them as he broke bread at the Table. Lastly, the sending was their response after his disappearance; they went back to Jerusalem with the good news of seeing the resurrected Christ. Therefore, the basic order of liturgical practices in the ancient church functioned around these four movements: the Gathering, the Word, the Table, and the Sending.<sup>140</sup> Over the next 600-year period of the ancient church,

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<sup>137</sup> Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 45.

<sup>138</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>139</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>140</sup> Cherry, 46.



other liturgical practices were added to support the order of worship through these four movements.

### **Three Specific Ancient Church Liturgies**

#### **Introduction**

The ancient church had a specific order of worship that involved four different movements—Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending.<sup>141</sup> Three specific liturgical practices used in these four movements are Creed, Christian calendar, and the Eucharist. The ancient liturgical practices were not randomly chosen to be a part of the worship service, but rather, each liturgical practice had a specific purpose in the order of worship. Their roots extend into the worship practices of ancient Israel and are rich in symbolism. Knowing the history of how these liturgical practices were developed and functioned in telling God’s story is significant for contemporary churches in order to develop balance in worship using embodied liturgical practices that provide both biblical remembrance and anticipation.

#### **The Creed**

##### **Definition and Origin**

The creed is another tool used by the Church to tell God’s story. A creed is a brief, authoritative, doctrinal formula confessed within the Christian Church.<sup>142</sup> The term is from the Latin *credo*, “I believe.”<sup>143</sup> Therefore, a creed is an affirmation with others in the fellowship of the church concerning the things that the universal church holds to be true or not true.<sup>144</sup> The

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<sup>141</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>142</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>143</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>144</sup> Taylor, 141.

Christian Creed finds its origins from the Old Testament Scriptures, and especially from the framework of Judaism's *Shema Israel*.<sup>145</sup> The *Shema* is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, and it provided a communal, creedal statement for the Jewish people:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gate.

The name *Shema* comes from its first word, "Hear." This creedal statement has three special features. First, it calls for a communal commitment. Secondly, in the context of the surrounding polytheistic cultures, it states that the Lord is the one and only God toward whom Israel owes allegiance.<sup>146</sup> Thirdly, it calls for a personal commitment to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Furthermore, within this personal commitment is a call to also teach your children to love God. The *Shema* stood as a covenant statement between God and his people, and it also gave the Jewish people a way to tell God's story. Therefore, the Jewish people recited this creed constantly in their morning and evening prayers, as well as, throughout their rituals.

Jesus quotes from the *Shema* when asked by one of the scribes, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus answers, "The most important one is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."<sup>147</sup> This very same framework of the Jewish *Shema* was present in the New Testament as Jesus revealed himself to

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<sup>145</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 10.

<sup>146</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 11.

<sup>147</sup> Mark 12:29-30.

his followers.<sup>148</sup> As Jesus' followers began to understand Christ's deity and the Trinity, their understanding of the words, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one," included Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus lays the groundwork for this expanded creedal statement by teaching his disciples that God, the Father, and he himself are one. In fact, Jesus states, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."<sup>149</sup> Likewise, Jesus expands the understanding of the Holy Spirit as deity when he states, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."<sup>150</sup> The words "another advocate" means that the Holy Spirit will be of the same kind; the same substance as Jesus and the Father.

Evidence demonstrates how the first church expanded the *Shema* to include the deity of Jesus Christ.<sup>151</sup> For example, John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."<sup>152</sup> These words of the Apostle John reveal that John, and perhaps most of his readers, understood that Jesus Christ was one and the same with the Lord God of the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 8:6 also expounds on how the Christian creed expanded from the *Shema*. It states, "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ,

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<sup>148</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 17-18.

<sup>149</sup> John 14:9.

<sup>150</sup> John 14:16-18.

<sup>151</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 17-18.

<sup>152</sup> John 1:1-3.

through whom all things came and through whom we live.” These examples demonstrate how New Testament quotes from the *Shema* expand to include the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### **Creedal Statements in the New Testament**

The New Testament reveals how the earlier church expanded the *Shema* not only to include the deity of Jesus but also to include the story of his life, death, and resurrection. Several New Testament scriptures show how the earlier followers of Christ had compressed the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus into creedal statements. These statements did not reveal everything about Jesus, but they gave the church a way to express their faith. Thus, it was important for the earlier church to have a rule of faith to live by, which distinguished them from the Jewish nation. For instance, even though Christianity was rooted in Judaism, it was also separate from Judaism. Christ claimed to be the God and Messiah that was prophesied in the Old Testament, and the nation of Israel rejected him.<sup>153</sup> However, not all the Jews rejected him, most of his earlier followers were Jews. Therefore, a Christian creedal statement of faith helped to identify those who were followers of Jesus Christ.

One of the New Testament passages that tells God’s story in creedal form is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

This passage is one of the Scriptures that reveal how the Christian faith was beginning to be organically formed into a creed that provided the church a way of expressing the truths of the

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<sup>153</sup> John 1:11.

gospel. Another passage is found in Romans 10:9; it states, “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” These New Testament creed statements were incorporated into the disciplines by which converts were prepared for baptism, and they were also used as answers to questions that were usually asked during the liturgy of baptism.<sup>154</sup> Consequently, baptismal creeds became the seeds from which grew the ecumenical creeds, such as those of Nicaea and Chalcedon; the traditional creeds, such as the Apostles’; and the more formal and scholastic creeds, such as the Athanasian.<sup>155</sup>

### **Writings from the Early Church Fathers**

The use of baptismal creeds was not the only reason for the development of the creeds. One major reason for the development of a church creed by early church fathers was to protect the church from false teaching. For instance, Ignatius the bishop of Antioch wrote a series of letters to churches in Asia Minor and Rome targeting those who were known as Docetists.<sup>156</sup> Docetism denied that Jesus shared fully and physically in the human condition.<sup>157</sup> In Ignatius’ Letter to the Trallians 9:1-2, Ignatius exhorts the church to,

Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly begotten of God and of the Virgin, but not after the same manner. For indeed God and man are not the same. He truly assumed a body; for “the Word was made flesh,” and lived upon earth without sin. For says He, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” He did in reality both eat and drink. He was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate. He really,

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<sup>154</sup> Al Truesdale, ed., *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 137.

<sup>155</sup> Truesdale, 137.

<sup>156</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 22.

and not merely in appearance, was crucified, and died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.<sup>158</sup>

Ignatius' words not only refute the false teachings of Docetism, but his argument shows the use of professions of faith that eventually established the standard creed of the church.

Another example of short, pre-creedal statements of faith found in the writings of the early church fathers is from the North African teacher Tertullian. Tertullian teaches a Rule of Faith by which genuine believers should live and against which the heresies of false teachers can be measured.<sup>159</sup> He states the Rule of Faith as this,

Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, *and*, under the name of God, was seen “in diverse manners” by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh. This rule, as it will be proved, was taught by Christ, and raises amongst ourselves no other questions than those which heresies introduce, and which make men heretics.<sup>160</sup>

This Rule of Faith revealed the progression the church made toward creating standard creeds.

## The Apostles' Creed

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<sup>158</sup> Ignatius of Antioch. *Epistles of Ignatius*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library Vol. 1. “Epistles of Ignatius to the Trallians, Chap. XI. Reference to the history of Christ.”  
[https://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius\\_antioch\\_/epistles\\_of\\_ignatius/anf01.v.iv.ix.html](https://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius_antioch_/epistles_of_ignatius/anf01.v.iv.ix.html)

<sup>159</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 28.

<sup>160</sup> Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Vol. III. Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. “Chap. XIII. Summary of the Creed, or Rule of Faith.”  
<https://ccel.org/ccel/tertullian/heretics/anf03.v.iii.xiii.html>

From the first and second century creedal statements that were organically developing came the first standard form of a profession of faith known as the Apostle's Creed. "The earliest set form of this creed is found in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (ca. 215 CE). It takes the form of questions and answers:"<sup>161</sup>

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?  
 Do you believe in Christ Jesus, Son of God?  
 Who was born (natus) by the Holy Spirit out of Mary the Virgin, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate and died and was buried, and rose on the third day alive from among the Dead, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, to come to judge the living and the dead?  
 Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh?<sup>162</sup>

This creed was also called "the old Roman Symbol," and was used as a baptismal confession in the Christian church in Rome as believers were publicly and formally inducted into the Christian faith.<sup>163</sup>

A version of the Apostles' Creed is found in the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* composed by Rufinus of Aquileia (ca. 404).<sup>164</sup> Rufinus was the first to give an account of a legend concerning the writing of the Apostles' Creed. He states that the creed was written by the apostles themselves, and that each of the twelve apostles contributed a phrase to the creed.<sup>165</sup> Although this legend became popular, historical criticism later proved that the legend had no truth to it. By the seventh century, the Apostles' Creed that we know today became the standard version. It reads:

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<sup>161</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>162</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>163</sup> H. Ray Dunning, *A Layman's Guide: To the Apostles' Creed* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>164</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 51.

<sup>165</sup> Dunning, 11.

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

One of the first features of this creed that is very noticeable is that it begins with the pronoun “I,” instead of “we.” This reveals that the Apostles’ Creed was used mostly for a baptismal creed that was recited by each convert to the Christian faith before being baptized. However, this does not limit its use to only baptismal confessions. The Apostles’ Creed is recited every Sunday in unison by local congregations across the world.

The words of the Apostles’ Creed are framed around the Trinity, teaching that there are three persons of the Trinity that form one Godhead. However, the creed is Christ centered, with most of its words telling the story of Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection. The words, “descended to hell,” usually raises many questions. Most Bible scholars understand this to mean that Christ went to *Sheol* or *Hades*. *Sheol* and *Hades* are the Hebrew and Greek words for “the place or realm of the dead,” also called, “the place of departed spirits.” However, some students of the Bible connect “descended to hell,” with 1 Peter 3:19, and imply that Christ gave the wicked dead an opportunity to believe. Nevertheless, what is important is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, thereby defeating death and the powers of darkness.

One concern Protestant believers have about the Apostles’ Creed is over the word “catholic.” Some think this part of the creed is endorsing the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. However, the word “catholic” in the creed does not in any shape or form imply the



Roman Catholic Church but means the whole or universal church throughout all places and all times.<sup>166</sup>

### **The Nicene Creed**

The most important widely used official creed of the church is known as the Nicene Creed. The first ecumenical council meeting of Nicaea in 325 A.D. was called by the Roman emperor Constantine for the unifying of the “newly Christian empire that had been severely divided by the teaching of a presbyter in Alexandria named Arius (256-336 A.D.). In defense of God’s absolute uniqueness and transcendence, Arius argued that God’s essence (*ousia*) could not be shared, for such sharing in nature would imply a division in the Godhead.”<sup>167</sup> Consequently, Arius taught that Jesus Christ (the Word of God), could not be fully God but must be a creature that God created, and that he was given the name, Son of God, only as an honorary title.<sup>168</sup>

The great bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, along with other orthodox bishops, opposed the false teachings of Arius and wrote the Nicene Creed as a statement of faith for the universal church.<sup>169</sup> The creed reads as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
Begotten [*gennethenta*] of the Father as only begotten, that is, out of being [*ousia*] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten not made [*gennethenta ou poiethenta*], one in being [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things are made, things in heaven and things on earth, who, for us humans and for our

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<sup>166</sup> F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church*. Rev. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 308.

<sup>167</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>168</sup> Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. Collegeville (Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book, 1983), 60.

<sup>169</sup> Davis, 59-60.

salvation came down and became flesh [*sarkothenta*], becoming human [*enanthropesanta*], he suffered, and he rose on the third day, and having gone into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

Those who say, “There was a time when he was not” and “before he was begotten, he was not, or that he was of another being or substance or a creature ... let the universal church consider them anathema.”<sup>170</sup>

Athanasius and the orthodox bishops stated in the creed that Jesus Christ is deity by declaring him “one in being with the Father”, and that anyone in the church who taught otherwise should be excommunicated. Therefore, the Nicene Creed is very different from the Apostles’ Creed and demonstrates the need for an expanded creedal statement that would protect the church from false teachings. In addition, the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. enlarged the creed and added that the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and Giver of Life,” “who proceeds from the Father,” is also fully divine, that is, “with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.”<sup>171</sup> As a result, the Nicene Creed is said to be the church’s first official affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

### **How The Creed Functions in Christian Formation**

There are several ways in which the creed functions in the worship services, and in the Christian faith. First, the creed brings to remembrance God’s saving activities through historical recitation. The creed teaches a precise historical statement of God’s salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. Secondly, the creed provides a “profession of faith”—a way to profess a statement of personal and communal identity.<sup>172</sup> Thirdly, the creed functions as a “Rule of Faith.” This points to the way creed provides a measure or norm for Christian identity, and a standard by which Scripture should be interpreted.<sup>173</sup> Fourthly, reciting the creed at worship is a counter-

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<sup>170</sup> Davis, 60.

<sup>171</sup> Truesdale., 138.

<sup>172</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 46.

<sup>173</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 46-47.

cultural act.<sup>174</sup> In a world that celebrates individuality and rejects tradition, the creed unites the church together as a body of believers throughout all church ages.<sup>175</sup> The fifth and sixth function of the creed is that it provides a definition of faith and a symbol for the Christian faith.

## **The Christian Calendar**

### **Defined**

The Christian calendar is also referred to as the Liturgical year or the Christian year. It “refers to a yearlong calendar that marks time according to God’s activities.”<sup>176</sup> It is a way of observing the life of Jesus Christ and provides a way to tell God’s story. The Christian year consists of observing two major cycles in Christ’ life and ministry, the Christmas cycle, and the Easter cycle.<sup>177</sup> Together these cycles form what is called the temporal cycle, and when completed, the Christian calendar starts over again much like the civil calendar.<sup>178</sup> The Christian year begins not with January as does the civil calendar, but with Advent, which is traditionally the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day.<sup>179</sup> The last day on the Christian calendar before the year starts again is called Christ the King Sunday, and this day is celebrated on the Sunday before Advent begins.

### **Time**

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<sup>174</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 47.

<sup>175</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 47.

<sup>176</sup> Cherry, 207.

<sup>177</sup> Cherry, 207.

<sup>178</sup> Cherry, 207.

<sup>179</sup> William Petersen proposes a shift in the Christian calendar concerning Advent. He advocates in his book, *What are we waiting for? Re-imagining Advent for Time to Come*, that Advent start seven weeks before Christmas and not four. A seven-week Advent would strengthen the theme of Advent, which is the “reign of God.”

God created time. Genesis 1:14 tells us that God created the sun, moon, and stars not only to separate night from day and to give light, but also to mark seasons, days, and years. After each day of creation in Genesis chapter one, God describes the day as a twenty-four-hour time period by calling it evening and morning. Therefore, God created time with its structure of events and rhythms of life, such as rest, worship, work, and play. Christianity has sought to use time to worship God and to tell God's story of his saving acts. James F. White writes, "Our present time is used to place us in contact with God's acts in time past and future."<sup>180</sup> Consequently, time is God's gift to help individuals structure their lives around him.

The New Testament uses two different words for time and each of these words depicts a different aspect of time. The first word is *Kairos*, and it is used in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near." *Kairos*, in this verse, means the right or proper time present in which God has accomplished a new dimension of reality.<sup>181</sup> It describes a special occasion and moment in which God has or will act in human history. The second word for time is *Chronos*, and it refers to clock or calendar time. The Bible uses this word in Matthew 2:7, "Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared." Therefore, *Chronos* refers to the actual date and hour of an event, and from it stems the word *chronology*.

A third New Testament word that is important for the understanding of how the Christian calendar functions to tell God's story is the word *anamnesis*. *Anamnesis* is a noun derived from the verb that means "to remember."<sup>182</sup> However, biblical use of this word in the Greek form varies differently from the western mind-set. The western mind-set thinks of remembering as

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<sup>180</sup> James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 48.

<sup>181</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 49.

<sup>182</sup> Cherry, 208

recalling past events that are fully concluded, but Chery argues that “*anamnesis* depicts an active remembrance. To remember, in the biblical sense, is when the present and the past come together; it is a claim that what God did in the past to benefit humankind is equally active and efficacious in this present moment.”<sup>183</sup> Therefore, the Christian calendar, through remembrance, makes the power and salvation of God in the past also real and present in lives today.

### **Jewish Roots**

The Christian calendar has its roots in Judaism. The Bible teaches that the law with its teachings, holy days, and festivals were only a shadow that pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>184</sup> For this reason, God established holy days, and festivals on a spiritual calendar for the Jewish people to celebrate so that God could reveal his plan of salvation not only to the Jews but also to the whole world. God knew that the Jewish nation and Christians today would need a spiritual calendar to help them remember his saving acts. Therefore, these festivals were to be celebrated and enjoyed by the whole Jewish nation, just as the whole church is to embrace the Christian year that is rooted in these Jewish festivals.

One example of the Jewish roots of the Christian calendar is the Christian’s celebration of Easter. Easter is a time to remember the cross, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ death and resurrection took place during the Jewish Passover that was celebrated each year as described in Exodus 12. Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover with his disciples before going to the cross and taught them that he was the fulfillment of this celebration by the giving of his blood and body on the cross. Jesus Christ became the spiritual lamb that was sacrificed for our sins. Christ established the sacrament of the Eucharist before going to the cross to represent the

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<sup>183</sup> Cherry, 208.

<sup>184</sup> Heb. 10:1.

fulfillment of the Old Testament Jewish Passover. Furthermore, the dates and times that are observed in the Christian Year concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ have their roots in the feasts and festivals of ancient Israel.<sup>185</sup>

### **How the Christian Year Developed**

Most of the first Christian worshippers were Jewish and they continued many of the Jewish holy days that they had always observed from the Jewish liturgical calendar. However, these Jewish practices began to be infused with Christian meaning and interpretation as these practices told God's story.<sup>186</sup> One example of how a Jewish practice began to be infused with Christian meaning can be seen in the words of the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth. The Bible states in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, "For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."<sup>187</sup> Nevertheless, the first Christians did not forsake the rhythm and benefits of the liturgical calendar that was already in place; instead, they discontinued some observances, continued others, and added Christian observances to tell God's story of salvation through Jesus Christ.<sup>188</sup>

The Christian Year began with a weekly rhythm of observing the Lord's Day, the day Christ had risen from the dead. Therefore, the first day of the week, Sunday, is the heart of the Christian Year. In fact, the earlier church saw the spiritual connection with this day and the first day of creation, when "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light....And there was

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<sup>185</sup> Cherry, 209.

<sup>186</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>187</sup> NRSV.

<sup>188</sup> Cherry, 210.

evening and there was morning, the first day.”<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, “the four gospels are all careful to state that it was on the morning of the first day, that is, the day on which creation began and God ‘separated the light from the darkness,’ that the empty tomb was discovered.”<sup>190</sup> Although earlier Jewish Christians observed both Saturday and Sunday, Sunday became the dominant day for worship because it was the day that Christ rose from the dead.

Evidence of Sunday being the dominant day of worship for the earlier Christians is indicated in 1 Corinthians 16:2 when Paul told the Christians in Corinth to set aside money for the collection on the first day of the week. This verse indicates that the giving of money to the poor in Jerusalem should be done when the church met together on Sunday for worship. Another Scripture pointing to Sunday as the dominant day of worship for the earlier Christians is found in Revelation 1:10 when John wrote that he “was in the spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Nevertheless, the term “Lord’s Day,” became a Christian term for the first day of the week.

Therefore, without the weekly rhythm of creation and recreation given by observing the Lord’s Day, there is no basis for the rest of the Christian year.<sup>191</sup> Later, the annual feast of Easter, Pascha, was added to the Liturgical year by the end of the second century and celebrated throughout the church.<sup>192</sup> Next, Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, was added to the Christian calendar, and this marked the end of the joyful season of Easter. The season of Lent was added to the Christian year in the third century.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, when the Roman Emperor Constantine was

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<sup>189</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 50. Scripture is from Genesis 1:3;5 NRSV.

<sup>190</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 50.

<sup>191</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>192</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>193</sup> Cherry, 210.

converted to Christianity in 321 CE, church leaders took advantage of the opportunity to expand the Christian year, and Sunday became recognized as the day of rest by imperial decree.<sup>194</sup>

Later, the observance of Christmas and Epiphany were added during the fourth century. Next, “The Paschal Vigil and Feast (Easter) expanded into the Easter Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the great Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.”<sup>195</sup> A fourth-century source, a diary by a Spanish woman named Egeria, confirms that by the fourth century, the events already mentioned were firmly established and observed as part of the Christian year.<sup>196</sup>

Other holy days and special observances by the Church were later added to the Christian year throughout the ages. For example, the Church has called the longest period between Pentecost and Advent by the name Ordinary Time. This is a time on the Christian calendar for the Church to teach from the gospels about the work and ministry of Christ. In addition to other holy days being added to the Christian year, colors as symbols were added to represent the different seasons of the Church Year.

## **Advent**

The meaning of the word “Advent” comes from the Latin, *adventus*, which means “coming.” Advent marks the beginning of the Christian year, and it begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day and ends on Christmas Eve. The major themes during this time are: the Annunciation, the Prophetic voice of John the Baptist, the anticipation of the incarnation, the preparation to celebrate the coming of the Savior, and the recognition of the three comings of Christ (Christ has come in the incarnation, Christ is come in that his presence lives in and among

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<sup>194</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>195</sup> Cherry, 211.

<sup>196</sup> Cherry, 211.



us even now, and Christ will come at the end of the age).<sup>197</sup> The colors that are displayed during Advent are purple, blue, and white on Christmas Eve.<sup>198</sup> Purple represents penitence and royalty. Blue is associated with Mary and symbolizes hope and anticipation.<sup>199</sup> Lastly, white represents purity, joy, and celebration.<sup>200</sup>

## **Christmas**

The next season of the Christian year is Christmas, and this time period is centered on celebrating the birth of Jesus. As Matthew 1:21-23 states, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, God with us” (NIV). Therefore, Christmas is a time to celebrate God with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Christmas is derived from “Christ’s mass,” and it begins on Christmas Day (December 25th), and ends twelve days later January 5th. The colors that are displayed during this time period are white and gold.<sup>201</sup> White represents the joy, and celebration that is felt for the birth of Christ, and gold represents the spiritual richness of his birth.<sup>202</sup>

## **Epiphany**

Epiphany begins on January 6th and ends the day before Ash Wednesday. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, which means manifestation. The major

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<sup>197</sup> Cherry, 211.

<sup>198</sup> Cherry, 213.

<sup>199</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>200</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>201</sup> Cherry, 213.

<sup>202</sup> Cherry, 216.

themes during Epiphany are the revelation of God (manifestation) to the entire world, including the Gentiles, celebration of the revelation of Jesus as Messiah, visitation of the kings (magi) to worship the baby Jesus, baptism of Jesus, the first miracle Jesus performed, and emphasis on Jesus' earthly ministry (teaching, healing, preaching).<sup>203</sup> Also, during Epiphany, Transfiguration Sunday is observed the last Sunday before Lent. Transfiguration Sunday recalls the time when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain with Elijah and Moses in the presence of Peter, James, and John. The color that represents this time period is green, and it symbolizes growth, life, and fulfillment.<sup>204</sup>

## **Lent**

Lent is observed in the Christian year from Ash Wednesday (forty days before Easter) until Holy Saturday. The word "lent" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lencten*, meaning "spring," when the daylight hours lengthen.<sup>205</sup> The major themes of Lent are: recollection of Jesus' temptation, conflict, suffering, and death, contemplation of our discipleship in light of Christ's passion, catechesis (time for instruction in spiritual formation), renewal of baptismal commitment, opportunity for spiritual disciplines, encouragement for self-denial, and a call to repentance.<sup>206</sup> Lent begins with observing Ash Wednesday, which emphasizes humanity's mortality and sinfulness. During the Ash Wednesday service, ashes are placed on individuals as a sign of repentance. As a result, the color purple is displayed during this time period representing penitence, and the royalty of Jesus Christ.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>204</sup> Cherry, 214-216.

<sup>205</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>206</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>207</sup> Cherry, 214-216.

The highlight of this season is Holy Week, also called Passion Week because of the suffering of Christ. Holy Week begins with celebrating Palm Sunday, which remembers when Christ rode into Jerusalem riding a donkey, while the people praised him and waved palm branches. Holy Week traces the last seven days of Jesus' life on earth. The three days prior to Jesus' resurrection are referred to as the Great Triduum. Maundy Thursday remembers the Last Supper, the washing of the disciples' feet, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, his betrayal, and his arrest.<sup>208</sup> Good Friday remembers the trial before Pilate and Herod, and Christ' crucifixion. Lastly, Holy Saturday ends Lent with the Great Easter Vigil.

### **Easter**

Easter begins on Easter Sunday, the day Christ rose from the dead, and it ends fifty days after Easter. It is the oldest feast in the history of Christianity, and Easter (Resurrection Sunday) has been celebrated in the church every Sunday since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>209</sup> The major theme of this season is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As a result, there is a focus on new life, light, and freedom from death. Scriptures that are read and preached during Easter are the gospels, which describe the story around his resurrection. There is also a focus on Christ post resurrection appearances and teachings during this time, along with the remembrance of his ascension. Moreover, Christ's ascension is observed and remembered on Ascension Sunday, which is celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter. The colors that are used to symbolize this time period are white and gold.<sup>210</sup>

### **Pentecost**

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<sup>208</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>209</sup> Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of The Spiritual Life*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2009), 159.

<sup>210</sup> Cherry, 215-216.

Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter and ends the day before the first Sunday in Advent. However, Pentecost in the Ancient Church did not mean the feast day fifty days after Easter. It meant “the great fifty days,” or “the fifty days of Easter,” which gave an entire period of rejoicing and praise.<sup>211</sup> This time period of rejoicing for many days in a row was referred to as Paschal tide or Eastertide. The word “Pentecost” comes from the Greek word *pentekoste* which means fiftieth. The major themes during this season are celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit, celebration of the church, acknowledgment of spiritual power for the church, and a call for people to receive and rejoice in God’s power.<sup>212</sup> During this season, Trinity Sunday is observed the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday. Trinity Sunday celebrates God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The color for this season is red, which symbolizes flames of fire and blood.<sup>213</sup>

### **Ordinary Time / Season after Pentecost**

The season of Ordinary Time is the longest period in the Christian year. It begins the day after Pentecost and ends the Saturday before Advent. Christ the King Sunday is celebrated at the end of this period on the Sunday before Advent. It brings the celebration of Jesus full circle from incarnation to final Lordship when Christ will rule in glory.<sup>214</sup> The color used to symbolize this season is green.<sup>215</sup> The liturgical year is a “catalog of the dimensions of the spiritual life, it is not unlike life itself.”<sup>216</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to have a period of time in the liturgical year called “ordinary time.” It represents what we ordinarily do every day in living out our lives for Jesus

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<sup>211</sup> Chittister, 172.

<sup>212</sup> Cherry, 215.

<sup>213</sup> Cherry, 215-216.

<sup>214</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>215</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>216</sup> Chittister, 182.

Christ. Therefore, Ordinary Time is observed twice during the liturgical year. It begins the Sunday after Epiphany, the feast of the baptism of Jesus, and extends until Ash Wednesday in Lent. The second period of Ordinary Time begins after Pentecost Sunday and goes to the beginning of Advent.<sup>217</sup>

### **Reasons for Observing the Christian Calendar**

The first reason for observing the Christian calendar is that it provides a way to tell the full narrative of God's story. Churches that do not observe the Christian calendar throughout the year risk the danger of only focusing on a few aspects of God's story. For example, without observance of the complete liturgical year, some emphasize only the cross of Jesus Christ and neglect emphasis on his resurrection and birth. Observing the Christian calendar allows for balance in telling God's story. Each event is given a specific time and date on the Christian calendar. Therefore, the Liturgical year gives structure in planning church worship services and promotes worship and praise to God for all the ways in which he has revealed himself in time.

A second reason for observing the Christian year is that it provides a guide for the spiritual pilgrimage of the church and for each member in the church. A third reason is that the liturgical year is Christocentric and sets out to attune the life of the Christian to the life of Jesus Christ.<sup>218</sup> Fourthly, the Christian year views time as sacred and helps the Church to celebrate all of time as Holy unto God, thus dispelling the dichotomy of secular versus sacred time.<sup>219</sup> Lastly, observing the Christian calendar remembers God's story through dramatic reenactment. As a result, there are many embodied liturgical practices included in the Christian year, which help the

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<sup>217</sup> Chittister, 184.

<sup>218</sup> Chittister, 6.

<sup>219</sup> Cherry, 211.

church visualize and imagine the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the Christian year provides spiritual formation using all the senses of the body.

## Eucharist

### Eucharist Origin

#### 1. Defined

The English word “Eucharist” is from the Greek *eucharisteo*, meaning “thanksgiving.”<sup>220</sup> Both Mark 14:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 11:24 use this term, indicating that there is reason to celebrate what Christ has done at the Table.<sup>221</sup> The meaning of the Eucharist stems from the institution of Christ’ prayer when he “gave thanks” after taking the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:24; Mt. 26:27).<sup>222</sup> Moreover, Eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. In connection, the Latin term, *Christus Victor*, proclaims our Lord to be victorious, triumphing not only over death, but over the evil one for all time.<sup>223</sup> Many churches seem to have lost the understanding of Eucharist as a time to celebrate what God has done through Jesus Christ.

A second word that is used for the Eucharist is “Communion.” It comes from the Greek word *koinonia*, and it articulates the communal nature of the Table.<sup>224</sup> Paul uses the same Greek word in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 to point out the importance of participating together in the bread and cup as the body and blood of Christ.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, the word communion communicates the

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<sup>220</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>221</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>222</sup> F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church*. Rev. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 570.

<sup>223</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>224</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>225</sup> Cherry, 88.

idea of unity, oneness, participation, and fellowship together. By partaking together at the Communion Table, the Church is one with Christ by feeding on his body and his blood, according to John 6:53-58. Not only is the Church one with Christ through participation at the Communion Table, but there also exists deep oneness and fellowship with one another through the Holy Spirit.

A third way of understanding the Eucharist is as “The Lord’s Supper.” The reason it is called “The Lord’s Supper” is because Christ wanted to share this symbolic meal with his disciples before his death and resurrection. Furthermore, the Greek words *kuriakos deipnon* in 1 Corinthians 11:20 is the English word for Lord’s Supper.<sup>226</sup> In connection, the Lord’s Supper is sometimes viewed as a memorial meal.<sup>227</sup> Thus, the bread and wine are eaten and drank in memory of Christ's blood and body, with great emphasis upon Christ's words, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

A fourth way of viewing the Eucharist is through what the Roman Catholic Church calls Mass. The word “mass” in Latin is *missa*, from *mittere*, “to send.”<sup>228</sup> Likewise, the liturgy in which the Eucharist is celebrated and, more generally, the entire Roman Catholic worship service is referred to as Mass.<sup>229</sup> Traditionally, *Ite, missa est* (Go, this is the dismissal), is said at the end of the service.<sup>230</sup> Furthermore, “mass” means sacrifice, and in Roman Catholic teaching,

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<sup>226</sup> Cherry, 87.

<sup>227</sup> Cherry, 87.

<sup>228</sup> Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Second Edition: Revised and Expanded. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014). <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=780304&site=ehost-live>

<sup>229</sup> McKim.

<sup>230</sup> McKim.

Mass is a time when Jesus Christ is re-sacrificed for the communicant's sins.<sup>231</sup> It is identical to the time when He was sacrificed on the Cross, except that, on Catholic altars, it is an unbloody sacrifice.<sup>232</sup>

## 2. Passover

The Eucharist has its roots deep in the Jewish Passover and the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-15, and Luke 22:7-10 all record Jesus asking his disciples to prepare the Passover meal for him to celebrate the Passover with his disciples. The Jewish Passover is celebrated every spring and was instituted on the night God brought Israel out of Egypt.<sup>233</sup> According to God's command, Moses instructed each Jewish family in Exodus 12 to slaughter a lamb for roasting and to eat. In addition, the Jewish people were to put the lamb's blood over the lintel and door post of each house.<sup>234</sup> The death angel would pass over Egypt that night and every first-born male would die whose house did not have the lamb's blood over its lintel and door post. Consequently, the Egyptians were the ones who lost their first-born children, including Pharaoh, because Pharaoh and the Egyptians did not believe in Jehovah.

Jesus used the liturgy surrounding the Jewish Passover and the Exodus to institute the Eucharist. The meaning of the Passover appears in Exodus 12:13:<sup>235</sup> "The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (RSV). In connection, God uses

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<sup>231</sup> Taylor, 330.

<sup>232</sup> Taylor, 330.

<sup>233</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1237.

<sup>234</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1237.

<sup>235</sup> Cesare Giraudo, "The Eucharist as Re-Presentation," *Religious Studies Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (1984): 154–55.  
<http://0-search.ebscohost.com/kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000964926&site=ehost-live>



blood in Exodus 24:8 to make a covenant with his people. When we look at 1 Cor. 11:23-25; Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Luke 22: 17-20, we can see Jesus telling his disciples that the cup of wine is his blood, establishing a new covenant with them. Likewise, Jesus told his disciples to eat the unleavened bread because it was his body. Therefore, the bread and wine of the Eucharist point to Christ as the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover and is an invitation to participate in a new exodus. This new exodus is the salvation of humanity through the death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>236</sup>

### 3. History

First generation Christians celebrated the Eucharist daily and weekly according to Acts 2:42-46 and Acts 20:7. The celebration of the Eucharist was the focus and center of the worship service for many centuries. Interestingly, “the early church fathers did not see bread and wine as a mere human reminder of Jesus. Instead, they approached bread and wine with a clear sense of the supernatural.”<sup>237</sup> The writings of Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch in AD 110, and the writings of Justin Martyr, second century apologist, both describe the bread and wine of the Eucharist as the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>238</sup> This description of the Eucharist is called *Real Presence*, and it emphasizes the actual Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>239</sup>

The understanding of the Eucharist as *Real Presence* continued in the church for many centuries until the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. It was during this time that Protestant theologians and Protestant movements took a different view of the Eucharist. The

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<sup>236</sup> Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper* (Vol. 1st ed. New York: Image, 2011), Chapter 3. <http://0-search.ebscohost.com/kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=741826&site=ehost-live>

<sup>237</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 137.

<sup>238</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 137-139.

<sup>239</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1379.

Roman Catholic Church, however, held onto its original view of the Eucharist as *Real Presence*. Consequently, it came to be called *Transubstantiation*. The word *transubstantiation* is a compound of two Latin particles (*trans* = across and *substantia* = substance),<sup>240</sup> thus indicating that the invisible substance or essence of the bread becomes the essence of the body of Christ and the substance of the juice or wine becomes the essence of Christ's blood.<sup>241</sup>

Three dominant views exist among Protestants regarding the Eucharist.<sup>242</sup> Martin Luther taught *consubstantiation* (*con* meaning *with*), the reality of Christ's body and blood in the elements "like light is in your eye."<sup>243</sup> John Calvin taught a spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the Swiss Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, taught a symbolic presence in which the sacrament is a mental remembrance of the cross of Jesus Christ.<sup>244</sup> Of all these views, John Wesley's view is more similar to John Calvin's view of the spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>245</sup> However, Calvin speaks of the presence of Christ's body in terms of power, mediated by the Holy Spirit, whereas Wesley stresses the presence of Christ in terms of His divinity.<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, in comparison to the Roman Catholic church, Wesley understood the Eucharist as *Real Presence*, but only in a spiritual sense.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Taylor, 528-529.

<sup>241</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>242</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>243</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>244</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>245</sup> Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign, and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1991), 226.

<sup>246</sup> Staples, 227.

<sup>247</sup> Staples, 226.

A close look at the many hymns that John and Charles Wesley compiled together in a book called *Hymns of the Lord's Supper* reveals how John and Charles understood the Eucharist.<sup>248</sup> Their hymns are filled with praise and thanksgiving to Christ for his presence in the Eucharist. However, Christ's presence in the Eucharist is always a matter of doxology without metaphysical and philosophical definitions.<sup>249</sup> Although the presence of Christ in the Eucharist remains a glorious mystery in their hymns, it is this mystery that leads them to worship Christ.<sup>250</sup> Therefore, Christ's presence in the Eucharist is a mysterious promise that should not be exhausted by attempting a science of the sacraments.<sup>251</sup>

## **Eucharist as Sacrament and Symbol**

### **1. Sacrament**

Eucharist is referred to as a sacrament. "The Roman and Greek Catholic churches observe seven sacraments: baptism, the Lord's Supper, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony."<sup>252</sup> The Protestant doctrine, however, generally only recognizes two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper.<sup>253</sup> The word sacrament comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, "originally applied to money deposited in a sacred place by parties involved in court proceedings. It was regarded as a pledge in which the participants considered their cause

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<sup>248</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

<sup>249</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

<sup>250</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 178.

<sup>251</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

<sup>252</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>253</sup> Taylor, 465.

good and just.”<sup>254</sup> However, the word later came to signify the oath Roman soldiers took in their pledge to be loyal to the Roman empire.<sup>255</sup>

Early Latin church fathers used the term *sacramentum* to translate the Greek word for mystery.<sup>256</sup> Therefore, the term sacrament came to “signify a sacred ordinance or rite in which the Christian believer receives blessing from God and deliberately binds himself in covenant to Him.”<sup>257</sup> Similarly, the Wesleyan Tradition has come to understand a sacrament as John Wesley defined it: “an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.”<sup>258</sup> Thus, a “sacramental theology draws deeply from the well of symbolism.”<sup>259</sup>

## 2. Symbol

Staples writes, “The word *symbol* refers to an object or pattern that is used to represent an invisible metaphysical reality and that also participates in the reality it represents.”<sup>260</sup> Christian theology contains many symbols. For example, the sacrament of the Eucharist and its elements are symbols of the Christian faith. In connection, Augustine referred to the sacrament of the Eucharist as a visible word,<sup>261</sup> a word that has power to communicate through symbols and can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled.<sup>262</sup> Therefore, when the Church participates in the

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<sup>254</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>255</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>256</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>257</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>258</sup> Staples, 53.

<sup>259</sup> Staples, 51.

<sup>260</sup> Staples, 51.

<sup>261</sup> Staples, 52.

<sup>262</sup> Staples, 52.

Eucharist, it is proclaiming the gospel message by using the senses, dramatic action, and symbolic gesture.<sup>263</sup>

The word *sign* in Wesley's definition of the sacrament of the Eucharist is not merely the physical element (water, bread, wine) of the sacrament, but the entire action surrounding its proper use.<sup>264</sup> The argument can be made that Wesley uses the word *sign* the same as one would define a symbol. A sign can only point to something outside of itself, but a symbol participates in the power of that which it symbolizes.<sup>265</sup> Wesley believed and understood the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Eucharist to be symbols that not only pointed to the body and blood of Christ but are also the means of grace by which the church participates in the body and blood of Christ.

## **Eucharist as Sacrifice and Eschatology**

### **1. Sacrifice**

The Eucharist embodies the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ revealed this embodiment in Luke 22 when he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."<sup>266</sup> When eating at the Lord's Table, hearts and minds are fixed on the sacrificial love that Christ gave at Calvary. However, this is not the only thought that is evoked

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<sup>263</sup> Cherry, 86.

<sup>264</sup> Staples, 53.

<sup>265</sup> Staples, 58.

<sup>266</sup> Luke 22:19-20 (NIV).

while participating in the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit reveals that “a reception of the Eucharist demands a response of sacrificial love and humble service to the other.”<sup>267</sup>

Christ said in Luke 22:20, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” The word *covenant* is an agreement between God and humanity which becomes the basis of divine blessing and eternal salvation.<sup>268</sup> A covenant requires two parties to enter into an agreement with one another. Jesus Christ agreed to give his life sacrificially for the church, and the church can do no less. Romans 12:1 states it perfectly: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” Thus, when the church participates in the Eucharist, it is saying to Christ, “I enter into a covenant with you by giving you my life as a sacrifice.” The sacrifice that the Church makes to Christ is to be his hands and feet in a broken world. Therefore, the “church exists to be broken before the world, thus in its brokenness the world will find hope.”<sup>269</sup>

## 2. Eschatology

The eschatological nature of the Eucharist is clear in Luke 22:16. Jesus said, “For I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” This verse points to the end of the ages when Christ comes back and sets up his kingdom and the Church joins him around the table to celebrate the Eucharist with him.<sup>270</sup> Therefore, every time the Church participates in the Eucharist, it enters an eschatological imagination of what God’s

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<sup>267</sup> Brent Peterson “Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Community of Joyful Brokenness.” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 5, no. 2 (2006): 1-10 Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library.

<sup>268</sup> Taylor, 363.

<sup>269</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology.”

<sup>270</sup> Rev. 19.

kingdom will be like when it comes in its fullness. In fact, when the Church shares in the Eucharist, it has already entered God's kingdom and his transforming work.

Nevertheless, the Eucharist gives a theology of hope which does not seek to illuminate the reality that exists, but the reality which is coming.<sup>271</sup> As a result, the Church lives in this already present, but not yet consummated Kingdom of God on earth where ultimately “God will be all in all.”<sup>272</sup> Therefore, the Church is able to go into a broken world as the body of Christ with a message of hope that helps people see themselves in light of the Kingdom of God. It is the Kingdom of God that Christ taught his disciples to pray to come in Matthew 6:10, and it is through the Eucharist that this kingdom is illuminated.

### **Reasons for a Weekly Participation in the Eucharist**

The Eucharist is a perfect liturgical practice that helps the church to reenact God's story through biblical remembrance and anticipation. The cross, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is both taught and spiritually reenacted when congregants participate in the Eucharist. Therefore, in addition to divine revelation and response, participation in the Eucharist has many benefits. First, weekly participation in the Eucharist shapes congregants to view the church as a body and not as a collection of individuals. Alexander Schmemmann states, “The Church, gathered in the Eucharist, even when limited to two or three is the image and realization of the body of Christ.”<sup>273</sup> Therefore, the Eucharist causes the body of Christ to see themselves as one, thereby bringing about a relational transformation in the body of Christ.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Moltmann, Jergen, *Theology of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 18 quoted in Brent Peterson “Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Community of Joyful Brokenness.” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 5, no. 2 (2006): 5 Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library.

<sup>272</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology.”

<sup>273</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. Trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2003), 24.

<sup>274</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology.”

Secondly, experiencing Christ at the Table brings to remembrance Christ' sacrificial love for everyone. Thus, the reception of the Eucharist demands a response of sacrificial love in return, which can only be the total surrender of lives in service to him and to one another. Jesus said, "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."<sup>275</sup> Therefore, participation in the Eucharist necessitates a call to every Christian to be broken for a lost and hurting world, "thus in its brokenness the world will find hope."<sup>276</sup>

Thirdly, a weekly participation in the Eucharist shapes and forms Christians to live out the eschatological hope of the kingdom of God because participation in Eucharist involves the use of all the senses of the body being used to train the desires of the heart for the kingdom of God. John and Charles Wesley considered the Eucharist as an eschatological taste of the consummation of God's kingdom. According to the Wesley's, "We cannot partake of the Cup without realizing that one day we shall drink it with our Savior when He drinks it anew in the Realm of God."<sup>277</sup>

## **Chapter Three: Thesis**

### **Introduction**

The thesis for this paper will argue for a variation of a monistic anthropology (emergent monism) that includes an embodied approach to Christian formation. Many Christian congregants are not being adequately formed and shaped as disciples of Christ, because many

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<sup>275</sup> Matt. 10:38-39.

<sup>276</sup> Peterson, "Eucharistic Ecclesiology."

<sup>277</sup> J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications, 1990), 57.



contemporary churches have a distorted philosophical anthropology, and therefore approach spiritual formation primarily from an intellectual standpoint. These churches view spiritual formation as a matter of disseminating Christian ideas and information. According to Smith, this view “assumes that human beings are primarily thinking things, or maybe believing animals.”<sup>278</sup> As a result, these churches neglect many of the ancient worship practices that involve bodily practices and rituals which train the hearts of believers in God’s story.

This author supports works by James K. A. Smith, John Wesley, and Robert Webber in advocating for a twofold solution to spiritual formation and development. First, they suggest churches adopt a philosophical anthropology of human persons not radically dualistic, but rather monistic. Smith, in *Desiring the Kingdom*, teaches a “philosophical anthropology that understands human persons as defined by love—as desiring agents and liturgical animals whose primary mode of intending the world is love, which in turn shapes the imagination.”<sup>279</sup> Adopting his view of human beings will help contemporary churches approach Christian formation in a holistic manner—one which involves the whole person, including the body and the mind.

Secondly, in connection with the understanding that human beings are primarily lovers, contemporary churches need to incorporate embodied worship practices each week in their corporate worship services for spiritual formation. Integrating a weekly blend of embodied worship practices such as the Eucharist, recitation of the Creed, observance of the Christian calendar, and rituals, such as baptism, will help to provide a holistic approach to spiritual formation. The steps of the argument of this thesis will be as follows: (1) dispute the dualistic view which many contemporary churches have of the nature of human beings, (2) contend for an emergent monistic anthropology, (3) illustrate Smith and Wesley’s Christian formation models

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<sup>278</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.

<sup>279</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 37.

which advocate for an emergent monistic anthropology, (4) describe how both Smith's and Wesley's model further advocates for the embodied worship practices of the ancient church, lastly (5) present a training manual to educate contemporary churches on the importance and incorporation of liturgies of the ancient church in their worship.

### **Christian Formation**

Jesus instructed the church in Matthew 28:18-20, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (NIV). Contemporary churches are commanded from this Scripture to provide Christian formation for the congregants in their churches. The problem for many contemporary churches is not what they should be doing (making Christlike disciples), but how to accomplish this task.

However, most contemporary churches are not regularly using the liturgical practices which the ancient church used for Christian formation. These include: The Eucharist, observing the Christian calendar, recitation of the Creed, and rituals, such as baptism. Many of these neglected ancient liturgies are embodied practices which provide spiritual formation using all five bodily senses, (taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing). Neglect of these liturgies has reduced contemporary worship services to mostly music and preaching as the two main ways to communicate God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation. Consequently, these believers are missing out on many of the components of holistic spiritual formation and are shaped by an individual and self-absorbed worship.<sup>280</sup>

### **Dualistic Anthropology**

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<sup>280</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 18.

According to an axiom given by Smith in *Desiring the Kingdom*, “Behind every pedagogy is a philosophical anthropology; that is, implicit in every constellation of educational practices there is a set of assumptions about the nature of human persons.”<sup>281</sup> Many contemporary churches are not using the liturgies of the ancient church for spiritual formation, because they have a dualistic anthropology. Dualistic anthropology views a human person as composed of two separate parts: a body and an immaterial soul, or a body and an immaterial mind. These churches teach spiritual formation based on this understanding of the nature of a human being.

The creation of radical dualism is credited to Plato (427-347 B.C.), who was a great Athenian thinker, and the father of Platonism and idealism.<sup>282</sup> Dualism came from Plato’s doctrine forms or ideas—the view that concepts have a real existence and are eternal—that the mind is superior to the body.<sup>283</sup> Later, during the Enlightenment Period, Rene Descartes, the father of the modern era, enhanced a radical dualistic anthropology that was a rebirth of Platonism.<sup>284</sup> His three elements of philosophy have had a profound effect on the character of much of western thinking.<sup>285</sup> Lakoff and Johnson state Descartes three elements of philosophy as follows: “first, that being able to think constitutes our essence; second, that the mind is disembodied; and third, therefore, that the essence of human beings, that which makes us human, has nothing to do with our bodies.”<sup>286</sup> As a result, a dualistic anthropology—separation of body

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<sup>281</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 37.

<sup>282</sup> Taylor, 403.

<sup>283</sup> Murphy, 12.

<sup>284</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 15.

<sup>285</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 400.

<sup>286</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, 400.

and mind was seen in the spiritual formation approach of the Protestant Reformation, Free Church Worship, and Frontier/Revival Worship movements.

Both models of human beings as thinkers and/or human beings as believers portray a radical dualistic anthropology.<sup>287</sup> This includes all spiritual formation models which understand Christian formation as primarily an acquisition of information, instead of primarily liturgical practices which incorporate both mind and body.<sup>288</sup> As a result, many contemporary churches have used the dualist view as a catalyst for adopting a spiritual formation approach which is radically individualistic,<sup>289</sup> and thereby neglects the embodied, corporate worship practices of the ancient church.

The spiritual formation model that many churches use has been described in chapter one as the mug-jug theory of learning referenced by Carl Rogers in *Freedom to Learn*.<sup>290</sup> This cognitive method of learning views the brain of congregants as mugs that can be filled with Christian information and ideas from the jug of Christian knowledge. The problem with this method of spiritual formation is that it is dualistic and separates the mind or soul from the body and makes the mind or soul superior to the body.

### **Monism versus Dualism in Scripture**

The ancient Hebraic writings of the Old Testament Scriptures support a monistic, and not a dualistic anthropology.<sup>291</sup> For example, the Hebrew word *nephesh* was intended to mean soul,

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<sup>287</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41-45.

<sup>288</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.

<sup>289</sup> Webber, *Ancient - Future Faith*, 18.

<sup>290</sup> Rogers, 196.

<sup>291</sup> Murphy, 17.

as in the whole person, but translated by Greek to mean a separate entity.<sup>292</sup> This translation stemmed from Greek philosophy which viewed the human person as “made up of distinct parts.”<sup>293</sup> Moreover, the entire New Testament was written in Greek, and consequently misunderstood by many to be dualistic. Nevertheless, Jewish culture did not view the human person as multiple parts, but as a “whole...existing on different dimensions.”<sup>294</sup>

In addition, a radical dualistic anthropology is in opposition to biblical teachings on creation, incarnation, resurrection, and recreation.<sup>295</sup> For example, Plato taught that the human body and all materiality is evil.<sup>296</sup> Another example is found in the radical platonic teachings of Gnosticism. According to Maddix and Blevins, “Gnosticism claims that the soul and the body remain separate substances, and the material must be rejected. The body serves as just a shell.”<sup>297</sup> Consequently, these teachings and beliefs reject the importance of the human body. More importantly, these teachings reject the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his bodily resurrection.<sup>298</sup> As a result, a radical dualistic anthropology must be rejected, because it provides an incorrect spiritual formation model for Christians.<sup>299</sup>

### **Monistic Anthropology**

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<sup>292</sup> Murphy, 17.

<sup>293</sup> Murphy, 21.

<sup>294</sup> Murphy, 21.

<sup>295</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 7.

<sup>296</sup> Taylor, 403.

<sup>297</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 7.

<sup>298</sup> Taylor, 235.

<sup>299</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41-45.

An alternative understanding to the nature of human beings is a monistic anthropology which claims humans are made of one substance, and it is physical.<sup>300</sup> Many Christians and Bible scholars hold to the position of monism or to one of its variations but reject the extreme end of monism called “ontological reductionism.” This position states that everything we are as human persons (our ontology, our being) can be reduced to an explanation of our neurological functioning without belief in the Christian faith or in a God who exists outside of oneself and acts within this world.<sup>301</sup> Nevertheless, nonreductive physicalism, dual-aspect monism, and emergent monism are several variations of a monistic view that do not reduce human beings to only the physical functioning of the body, but allow for a “nonreductive” component that is spiritual.<sup>302</sup>

### **Emergent Monism**

Again, the argument of this thesis is for a variation of a monistic anthropology (emergent monism) that will allow for an embodied approach to Christian formation. Emergent monism is a variation of a monistic anthropology that is very similar to the Hebrew understanding of the human person.<sup>303</sup> This view understands that the “human personhood arises as an emergent property of a hyper complex organism (brain and body) as it interacts within a physical and social environment. Therefore, concepts such as mind, soul, spirit, self, and person describe aspects of whole persons.”<sup>304</sup> Consequently, the emergent property of a person never separates

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<sup>300</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 6.

<sup>301</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 7.

<sup>302</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89.

<sup>303</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 37.

<sup>304</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89.

from his or her “embodied and socially embedded life.”<sup>305</sup> Embodied, meaning the human person is one substance including a body and a brain, and embedded meaning the human person is always contextualized within action within the world. Embodied and embedded are the two foundational characteristics of emergent monism.<sup>306</sup> Therefore, it is impossible to accurately describe a person outside his or her context.<sup>307</sup>

### **Embodied and Embedded Spirituality**

To describe further how embodiment and embedment fit into the spiritual dimension of human persons, Jeeves and Brown underscore three important components of spirituality: (1) experience, in terms of one’s awareness of the transcendent, (2) belief, in terms of what one believes about God, about one’s self, and about the world in which one lives, and (3) action, in terms of how one lives life (practices).<sup>308</sup> These three components are embedded in each human person’s social network of family, community, and culture.<sup>309</sup> Consequently, one’s spiritual life is shaped through a human biological makeup which includes “the interdependent processes between the brain processes, cognitive processes, and behavior processes.”<sup>310</sup>

### **Neuroscience and Spirituality**

Although the spiritual dimension in the lives of human beings are both firmly embodied and embedded, they can be changed.<sup>311</sup> For example, embedded religious dimensions of

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<sup>305</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89.

<sup>306</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89-90.

<sup>307</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89-90.

<sup>308</sup> Jeeves and Brown, 134.

<sup>309</sup> Jeeves and Brown, 134.

<sup>310</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 91.

<sup>311</sup> Jeeves and Brown, 134-135.

experience, belief, and practice have the power to re-sculpt one's brain.<sup>312</sup> Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the brain to change "its structure, circuits, chemical composition, or functions in response to change in its environment."<sup>313</sup> External stimuli can change interactions between human brain neurons.<sup>314</sup> Researchers have known that the brains of children and infants were plastic (or malleable), and assumed that the brains of adults were hardwired and immutable.<sup>315</sup> However, with the 1998 discovery of neurogenesis in the adult hippocampus, "researchers now know that adult brains remain plastic and can continue to form new neural connections and generate new neurons in response to learning or training into old age."<sup>316</sup> This discovery enhances the importance of Christian community and the need for the embodied worship practices of the ancient church to provide Christian formation.

### **An Emergent Monistic Anthropology**

The most accurate view of the nature of human beings is an emergent monistic anthropology. This view considers that the mind and body work together as one. The bodily senses take in information to be processed through the brain. The embodied and embedded aspects of an emergent monistic anthropology make it a correct philosophical anthropology upon which to build a spiritual formation model. First, it recognizes the importance of Christian community and the impact which embedded Christian liturgies have on forming disciples for Christ. Secondly, an emergent monistic anthropology recognizes the importance of the embodied

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<sup>312</sup> Jeeves and Brown, 135.

<sup>313</sup> J. Schwartz., & R. Gladding, *You Are Not Your Brain* (New York. NY: Avery, 2012), 36.

<sup>314</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 45-46.

<sup>315</sup> S. Begley, *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves* (New York, NY: Ballantine, 2006).

<sup>316</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 46.



liturgies of the ancient church, and their power to form disciples for Jesus Christ. Thirdly, an emergent monistic anthropology considers and agrees with the discoveries in neuroscience. A radically dualistic anthropology would not recognize any of the things mentioned above and is therefore not the correct view of the nature of human persons.

### **Embodied Cognition**

An important aspect of an emergent monistic anthropology is embodied cognition. Embodied cognition “argues that mental process is founded and grounded in actions of the body, which means that cognition is rooted in sensory-motor interactions of the body with the world.”<sup>317</sup> Embodied cognition is in opposition to the understanding of cognition (thinking) that is found in a dualistic view of the human person. A dualistic view “understands human cognition (thinking) as information processing conceptualized via computer metaphors.”<sup>318</sup> For example, the human brain is compared to the hardware of a computer, while the mind functions as software.<sup>319</sup>

According to Maddix and Blevins, “all aspects of ‘minding,’ including learning, are shaped by the nature of the body, and cognitive processing remains rooted in the actions of the body in the physical world.”<sup>320</sup> A human being thinks and learns not by noting and manipulating abstract concepts, but by interacting with the world in and through their body.<sup>321</sup> In *Neuroscience and Christian Formation*, Maddix and Blevins describe how a person’s mind is the result of both

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<sup>317</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

<sup>318</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 88.

<sup>319</sup> Daniel C. Dennett. *Consciousness Explained*, (New York, NY: Little, Brown & Co., 1991) quoted in Mark A. Maddix and Dean G. Blevins eds. *Neuroscience and Christian Formation*. (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2016), 88.

<sup>320</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

<sup>321</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

the brain and the bodily actions of a person. For example, they say, “if one had the body of an elephant and the brain of a human, one would have a very different mind.”<sup>322</sup> This is because in embodied cognition, the sensory-motor interactions of the body are grounded in the mental processes of the brain.

### **Smith and Wesley’ Model of Christian Formation**

Both Smith’s and Wesley’s model of Christian formation mirror an emergent monistic anthropology because of their use of embodied and embedded liturgical practices. Smith uses “social psychology research and phenomenological philosophers” to indicate the use of liturgical, “formational practices.”<sup>323</sup> He rejects a dualistic anthropology that approaches spiritual formation primarily through ideas and concepts.<sup>324</sup> Likewise, Wesley also rejects the conceptualization of spiritual formation (spiritual formation primarily through ideas and concepts), but endorses liturgical, worship practices that form the heart of believers in God’s love.<sup>325</sup>

The embodied, liturgical, worship practices that Smith and Wesley embrace are the same worship practices of the ancient church. These ancient worship practices include: (1) Corporate worship, (1) participation in the Eucharist, (2) reciting the Creed, (3) baptism, (4) and observance of the Christian Calendar. Consequently, embodied liturgical practices lead to a rediscovery of the ancient church’s way of telling God’s story, and these practices also link the Christian formational approach of both Smith, Wesley to the ancient church.

### **Liturgical Practices**

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<sup>322</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 90.

<sup>323</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 91.

<sup>324</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41-45.

<sup>325</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

Liturgical practices are the link between: (1) an emergent monistic anthropology, (2) the ancient church, (3) and the Christian formation models of both Smith and Wesley. All three connections agree on the importance of liturgies in Christian formation. Liturgies come from the term *liturgy* which is derived from the Greek word *leitourgia*. The word *leitourgia* was used in Hellenistic Greek to describe an act of public service, and used in the Septuagint to denote the services of the priests and Levites in the Tabernacle and Temple.<sup>326</sup> The New Testament also uses the term *liturgy* in several places: as temple services (Luke 1:23, Heb. 9:21), as Christian worship (Acts 13:2), and as works of love and devotion (2 Cor. 9:12, Phil. 2:30).<sup>327</sup> Consequently, liturgy is the participation with God in his work—our words, actions, postures, spaces, and symbols are liturgies of worship.<sup>328</sup>

### **Smith's Embodied and Embedded Liturgies**

Smith defines liturgies as habit forming practices or rituals in which humans participate.<sup>329</sup> His core claim in his book, *Desiring the Kingdom*, is that “liturgies—whether sacred or secular—shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world.”<sup>330</sup> Smith argues that all liturgies are embedded with beliefs, values, and assumptions concerning some vision of how a good life looks.<sup>331</sup> He demonstrates his argument by his classical illustration of the pedagogy of the local mall.<sup>332</sup> The

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<sup>326</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>327</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>328</sup> Brooks, 9.

<sup>329</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 24-25.

<sup>330</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

<sup>331</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

<sup>332</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 24.

beautiful outfits on the manikins at the mall do not use abstract concepts and ideas to win a person's heart, but they use pictures and images of what a person could look like if they purchased and wore these outfits.

Smith also connects liturgies to a human person's character of being a lover.<sup>333</sup> Because love or desire is a structural feature of being human that cannot be turned off, Smith believed liturgies could change the heart.<sup>334</sup> He states, "Liturgies aim our love to different ends precisely by training our hearts through our bodies."<sup>335</sup> Consequently, embodied liturgical practices, such as the Eucharist, baptism, recitation of the Creed, and the Christian calendar are embedded with symbols and pictures of the good life of the kingdom which have the power to capture the imagination of the heart.

### **Wesley and Emergent Monistic Anthropology**

John Wesley never wrote or preached concerning the concept of an emergent monistic view of the human person. However, his teachings on Christian formation, which have been described by Long as moral theology,<sup>336</sup> work well within an emergent monistic view of the human person. For example, Wesley's unique understanding of the doctrine of illumination and participation, as described in Chapter 2 of this paper, aligns well with an emergent monistic anthropology. His use of liturgical practices in the participation of God's divine nature closely resembles the two main characteristics of emergent monism, embodied and embedded.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 50-51.

<sup>334</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 50-51.

<sup>335</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

<sup>336</sup> Long, 130.

<sup>337</sup> Maddix and Blevins, 89-90.

An example of Wesley arguing for the practice of embodied and embedded liturgies can be found in his sermon, *The Means of Grace*:

By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace. I use this expression, means of grace, because I know none better; and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages; — in particular by our own Church, which directs us to bless God both for the means of grace, and hope of glory; and teaches us, that a sacrament is "an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.

The chief of these means are prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the Scriptures; (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon;) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Him: And these we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men.<sup>338</sup>

Here, Wesley references several liturgical practices that require an embodied approach to spiritual formation using both the body and the brain working together. In addition, Wesley describes these practices as being embedded with both the teachings of Christ and the teachings of the early church.<sup>339</sup> As a result, Wesley's unique understanding of these liturgical practices as being a "means of grace" for Christian formation makes his model, along with Smith's, an ideal model for contemporary churches to adopt.

### **The Ancient Church and Emergent Monistic Anthropology**

The ancient church, like Wesley, supported a model of Christian formation through an emergent monistic view of the human person by way of their use of embodied and embedded liturgical practices to tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation. The emergent monistic view can be seen in their liturgical practice of reciting the creeds, preaching the Word of God, and reading the Scriptures for historical recitation through biblical remembrance. It can further be seen in their use of liturgical practices of baptism and the Eucharist for dramatic

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<sup>338</sup> Wesley, Sermon 16, 2.1.

<sup>339</sup> Wesley, Sermon 16, I.1.

reenactment, which also brought biblical remembrance of God's creation, incarnation, and recreation. In addition, the ancient church's use of embodied and embedded liturgical practices to build Biblical anticipation among worshipers further supports an emergent monistic view.

### **The Ancient Church's Order of Worship for Today**

The arrangement of liturgical practices in worship services is an important component of spiritual formation. Therefore, the ancient church arranged liturgical practices in a four-fold movement, worship order (the gathering, the Word, the Table, and the sending).<sup>340</sup> Like the ancient church, the main structure of the service should be centered around "Word and Table." This would provide a time for "revelation and response" from the worshipers. Revelation and response are the heart of Christian worship.<sup>341</sup> Therefore, keeping the focus on "Word and Table" would provide both illumination and participation through the hearing of the Word of God and participation in the Eucharist. Furthermore, like bookends to "Word and Table," the gathering and sending in a service would provide a time to use many of the embodied and embedded liturgical practices of the ancient church.<sup>342</sup>

### **Conclusion / Artifact**

This author has made the argument for an emergent monistic anthropology as the correct view of a human person. This view considers how the brain and body work together in forming and shaping the human person and considers how a person's social environment works to shape him or her. In support of an emergent monistic view of the human person, this author has argued for Smith's, Wesley's, and the Ancient's Church's model of Christian formation which all use and rely upon embodied and embedded liturgical practices of spiritual formation for believers.

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<sup>340</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>341</sup> Cherry, 45.

<sup>342</sup> Cherry, 46.

As a result, all three of these would be an ideal model for contemporary churches to adopt in their spiritual formation program. Contemporary churches should pray and design each service with the right embodied and embedded liturgical practices for the spiritual formation of its congregants.

To incorporate an emergent monistic anthropology into the model contemporary church chosen for this dissertation, this author has created a training manual which incorporates the liturgical practices of the ancient church into modern worship. This training manual will serve as a tool to help educate church leaders on how embodied liturgies work to form disciples of Jesus Christ. This manual describes both Smith's and Wesley's models of Christian formation, and how liturgical practices are used. Furthermore, this training manual describes how the ancient church used liturgical practices in their worship to tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment. Lastly, this manual describes the history and development of three ancient liturgical practices that can be implemented in many contemporary worship services.

## **Chapter Four: Methodology for Creating Training Manual**

### **Model For Artifact**

The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* follows the standards and measurements of Mary L. Lanigan's model, *How to Create Effective Training Manuals*.<sup>343</sup> This author needed a professional model or template to follow in creating a training manual that would adequately help train the leaders at Fulton First Church of the Nazarene. Consequently, Mary L. Lanigan's model was chosen for two reasons. Lanigan's model provides a clear, step by step instruction on how to arrange the information on ancient church liturgies in a way that

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<sup>343</sup> Mary L. Lanigan, *How to Create Effective Training Manuals* (Tinley Park, IL.: Third House Inc., 2010), 1-26.

provides an excellent communication tool for training leaders. Secondly, Mary L. Lanigan is personally qualified to provide a professional model on how to create an effective training manual. Her doctorate is from Indiana University's Instructional Systems Technology program and her master's degrees are in Educational Psychology, Communication, and Instructional Systems Technology. She is a four time ISPI Award of Excellence winner for her evaluation research (1999), book (2001) and CD training workshops (evaluation CD in 2005 and performance technology CD in 2007).

### **Background Information Steps**

Lanigan's model recommends three background information steps before composing a training manual.<sup>344</sup> Step one is to complete a front-end analysis.<sup>345</sup> Completing a front-end analysis involves making a task list of objectives and goals to be reached by the training manual.<sup>346</sup> The list of objectives and goals for the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* are as follows: (1) To educate contemporary church leaders on both Smith and Wesley's models of Christian formation, (2) to educate contemporary church leaders on the ancient church's approach to worship, and (3) to train contemporary church leaders on how to incorporate the embodied liturgies of the ancient church in their worship practices, especially the liturgical practices of the Creed, Eucharist, and observing the Christian calendar.

Step two of the background information is to divide the content of the training manual into chapters and sections that will be set-up as structured lessons.<sup>347</sup> The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* has seven chapters divided into several subsections for

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<sup>344</sup> Lanigan, 6.

<sup>345</sup> Lanigan, 6.

<sup>346</sup> Lanigan, 6.

<sup>347</sup> Lanigan, 6.



each chapter except chapter four, which has only one section. The manual is designed to be taught over a period of six weeks. One chapter can be taught in a four-hour period for a six-week period. Chapter four is combined with chapter five, therefore, allowing the seven chapters to be taught in six different segments of time.

The chapters and sections for the manual are as follows:

<b>Chapter One: James K. A. Smith's Model of the Human Persona as a Lover</b>	6
Section One: Introduction	7
Section Two: The Heart	7
Section Three: Desires of the Heart	8
Section Four: Love is Always Intentional and Teleological	10
Section Five: Images of the Good Life	13
Section Six: Habits	14
Section Seven: Liturgical Practices	16
Section Eight: Overview of James K. A. Smith's Model	18
<b>Chapter Two: John Wesley's Christian Formation Model</b>	20
Section One: Introduction	21
Section Two: Wesley's Moral Theology	22
Section Three: Affections	26
Section Four: Means of Grace	27
<b>Chapter Three: Ancient Church Worship</b>	30
Section One: Introduction	31
Section Two: Ancient Church Theology of Worship	31
Section Three: Biblical Remembrance	31
Section Four: Anticipation	34
Section Five: Order of Worship or Liturgical Practices	34
<b>Chapter Four: Three Specific Ancient Church Liturgies</b>	36
Section One: Introduction	37
<b>Chapter Five: The Creed</b>	38
Section One: Definition and Origin	39
Section Two: Creedal Statements in the New Testament	41
Section Three: Writings from the Early Church Fathers	43
Section Four: The Apostle's Creed	45
Section Five: The Nicene Creed	47
Section Six: The Chalcedon Creed	48
Section Seven: How the Creed Functions in Christian Formation	49
<b>Chapter Six: The Christian Calendar</b>	50

Section One: Defined	51
Section Two: Time	51
Section Three: Jewish Roots	53
Section Four: How the Christian Year Developed	54
Section Five: Advent	56
Section Six: Christmas	57
Section Seven: Epiphany	58
Section Eight: Lent	58
Section Nine: Easter	59
Section Ten: Pentecost	60
Section Eleven: Ordinary Time / Season After Pentecost	60
Section Twelve: Reasons for Observing the Christian Calendar	61
<b>Chapter Seven: Eucharist</b>	63
Section One: Eucharist Origin	64
1. Defined	64
2. Passover	66
3. History	67
Section Two: Eucharist as Sacrament and Symbol	70
1. Sacrament	70
2. Symbol	71
Section Three: Eucharist as Sacrifice and Eschatology	72
1. Sacrifice	72
2. Eschatology	73
Section Four: Reasons for a Weekly Participation in the Eucharist	74

Step three of the background information is to select a style manual to be used in writing the training manual.<sup>348</sup> The style manual used for the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* is the ninth edition of Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. The font and font size of the body of the manual is Times New Roman 12 type-font. However, 14 and 16 type-font has been chosen for headings and subheadings. All text is in black ink, and the original transcript is produced on 11 x 8.5-inch pages. In addition, all margins are 1 inch, and the training manual adheres to the *Manual for Writers* standard for footnotes, and bibliography.

### Six Tips in Writing a Training Manual

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<sup>348</sup> Lanigan, 7.

Lanigan gives six tips when writing a training manual. The first tip is to place large chunks of material into short paragraphs.<sup>349</sup> The purpose for writing short paragraphs is to help trainees not to be overwhelmed by huge amounts of text grouped together.<sup>350</sup> Furthermore, Lanigan also suggested using transition devices to help readers better understand the flow of thoughts from one idea to the next. The following transition devices were suggested: Addition, illustration, emphasis, examples, suggestion, and summary.<sup>351</sup> This manual includes large chunks of material deciphered into short paragraphs with transition devices where appropriate.

The second tip in writing a training manual is to leave white spaces between chunks of ideas and other logical groupings. “White space makes the material look less intimidating.”<sup>352</sup> The third tip is to use images to enhance the writing.<sup>353</sup> Fourthly, use bullets to offset text. “Using bullet points helps the readers see important information.”<sup>354</sup> The fifth tip is to create a visually appealing manual by using a font style and size that is easy to read.<sup>355</sup> Another way to make a training manual visually appealing is to use different colors to offset the pages of new chapters or sections. The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* implements many of these tips including the use of images, bullet points and white spaces where appropriate to enhance visual appearance.

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<sup>349</sup> Lanigan, 8.

<sup>350</sup> Lanigan, 8.

<sup>351</sup> Lanigan, 9.

<sup>352</sup> Lanigan, 11.

<sup>353</sup> Lanigan, 11.

<sup>354</sup> Lanigan, 11.

<sup>355</sup> Lanigan, 12.

The six tip is to provide practices and feedback throughout the training manual. According to Mary L. Lanigan, “A quality training manual always provides the trainees with a number of exercises and/or practices of the materials. The trainees need communication mechanisms that tell them how well they are doing.”<sup>356</sup> The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* strategically provides many practice exercises for each chapter to give trainees feedback on how well they are grasping the material. Each chapter further directs the trainees to an Appendix quiz to test their information recall.

### **Edit and Add Front Contents**

According to Lanigan’s model, the training manual must be edited to make sure that the contents are accurate, clear, and comprehensive.<sup>357</sup> The next step is to conduct a trial run of the materials using voluntary participants.<sup>358</sup> As such, the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* underwent several editions. Furthermore, a trial run consisted of select volunteers from Fulton First Church of the Nazarene who reviewed the manual and practice tests. Insights gleaned from the test run included a need for select images and clarification of main teaching points.

The next step in following Lanigan’s model is to add the front contents of the training manual. These are as follows: A title page, publisher and copyright page, things to note page, and a table of contents.<sup>359</sup> This manual mirrors Lanigan’s model in providing a title page which gives the title, the name of the author, and the model church for whom this manual was written. The title reads as follows: *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual*. The

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<sup>356</sup> Lanigan, 12.

<sup>357</sup> Lanigan, 13.

<sup>358</sup> Lanigan, 13.

<sup>359</sup> Lanigan, 13.

author is Dale Eugene Turner, pastor of Fulton First Church of the Nazarene at 404 Green Street, Fulton, Kentucky 42041. In addition, the manual follows Lanigan's model in producing a detailed table of contents page, a publisher and copyright page, and a things to note page. The publisher and copyright page states the title, *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual*. It also acknowledges the author and model that this manual followed, which is Mary L. Lanigan's model, *How to Create Effective Training Manuals*.

The "things to note" or "preface page" gives the purpose of this manual, which is to serve as a tool to help educate church leaders on how embodied liturgies work to form disciples of Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* describes both Smith's and Wesley's models of Christian formation, and how liturgical practices are used. Furthermore, the manual describes how the ancient church used liturgical practices in their worship to tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment. Lastly, this manual describes the history and development of three ancient liturgical practices that can be implemented in worship services.

### **Add Back Contents**

The contents in the back of a training manual include Addendum, References, and Index.<sup>360</sup> The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* has an Appendix section where the practice quizzes for each chapter are located. The training manual also includes a reference section that was written following the guidelines of the ninth edition of Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. In the reference section, cited resources provide interested readers with more detail on both Smith and Wesley's model of Christian formation as well as resources on the study of liturgies in the ancient church.

### **Training Manual Written for a Live Instructor**

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<sup>360</sup> Lanigan, 17.

The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* has been written specifically as a training manual that will be used by this author in a live training seminar. The intended audience is the church board and leaders at Fulton First Church of the Nazarene. This author's artifact is a copy of the leader's version of the training manual. The leader's version of the training manual includes all the answer keys to the practice quizzes. The answer keys and the practice quizzes are in the Appendix section of the manual. In addition, the leader's version of the training manual includes where specific breaks need to be given during the training seminar. Depending on the number of participants in the training seminar, a copy of the leader's version of the training manual will need to be made for each participant which will not include answer keys and break times.

### **Bind the Training Manual**

The training manual can be bound using three different methods: a spiral bound manual, a book binding, or a three-ring binder. Each method offers something different, depending on each group's individual needs. For example, "if the user needs to position the manual flat on a table while working on a computer, then perhaps a spiral bound manual might be the best binding."<sup>361</sup> However, if the trainee is going to refer back to the manual frequently, then a book binding manual would be better because a spiral bound manual may be prone to rips and tears.<sup>362</sup> Nevertheless, a book-type binding doesn't allow for quick updates or changes.<sup>363</sup> This author chose to bind the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* with a three-ring binder for two reasons. First, a three-ring binder is the most affordable option. Secondly, a three-ring binder allows for the option of adding and updating material as needed.

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<sup>361</sup> Lanigan, 19.

<sup>362</sup> Lanigan, 19.

<sup>363</sup> Lanigan, 19.

## **Planning a Time and Date**

This author has chosen a six-week period for a training seminar with the church board and worship leaders using the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual*. The training seminar will take place at the church on six consecutive Sundays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Sunday is the most suitable or accessible day for this group. Each participant will have his/her own copy of the training manual, and childcare will be provided during the seminar.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion on Training Manual**

### **Implementation of Training Manual**

The implementation of the training manual requires a strong commitment from the trainees. For six consecutive weeks, a segment of four hours will cover an extensive amount of material. By this commitment, each participant is acknowledging an interest in investing in the kingdom, and in making disciples for Christ at Fulton First Church of the Nazarene.

Because much of the material and language in the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* will be new to the participants, this author has chosen to highlight these words in descriptive bullet points to make learning easier. In addition, the practice questions in the Appendix section will help trainees learn many of the key points of ancient church liturgies. Furthermore, ending each session with a question-and-answer period will give feedback on what areas of material need further teaching.

### **Goals To Be Reached**

The implementation of the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* has three goals. The first goal is a new order of worship which includes a weekly practice of recitation of the Creed, Eucharist, and observance of the Christian calendar. A second goal is to educate church leaders on the history of the ancient church liturgies and how they were

used to reenact God's story regularly in worship. The third goal is to further educate church leaders on how human beings are shaped using ancient church liturgies and using both Smith's and Wesley's model of Christian formation.

### **Summarize the Artifacts Development**

The training manual was developed around the need to incorporate ancient church liturgies, especially embodied liturgies, for the purpose of spiritual formation. The culture of contemporary churches has influenced the choice of liturgical practices used in worship. The first step in developing the training manual was to see the need to approach spiritual formation through an emergent monistic anthropology. This then led to the understanding that the embodied liturgical practices of the ancient church needed to be rediscovered. The second step was to grasp how both Smith's and Wesley's model fit within an emergent monistic anthropology, and how they are both congruent with how human beings are formed. The third step was to research and discover how the ancient church used liturgies in spiritual formation and worship. Lastly, the final step in the artifact's development was to compile this information in a training manual following Mary L. Lanigan's model, *How to Create Effective Training Manuals*.

### **Implementation On Future Studies**

Future research implications discovered in creating this artifact include the need to study other liturgical practices of the ancient church, including fasting and baptism, and their impact on Christian formation. In addition, this author is interested in more research on Cherry Constance's work regarding the ancient church's four movements of worship: the Gathering, the Word, the Table, and the Sending, and how to plan a worship service around these four movements. The reason for this is because the worship service provides spiritual formation for Christians, and this



author would like to be able to learn how to be more efficient in providing spiritual formation around the ancient flow of gathering, Word, Table, and sending.

### **How Would the Author Expand, Narrow, or Change the Focus?**

In retrospect, this author would expand this project in two areas: (1) study to determine which liturgical practices to use in each of the four movements to be more effective in providing spiritual formation, and (2) research the history and development of other liturgical practices besides those already mentioned, such as baptism, and fasting to make these practices meaningful to many contemporary churches today. This author would further narrow the focus of this project by omitting one of the models of Christian formation. Including both Smith and Wesley's model in one training manual may be too much information for trainees to process. The amount of material may be creating an information overload with both models in one manuscript. Nevertheless, both models are great tools for spiritual formation, and each one gives a different approach to how the ancient church liturgies are used for spiritual formation.

Lastly, in retrospect, this author would focus more on helping churches plan an order of worship. For example, he would research more on the different types of liturgical practices used by the ancient church in connection with the four movements of a worship service. Determining which liturgical practice to use for spiritual formation in a worship service is important, because many Christians only attend a worship service for one hour a week.

### **Suggestions For Others**

If others want to build on this project, this author suggests three areas where further research is needed. First, there needs to be further research on the effect of American culture on spiritual formation. For example, author, Andrew Root, provides a good example of how American individualism and consumerism has affected Christian formation. A second area that

would build on this project is research in the area of neuroscience and how it connects to Christian worship. Lastly, a third area would be with the connection between spiritual formation and what Smith calls “new unconscious.”<sup>364</sup> The question that comes to mind is, “How much of a Christian’s spiritual formation can become a part of their “second nature?”

### **Training Response**

The emergent monistic view of worship was presented to the board by way of promotion of the embodied and embedded liturgical practices of the ancient church. Initially, some viewed these practices as ritualistic and bordering Roman Catholic. However, with more in-depth study of their meaning and their associations to the truths of Christianity and their ability to re-tell God’s story through reenactments, these practices were received favorably and with enthusiasm. Future seminars would benefit from mock trials of orderly services and congregational demonstrations.

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<sup>364</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 80.



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**Appendix A: Artifact**

**Ancient Liturgies  
For Contemporary Worship  
Training Manual**



**Pastor Dale Eugene Turner**

**Fulton First Church of the Nazarene**

**404 Green Street, Fulton, Kentucky 42041.**

**Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual**

This manual was created by Pastor Dale Turner on October 30th, 2021,

for Fulton First Church of the Nazarene.

404 Green St., Fulton, Kentucky, 42041

**Permission to Use**

This manual may be reprinted by any church or church member for the purpose in training ancient liturgies for contemporary worship.

**Purpose of This Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a tool to help educate church leaders on how embodied liturgies work to form disciples of Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, the *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* describes both Smith's and Wesley's models of Christian formation, and how liturgical practices are used. Furthermore, the manual describes how the ancient church used liturgical practices in their worship to tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment. Lastly, this manual describes the history and development of three ancient liturgical practices that can be implemented in worship services.

**How To Use This Manual**

The *Ancient Liturgies for Contemporary Worship Training Manual* has seven chapters divided into several subsections for each chapter except chapter four, which has only one section. The manual is designed to be taught over a period of six weeks. One chapter can be taught in a four - hour segment for a six-week period. Chapter four is combined with chapter five, therefore, allowing the seven chapters to be taught in six different segments of time.

There will be a practice quiz in Appendix A for each week to test trainee's information recall.

The answer key for each week's quiz is in Appendix B.

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## Week One

### Chapter One

#### ***James K. A. Smith's Model of the Human Person as a Lover***



### Main Points

- ★ The human being as a lover model shifts the center of gravity of human identity down from the heady regions of mind to the central regions of the heart or gut.<sup>365</sup>
- ★ Desire is a very key component in the model of the human person as a lover.
- ★ Human beings inhabit the world primarily in a noncognitive, affective mode of intentionality, and implicit in their love is an end, or *telos*.<sup>366</sup>

<sup>365</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 47.

<sup>366</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

- ★ “Our ultimate love is oriented by and to a picture of what we think it looks like for us to live well, and that picture then governs, shapes, and motivates our decisions and actions.”<sup>367</sup>
- ★ All liturgies are informed by beliefs and reflect the values of an individual or people.<sup>368</sup>

## Section One: Introduction

The next several sections will evaluate different components in Smith’s model of the human person as a lover. His model will begin first with the heart because it is the center and essence of the human being as a lover. Next, his model will discuss the desires of the heart and how a human being’s desires are aimed at some end or vision of the good life.<sup>369</sup> Lastly, his model will discuss how the desires of the heart are shaped and formed by habits, and how these habits are formed and shaped by liturgical practices.

## Section Two: The Heart

The human being as a lover model shifts the center of gravity of human identity down from the heady regions of mind to the central regions of the heart or gut.<sup>370</sup> The Greek word for heart is *kardia*. It is defined as the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life.<sup>371</sup> *Kardia* is also

<sup>367</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>368</sup> Scott Aniol, “Practice Makes Perfect: Corporate Worship and the Formation of Spiritual Virtue,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2017): 93–104. <https://0-search-ebscohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=33h&AN=12685&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>369</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51.

<sup>370</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 47.

<sup>371</sup> Richard S. Taylor, ed. *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City, MI: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 249.

used in Scripture to describe the “whole inner man, including motives, feelings, affections, desires, the will, the aims, the principles, the thoughts, and the intellect.”<sup>372</sup> A Scripture that shows the centrality of the heart in relationship to the body is Proverbs 4:23. It states, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (NIV). This verse, as well as others, points to the heart as the source from which spiritual life flows.

When Wesley, Smith, and biblical writers use the term *heart*, they are not referring to the muscle that pumps blood throughout the body. Instead, they are referring to the center of the human being, the core identity of who we are.<sup>373</sup> Scripture uses the term *heart* as a metaphor to describe who we really are, what we are really after in life, and what brings our greatest fulfillment.<sup>374</sup> Scripture indicates the heart as the source from which desires and affections operate. For example, when Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Matthew 15 concerning the washing of the disciples’ hands before they ate, he answered, “It is not what goes into a person’s mouth that makes him or her unclean, but it is what comes out of the mouth. Whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body. However, the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a person unclean.”<sup>375</sup> Therefore, the next sections will discuss the function of desires and affections in the heart.

### **Section Three: Desires of the Heart**

<sup>372</sup> Taylor., 249.

<sup>373</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered: A Wesleyan Spirituality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014). <https://0-search-ebscohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=834369&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>374</sup> Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered*.

<sup>375</sup> Matt. 15:1-19.



Desire is a very key component in the model of the human person as a lover. According to Smith, “desire shapes how one sees and understands the world, and so the key question for the Christian in pursuit of knowledge is first to consider the shape and aim of one’s desire, and to specifically seek to increase one’s desire for God.”<sup>376</sup> The Scriptures explain and describe how the heart desires and longs after God as a lover long for the object of his or her love. Psalms 42:1-2 states, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God, My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (NIV). These verses use the metaphor of a deer longing for the very life-giving source of water to demonstrate how drastic the desires and the longings of the heart are for God. The desires and longings of the spiritual heart is the very essence and identity of a person. Therefore, the human person as a lover is defined by that which they love and long for.

The first chapter of the book of John further demonstrates that Scripture is not only in agreement with the understanding of the human person as a creature of desire, but that it leads the way in teaching this model. Jesus Christ enters the scene to begin his earthly ministry and is baptized by John the Baptist. Next, John declares him to be the Lamb of God, and two of John’s disciples begin to follow Jesus. Then, John 1:38 says, “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’” (NIV). This question of desire and longing demonstrates the human person’s orientation to the world is love and desire. Jesus did not ask them, “What do you know, but what do you want?” Therefore, the understanding of discipleship in this passage is not approached through the cognitive model of knowing and believing, but through the model of humans as lovers with their intentional desires and longings.

<sup>376</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 71.

Therefore, human beings are “primordially and essentially agents of love, which takes the structure of desire or longing.”<sup>377</sup> In connection, St. Augustine, a fifth-century philosopher, theologian, and bishop from North Africa helped the early church to capture a holistic picture of the human person as lover.<sup>378</sup> In the opening paragraph of his spiritual autobiography, he penned these famous words, “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”<sup>379</sup> Augustine strongly endorsed human persons as created lovers who desire and want to know God, their creator.

## **Section Four: Love is Always Intentional and Teleological**

This next section will focus on the aim and end to which a human person’s desire and love is directed. As strings on a guitar, desires, affections, tempers, spiritual senses, and dispositions make up the human being as a lover. Each string can be picked for a particular sound or strung together for a combined sound. A person’s desires, affections, tempers, spiritual senses, and dispositions all make different sounds that compose melody or song. They all say something about who we are and the direction that we are heading. The model of the human being as a lover function in the world not with a static love but with an intentional love.

Nevertheless, love is always being aimed at some object that is desired. It is not a matter of whether human beings love, but what they love. At the heart of a human’s identity is a love pump that is never turned off.<sup>380</sup> Therefore, to say that human persons are dynamic, intentional

<sup>377</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 50.

<sup>378</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 7.

<sup>379</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1.1.1., quoted in James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 7-8.

<sup>380</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

creatures entails another characteristic—human persons are teleological creatures, their love is aimed at different ends or goals.<sup>381</sup> In other words, what human people love is a specific vision of the good life, an implicit picture of what human beings think human flourishing looks like.<sup>382</sup> “Such a picture of human flourishing will have all sorts of components: implicit in it will be assumptions about what good relationships look like, what a just economy and distribution of resources look like, what sorts of recreation and play we value, how we ought to relate to nature and the nonhuman environment, what sorts of work count as good work, what flourishing families look like, and much more.”<sup>383</sup>

Therefore, human beings inhabit the world primarily in a noncognitive, affective mode of intentionality, and implicit in their love is an end, or *telos*.<sup>384</sup> The *telos* that a human being lives toward is not something he or she primarily knows or believes or thinks about; rather, the human person’s *telos* is what he or she wants, what the human person craves and longs for.<sup>385</sup> As a result, human beings *telos* become their ultimate goal, and it becomes what they worship. According to Smith, “we become what we worship because what we worship is what we love.”<sup>386</sup> As the great Reformer Martin Luther once said, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in,

<sup>381</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>382</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>383</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>384</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

<sup>385</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*, 11.

<sup>386</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*, 23.

that is really your god.”<sup>387</sup> Therefore, every human being is worshipping some vision of what he or she thinks human flourishing looks like. The question is, “What vision are we worshipping?”

The identity of a human being is defined by the vision of the good life that he or she loves and is worshipping. However, not all visions of the good life are the same, because there are many different targets that are drawing upon the love of individuals. Therefore, for Christians, Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God is the target and vision of the good life. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (NIV). This verse gives a vision of the good life with all of a believer's needs being met.

Another Scripture that gives a vision of the good life in the kingdom of God is in John 6:35. It states, “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty’” (NIV). Again, this verse reveals Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God as the true *telos* and vision of the good life for those who are hungry and thirsty. Notice the language Jesus uses in describing this vision of the good life. He describes this *telos* not in words that would align with a cognitive anthropology, but with words that describe the human person as a lover with desires and longings. Most of all, Jesus declares himself as the fulfillment of the human heart’s hungering and thirsting.



Take a 20-minute break.

<sup>387</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Large Catechism*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Minneapolis: Luther, 1908), 44.

## Section Five: Images of The Good Life

It is important to point out that the *telos* of human love is aimed not at a list of ideas or propositions of doctrines, and it is also not a list of abstract, disembodied concepts or values.<sup>388</sup> On the contrary, “Our ultimate love is oriented by and to a picture of what we think it looks like for us to live well, and that picture then governs, shapes, and motivates our decisions and actions.”<sup>389</sup> The human heart functions primarily with an affective, imaginative nature that is oriented to visions of the good life. Therefore, the reason why stories, legends, myths, plays, novels, and films are more powerful in capturing the imagination of the heart than dissertations, messages, and monographs is because they offer the heart a picture and image of how a good life looks.<sup>390</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, captures the power of the imagination with these words, “If you want to build a ship,” he counsels, “don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea”<sup>391</sup> Consequently, the human person is shaped through the power of the imagination.

Another good example of how the imaginative nature works within the affections and desires of the heart is demonstrated when we go shopping. When we go to the mall and look at all of the beautiful outfits on the slender manikins that stand in the window shops, our hearts are pulled to an imagination of what we would look like if we were to wear those outfits. This is what is described as a vision of the good life. Marketing and advertising know that the human

<sup>388</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>389</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>390</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 53.

<sup>391</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Wisdom of the Sands* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950), quoted in James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 11.

person operates primarily as a creature of desire, and that is why marketing and advertising operate in the realm of images and pictures. Intellectually, we are less likely to buy the beautiful outfits that are being displayed by the manikins out of need, but rather, at a precognitive level, we are attracted to a vision of the good life that has been displayed before us through an image or vision.<sup>392</sup> Smith articulates further on this topic when he asks, “What are the mechanisms by which particular visions of the good life get infused in our hearts such that they could motivate and govern a way of life (decisions, actions, pursuits, relationships)?”<sup>393</sup>

Nevertheless, when our imagination is captured, we are drawn into whatever vision of the good life that is stirring our imagination. These visions of the good life have a way of seeping into the noncognitive being of who we are.<sup>394</sup> As a result, “we begin to emulate, mimic, and mirror the particular vision that we desire. Attracted by it and moved toward it, we begin to live into this vision of the good life and start to look like citizens who inhabit the world that we picture as the good life.”<sup>395</sup> Therefore, it is important to examine the telos of the visions that are being pictured and displayed for our imaginations, because embedded in every picture and image is some vision of the good life.

## Section Six: Habits

A desire for an orientation to a particular vision of the good life becomes operative in us by becoming an integral part of the fabric of our dispositions—our precognitive tendencies to act

<sup>392</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

<sup>393</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>394</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

<sup>395</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

in certain ways and toward certain ends.<sup>396</sup> These fixed dispositions are also called *habits*—things we have done over and over, and therefore do not require conscious reflection; good habits are called *virtues*, whereas bad habits are *vices*. These habits constitute a kind of second nature: while they are learned, they can become so intricately woven into the fiber of our being that they function as if they were natural or biological.<sup>397</sup> Our habits incline us to act in certain ways without our having to consciously think about what we are doing. They become our default tendencies or our automatic dispositions to act in certain ways, and to mirror some vision of the good life that has become embedded in our hearts.<sup>398</sup> This is also true about visions and images of the good life. Therefore, desires and affections, in response to some vision of the good life, can become fixed dispositions or habits that are being practiced without our conscious reflection.

John Wesley's moral theology of divine participation is connected to and centered in the concept of holy habits being formed in individuals. Wesley believed that the spiritual senses of human persons are illuminated at the new birth, and as a result, human persons are enabled by God's grace to form holy affections, tempers, dispositions, and desires.<sup>399</sup> Furthermore, Wesley believed that these holy affections and tempers did not have to be temporary, but could be habituated into enduring dispositions.<sup>400</sup> The ability to form holy habits is what it means to participate in the divine nature—also called sanctification or inward holiness. As a result,

<sup>396</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>397</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

<sup>398</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

<sup>399</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God." Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 1:9. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-19-the-great-privilege-of-those-that-are-born-of-god/>.

<sup>400</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 69.

forming the divine nature through holy tempers and holy affections will keep our love aimed at the vision of the good life in Jesus Christ.

Fixed dispositions or habits work in the realm of the noncognitive. Driving is an example. Our bodies can be trained to do certain behaviors automatically and by default without our conscious reflection. Many have had an experience of driving home safely from work without remembering specifics of the route because their minds were busy thinking about something else. The reason one can drive home safely is because driving becomes a habit; one does not need to consciously decipher each detail of the trip. Thus, driving demonstrates how habits work on a non-cognitive level without conscious reflection.

It is important to point out that not all habits are identity forming habits. For example, the habit of brushing our teeth every day or eating a certain cereal every morning would be called very thin, or mundane habits, because they do not operate on a deep heart level of love or desire.<sup>401</sup> On the other hand, habits like going to church every Sunday or reading our Bible everyday would be called thick habits, because these habits operate in the realm of love and desire.<sup>402</sup> Thick habits have embedded in them some particular end or vision of the good life. They aim our love and desire toward a goal or target and form our identity.

## **Section Seven: Liturgical Practices**

The human person as a lover operates primarily in the world as a creature of desire and habit. Habits and dispositions are formed and shaped through bodily practices or rituals. These train our hearts to desire certain ends.<sup>403</sup> According to Smith, “Different kinds of material

<sup>401</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 82.

<sup>402</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 82.

<sup>403</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58.



practices infuse non-cognitive dispositions and skills in us through ritual and repetition precisely because our hearts (site of habits) are so closely tethered to our bodies. The senses are portals to the heart, and thus the body is a channel to our core dispositions and identity.”<sup>404</sup>

He describes thick bodily practices or rituals that form our identity and inculcate visions of the good life as liturgies.<sup>405</sup> Liturgies comes from the term *liturgy* which is derived from the Greek word *leitourgia*. The word *leitourgia* was used in Hellenistic Greek to describe an act of public service, and used in the Septuagint to denote the services of the priests and Levites in the Tabernacle and Temple.<sup>406</sup> The New Testament also uses the term *liturgy* in several places: as temple services (Luke 1:23, Heb. 9:21), as Christian worship (Acts 13:2), and as works of love and devotion (2 Cor. 9:12, Phil. 2:30).<sup>407</sup> Consequently, liturgy is the participation with God in his work—our words, actions, postures, spaces, and symbols are liturgies of worship.<sup>408</sup>

All liturgies are informed by beliefs and reflect the values of an individual or people.<sup>409</sup> Nevertheless, action in worship is important, because one is shaped by worship.<sup>410</sup> Smith describes *liturgical* practices as a reflection of what one loves and one's greatest desire. Identity shaping rituals (also known as thick practice habits) reflect what we love and desire; these

<sup>404</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58-59.

<sup>405</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86.

<sup>406</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>407</sup> Taylor, 319.

<sup>408</sup> Timothy Brooks, *The Formational Power of Worship: Leading Your Community with Intention* (Kansas City, MO: The Foundry Publishing, 2020), 9.

<sup>409</sup> Scott Aniol, “Practice Makes Perfect: Corporate Worship and the Formation of Spiritual Virtue.” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2017): 93–104. <https://0-search-ebshost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=33h&AN=12685&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>410</sup> Brooks, 8.

practices work as liturgies. According to Smith, “liturgies are the most loaded forms of ritual practices because they are after nothing less than our hearts. They want to determine what we love ultimately. Our ultimate love is what defines us, what makes us the kind of people we are.”<sup>411</sup> However, not all embodied practices are liturgical, only those that shape our love and desire for some vision of the good life. Furthermore, not all liturgical practices are religious, because there are secular liturgies that are drawing the hearts of people to different ends and not to the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is important for Christians to examine their own liturgical practices and determine what vision of the good life is embedded in them.

## **Section Eight: Overview of James K. A. Smith’s Model**

Two main points in Smith’s model of the human person as a lover are the following: The first key point is that Smith is arguing for the center of formation to be changed from the mind to the heart (or *kardia*). To change the center of formation from the cognitive region to the bodily realm of the heart is very radical. This goes against the way many institutions of learning and against the way many contemporary churches have approached educational learning and spiritual formation for centuries. Therefore, to place the center of formation in the heart and not the mind requires a drastic change in the way one views how the senses, desires, bodily practices, and many other components work in the formation of human persons. The second important point in Smith’s model is his argument on the direction that formation practices, liturgies, and rituals are shaping one’s desires. Smith argues that people are formed and shaped primarily not by ideas or thoughts, but by embodied, liturgical practices that are training one’s heart to desire a certain end.<sup>412</sup>

<sup>411</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87.

<sup>412</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58.

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

## Week Two

### Chapter Two

#### *John Wesley's Christian Formation Model*



### Main Points

- ★ Wesley's approach to spiritual formation is described as moral theology.
- ★ Long indicates that Wesley's sermon, *The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God*, along with 2 Peter 1:4 is at the heart of Wesley's understanding of Christian formation as moral theology.<sup>413</sup>
- ★ Wesley's two main components of his moral theology are illumination and divine participation.

<sup>413</sup> Stephen D. Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 130.

- ★ Means of grace are any worship practices or spiritual channels through which the Holy Spirit uses to shape and form a Christian's life.
- ★ For grace to be relational and to enable a person to have a relationship with God, it must involve the presence of God and the identity of God.

## Section One: Introduction

Wesley's approach to Christian formation has been described by theologian Randy Maddox as an affectional moral psychology.<sup>414</sup> Others like Albert Outler and Gregory Clapper agree that Wesley's approach to Christian formation is best described as "the renewal of the human heart."<sup>415</sup> For example, it has been said, "anyone who reads the works of John Wesley will immediately be struck with how often he refers to the 'heart' or the 'affections' or the 'tempers'."<sup>416</sup> Wesley's approach to Christian formation is focused on an inward holiness or a transformation of the heart. His language demonstrates very practical and useful theology in the process of spiritual formation. The next sections of this paper will seek to explain Wesley's moral theology, as it is described by Stephen Long, in his book, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*, and how it is very similar to Smith's model of the human person as primarily a lover.

## Section Two: Wesley's Moral Theology

<sup>414</sup> Randy L. Maddox, "Reconnecting the Means to the End: A Wesleyan Prescription for the Holiness Movement." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33.2 (1998): 25.

<sup>415</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, *The Renewal of The Heart is The Mission of The Church: Wesley's Heart Religion in The Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 27.

<sup>416</sup> Clapper, *The Renewal of The Heart*, 3.

Long indicates that Wesley's sermon, *The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God*, along with 2 Peter 1:4 is at the heart of Wesley's understanding of Christian formation as moral theology.<sup>417</sup> His sermon focuses on two scriptures: 1 John 3:9, which states, "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God" (NIV); and 2 Peter 1:4, which states, "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (NIV). These two Scriptures help constitute Wesley's theology of how the new birth gives the power and grace to participate in the divine life of God.

Similarly, it was Augustine and Aquinas who influenced Wesley to understand that divine knowledge was given by God in the form of an awakening or what Wesley described as illumination.<sup>418</sup> Wesley describes this spiritual illumination in his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*:

"The eyes of his understanding" are now "open," and he "seeth Him that is invisible." He sees what is "the exceeding greatness of his power" and of his love toward them that believe. He sees that God is merciful to him a sinner, that he is reconciled through the Son of his love. He clearly perceives both the pardoning love of God, and all his "exceeding great and precious promises." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined," and doth shine, "in his heart," to enlighten him with "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance.<sup>419</sup>

Wesley's sermon describes from 2 Peter 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 4:6 how the love of God in Jesus Christ illuminates his darken soul and brings him into the light of Jesus Christ. Scripture says that light is given at God's command, just as God spoke in the beginning of creation, "Let there

<sup>417</sup> Stephen D. Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 130.

<sup>418</sup> Long, 13 & 133.

<sup>419</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

be light, and there was light.” Wesley believed the giving of light to the darken soul is a result of the grace and mercy of God. As a result, the understanding of the illumination of the soul from these Scriptures is the first component for the basis of Wesley’s moral theology.

A second component in Wesley’s moral theology is participation. Again, in his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, Wesley describes this participation:

But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed! His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say, by sure experience, "Thou art about my bed, and about my path;" I feel thee in all my ways: "Thou besettest me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me." The Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; and the same breath which comes from, returns to, God: As it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving; love and praise, and prayer being the breath of every soul which is truly born of God. And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day, together with spiritual strength, and motion, and sensation; all the senses of the soul being now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.<sup>420</sup>

Here, Wesley indicates that the great privilege Christians have in being born of God is a participation in God’s divine life. He describes this participation by pointing out how Christians are enabled by the Spirit of God to respond to God in love, thanksgiving, prayer, and praise.

Wesley’s words emphasize that this divine participation is only possible through spiritual illumination, or what Wesley describes as being born of God and His Spirit. Therefore, the basis of Wesley’s moral theology is that because of God’s illumination into individual hearts, they are now able to participate in a moral life that is Christ-like.

Wesley states, “all the senses of the soul are now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.”<sup>421</sup> These awakened spiritual senses are coming from the heart (or

<sup>420</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>421</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

kardia), and they allow the Christian to participate in the divine nature. A good example of this concept is in Wesley's description of his own salvation experience at Aldersgate:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change in which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.<sup>422</sup>

Wesley's description of his heart being strangely warmed points to how God's illumination in his heart brought about an awakening in his spiritual senses. His sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, describes this illumination of the inner life as a new kind of spiritual respiration that is able to grow in strength, motion, and sensation.<sup>423</sup> Moreover, Wesley describes an affectionate, moral theology that is built upon the soul being first illuminated by God and then given the ability to participate in the divine life. Scripture supports this idea in 1 John 4:19; the Christian is only able to love and participate in the divine life of God, because God has first loved and brought new birth or spiritual illumination to one's heart.

Faith is a key point in understanding Wesley's moral theology. In his sermon, *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*, the new birth is received by faith, and it is by faith that a Christian continues to participate in the divine life. Wesley views faith as an infused gift from God that lets the Christian see what physical sight alone cannot see.<sup>424</sup> As Long states, "This gift of faith is a participation in the "candle of the Lord" that illuminates the eternal, invisible reality..."<sup>425</sup> Therefore, as scripture teaches, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—

<sup>422</sup> Percy Livingstone Parker, ed., *The Journal of John Wesley* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951), 64.

<sup>423</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>424</sup> Long, 132.

<sup>425</sup> Long, 132.



and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph. 2:8-9, NIV). Grace gives both faith and salvation, and faith keeps a human being grounded in the grace of God and allows the person to continually participate in the divine nature by grace and not by human works.

Continual participation in God’s divine nature by grace is very important to the understanding of how holiness, sanctification, and Christian growth fits into Wesley’s moral theology. These foster spiritual growth by participating in the divine nature through the *means of grace*. Furthermore, continual growth in the divine nature of God fosters participation in God’s love. As a result, participation in God’s love as a *telos* is the connection to Smith’s model of the human person as a lover.



Take a 20-minute break.

### Section Three: Affections

The heart is the home of the affections. “However, Wesley does not refer to heart-realities exclusively in terms of the *affections*. He also uses language that includes *tempers*, *dispositions*, *feelings*, and (though rarely) even *emotion*.”<sup>426</sup> These words describe the level on which the desires and longings of the heart function and operate. Consequently, in Wesley’s model, these words represent a list of the *spiritual senses* that are awakened in the heart through the illumination of the new birth.<sup>427</sup> Therefore, Wesley uses these words interchangeably in most of his writings to explain what is taking place in the inward part of the human person. Wesley’s focus on the importance of the affections of the heart is the same language Smith uses in his model when speaking of the desires of the heart.

The heart’s desires and affections are rich and complex and can be multidirectional. Therefore, understanding its function is one of the major key components to understanding Smith’s and Wesley’s model of the human person as a lover. For example, Wesley states in his sermon: “If thine eye be thus single, thus fixed on God, thy whole body shall be full of light. Thy whole body: — all that is guided by the intention, as the body is by the eye. All thou art, all thou doest thy desires, tempers, affections, thy thoughts, and words, and actions. The whole of these shall be full of light; full of true divine knowledge.”<sup>428</sup> Here, two things are implied: (1) the state and disposition of the human person’s affections, desires, and tempers represents the identity of

<sup>426</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, “John Wesley’s Language of the Heart.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (2009): 94–102. <https://0-search-ebscohost-com.kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001745927&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>427</sup> Wesley, Sermon 19, 1:9.

<sup>428</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 28, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse Eight.” Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 3. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-28-upon-our-lords-sermon-on-the-mount-discourse-eight/>.

the human person, and (2) these affections, desires, and tempers are shaped by that which the human person loves. As Smith indicates, we are what we love.

Wesley further implies that a person's tempers, affections, and desires can be aimed in a different direction (away from God). He states, "Yea, if thine eye be not single, if thou seek any of the things of earth, thou shalt be full of ungodliness and unrighteousness, thy desires, tempers, affections, being all out of course, being all dark, and vile, and vain. And thy conversation will be evil as well as thy heart, not seasoned with salt, or meet to minister grace unto the hearers; but idle, unprofitable, corrupt, grievous to the Holy Spirit of God."<sup>429</sup> Consequently, a person's affections, tempers, and desires can be evil or good based on the direction or end to which these desires are aimed. Nevertheless, the purpose of Christian formation is to bring about the transformation and the continual growth of a person's affections, tempers, and desires into Christlikeness.

#### **Section Four: Means of Grace**

The *means of grace* is very important in understanding how Wesley's moral theology works in forming and shaping Christians into the image of Christ. Moreover, Wesley's means of grace is the same as Smith's liturgical practices which form habits in a person and aims his or her heart toward the kingdom of God. Wesley defines means of grace in his sermon, *The Means of Grace*:

By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace. I use this expression, means of grace, because I know none better; and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages; — in particular by our own Church, which directs us to bless God both for

<sup>429</sup> Wesley, Sermon 28, 7.

the means of grace, and hope of glory; and teaches us, that a sacrament is "an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same."<sup>430</sup>

Therefore, means of grace are liturgical or spiritual practices which Christians use to train their hearts and desires toward the things of Christ. They are not works to earn salvation, but they are channels of grace for the nurturing and developing of the Christian life. Furthermore, the means of grace are not an end in themselves but are viewed as a means to an end—to love God and others out of a pure heart. Therefore, Wesley's moral theology understands the means of grace as the way through which a Christian is enabled to participate in the divine nature.

The importance of the means of grace in developing the life of a Christian is based upon the understanding of grace. Wesley viewed grace as relational—both enabling and inviting one to participate in an ongoing personal relationship with God.<sup>431</sup> According to Knight, "Wesley envisioned a free and dynamic relationship with God in which divine activity enabled and invited human activity, and human participation was essential if the relationship was to grow and deepen."<sup>432</sup> Therefore, divine illumination and human participation through the means of grace is how Wesley understood a relationship with God to be possible.

For grace to be relational and to enable a person to have a relationship with God, it must involve the presence of God and the identity of God. Wesley used this framework of the presence of God and the identity of God to organize the different types of *means of grace* into different categories. For example, "the means of grace which encourage openness to the presence of God include Christian community, works of mercy, extemporaneous prayer, fasting, and the

<sup>430</sup> John Wesley. *The Sermons of John Wesley*. Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace." Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University, 2.1. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-16-the-means-of-grace/>.

<sup>431</sup> Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in The Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*. (Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 1992), 8.

<sup>432</sup> Knight III, 8.

general means of grace. These involve practices which enable and encourage us to be attentive to God's presence."<sup>433</sup> On the other hand, "the means of grace which encourage the experience of the identity of God include scripture, preaching, the eucharist, and the prayers of the tradition. These describe the character and activity of God."<sup>434</sup>

Therefore, means of grace are any worship practices or spiritual channels through which the Holy Spirit uses to shape and form a Christian's life. As a result, the means of grace are the same as liturgies, and liturgies are not new. The Ancient Church practiced Christian liturgies in their worship services for centuries to promote spiritual growth. Consequently, Wesley was very passionate in his understanding of how these same ancient liturgies worked as a means of grace in developing the desires, the tempers, and the affections of the heart toward holiness. He felt that these ancient worship practices were not obligatory, but rather, they were a way to participate in the divine life of God.

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

<sup>433</sup> Knight III, 9.

<sup>434</sup> Knight III, 13.

## Week Three

### Chapter Three

#### *Ancient Church Worship*



### Main Points

- ★ The ancient church's worship was structured to tell God's story—creation, incarnation, and recreation.
- ★ Historical recitation and dramatic reenactment use liturgical practices as the building blocks of worship to provide biblical remembrance and anticipation in telling God's story.
- ★ Biblical remembering brings God's saving events to mind, body, and soul, and makes the power and the saving effect of the event present to the worshipping community.<sup>435</sup>
- ★ Biblical remembrance and anticipation are two forms of worship in telling God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation.

<sup>435</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 43.

- ★ A connection exists between remembering past events of God’s creating and saving power to what theologians call eschatology.<sup>436</sup>

## **Section One: Introduction**

The ancient church’s worship was structured to tell God’s story—creation, incarnation, and recreation. This story was told by biblical remembrance and anticipation using liturgical practices. Historical recitation and dramatic reenactment use liturgical practices as the building blocks of worship to provide biblical remembrance and anticipation in telling God’s story. The telling of God’s story through a balance of embodied liturgical practices, as well as other liturgical practices, builds anticipation of what God can and will do for his people.

## **Section Two: Ancient Church Theology of Worship**

The ancient church understood worship to be the acknowledgment of the “worth-ship” of God, and the human response to divine nature.<sup>437</sup> Worship was viewed first about God, and what he had revealed.<sup>438</sup> The ancient church focused on creation, incarnation, and recreation as God’s story. It was in this divine activity that the ancient church participated in “biblical remembrance and anticipation.”<sup>439</sup>

## **Section Three: Biblical Remembrance**

<sup>436</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 57.

<sup>437</sup> Taylor, 551.

<sup>438</sup> Wayne Johnson, 31-32.

<sup>439</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God’s Narrative*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2008, 107.

Biblical remembering is much more than an intellectual recalling of past events. Biblical remembering brings God's saving events to mind, body, and soul, and makes the power and the saving effect of the event present to the worshipping community.<sup>440</sup> The Greek word for remembrance is *anamnesis*; it has the force of making present, making alive, and making real.<sup>441</sup> Most of all, remembrance is directed to God; it says, "God, remember your saving deeds—remember how you delivered us from the power of the evil one and conquered death."<sup>442</sup> Therefore, remembrance is a powerful tool in worship, which encourages faith in God's ability to save, protect, and keep. Moreover, ancient Israel and the ancient church participated in biblical remembrance of God's saving events through historical recitation and through dramatic reenactment. Consequently, ancient church liturgies were developed as a form of biblical remembrance.

The church and Israel were able to engage in historical recitation and dramatic reenactment using liturgies. Historical recitation is demonstrated in scripture by King David. His liturgical practice was the reading of the Word of God. The book of Psalms is filled with passages of Scripture which tell how David participated in the historical recitation of the saving acts of God in ancient Israel. David read how God created the world, and how God delivered the nation of Israel out of Egypt. The liturgical practice of reading and reciting the saving events of God caused David to anticipate how God would work in his life and bring deliverance (recreation). Therefore, through historical recitation, David was able to worship God and tell God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation.

<sup>440</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.

<sup>441</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.

<sup>442</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 43.



The liturgical practice of reciting the creeds, preaching the Word of God, and reading the Scriptures are liturgical forms of biblical remembrance used in historical recitation to tell God's story. Moreover, embodied liturgical practices, such as baptism and the Eucharist work to tell God's story through dramatic reenactment. Therefore, when the church participates in the Eucharist and baptism, God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation is being remembered and reenacted. In summary, all forms of ancient liturgical practices work as a means of grace. Through participation in them the church fosters growth in their love and desire for the kingdom of God. Moreover, these are the same liturgical practices which Smith uses in his model of the human person as a lover.



Take a 20-minute break.

## **Section Four: Anticipation**

Biblical remembrance and anticipation are two forms of worship in telling God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation. However, the whole story of God is not contained completely in past events.<sup>443</sup> A connection exists between remembering past events of God's creating and saving power to what theologians call eschatology.<sup>444</sup> Eschatology is the study of future events which God will bring about through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These future events are foretold in the Word of God and are a part of God's story of creation, incarnation, and recreation. Historical recitation and dramatic reenactment of the whole biblical story teaches and imagines God's work in the future and builds anticipation in the community of faith. Therefore, worship practices, including embodied ancient worship practices, are used not only to remember past events, but to anticipate God's recreation of this world in the future.

## **Section Five: Order of Worship or Liturgical Practices**

Liturgical practices are the building blocks of worship. They tell God's story through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment. The ancient church arranged these liturgical practices in a particular worship order. The main structure was around "Word and Table," which provided "revelation and response." Revelation and response are the heart of Christian worship.<sup>445</sup> Therefore, the structure of "Word and Table" provided both illumination and divine participation through the hearing of the Word of God and participation in the Eucharist.

<sup>443</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 57.

<sup>444</sup> Robert E. Webber. *Ancient – Future Worship*, 57.

<sup>445</sup> Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 45.

Scripture and the Eucharist were the main focus of the ancient worship service.<sup>446</sup> In addition to the reading of Scripture and the Eucharist, the ancient church worship order consisted of gathering and sending.<sup>447</sup> Luke 24:13-35 best demonstrates this order of service in Scripture. Jesus gathered with the two disciples as they walked the road to Emmaus. Christ then spoke to them from the Old Testament Scriptures and revealed himself to them as he broke bread at the Table. Lastly, the sending was their response after his disappearance; they went back to Jerusalem with the good news of seeing the resurrected Christ. Therefore, the basic order of liturgical practices in the ancient church functioned around these four movements: the Gathering, the Word, the Table, and the Sending.<sup>448</sup> Over the next 600-year period of the ancient church, other liturgical practices were added to support the order of worship through these four movements.

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

<sup>446</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>447</sup> Cherry, 46.

<sup>448</sup> Cherry, 46.

## Week Four

### Chapter Four

#### *Three Specific Ancient Church Liturgies*



### Main Points

- ★ The ancient church had a specific order of worship that involved four different movements—Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending.<sup>449</sup>
- ★ Three specific liturgical practices used in these four movements are Creed, Christian Calendar, and the Eucharist.

<sup>449</sup> Cherry, 46.

- ★ Their roots extend into the worship practices of ancient Israel and are rich in symbolism.

## **Section One: Introduction**

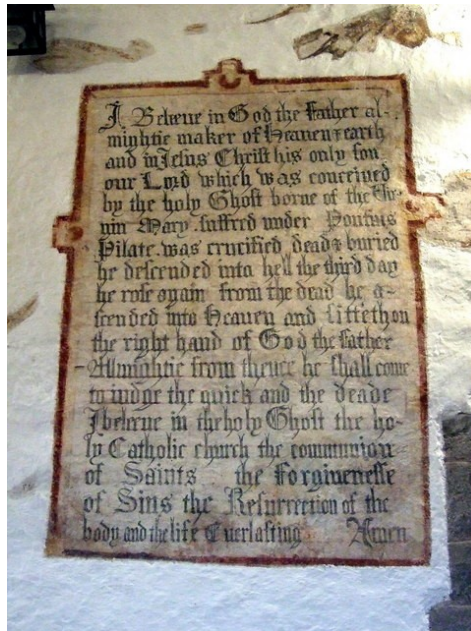
The ancient church had a specific order of worship that involved four different movements—Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending.<sup>450</sup> Three specific liturgical practices used in these four movements are Creed, Christian Calendar, and the Eucharist. The ancient liturgical practices were not randomly chosen to be a part of the worship service, but rather, each liturgical practice had a specific purpose in the order of worship. Their roots extend into the worship practices of ancient Israel and are rich in symbolism. Knowing the history of how these liturgical practices were developed and functioned in telling God's story is significant for contemporary churches in order to develop balance in worship using embodied liturgical practices that provide both biblical remembrance and anticipation.

<sup>450</sup> Cherry, 46.

## Week Four

### Chapter Five

#### The Creed



#### Main Points

- ★ A creed is a brief, authoritative, doctrinal formula confessed within the Christian Church.<sup>451</sup>
- ★ Creed is from the Latin *credo*, “I believe.”<sup>452</sup>
- ★ The Christian Creed finds its origins from the Old Testament Scriptures, and especially from the framework of Judaism’s *Shema Israel*.<sup>453</sup>

<sup>451</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>452</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>453</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 10.

- ★ From the first and second century creedal statements that were organically developing came the first standard form of a profession of faith known as the Apostle's Creed.
- ★ The second official creed of the church is the Nicene Creed; however, it is the first creed to be produced by an ecumenical council meeting.

## Section One: Definition and Origin

The creed is another tool used by the Church to tell God's story. A creed is a brief, authoritative, doctrinal formula confessed within the Christian Church.<sup>454</sup> The term is from the Latin *credo*, "I believe."<sup>455</sup> Therefore, a creed is an affirmation with others in the fellowship of the church concerning the things that the universal church holds to be true or not true.<sup>456</sup> The Christian Creed finds its origins from the Old Testament Scriptures, and especially from the framework of Judaism's *Shema Israel*.<sup>457</sup> The *Shema* is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, and it provided a communal, creedal statement for the Jewish people:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gate.

<sup>454</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>455</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>456</sup> Taylor, 141.

<sup>457</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 10.

The name *Shema* comes from its first word, “Hear.” This creedal statement has three special features. First, it calls for a communal commitment. Secondly, in the context of the surrounding polytheistic cultures, it states that the Lord is the one and only God toward whom Israel owes allegiance.<sup>458</sup> Thirdly, it calls for a personal commitment to love God with all your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your strength. Furthermore, within this personal commitment is a call to also teach your children to love God. The *Shema* stood as a covenant statement between God and his people, and it also gave the Jewish people a way to tell God’s story. Therefore, the Jewish people recited this creed constantly in their morning and evening prayers, as well as, throughout their rituals.

Jesus quotes from the *Shema* when asked by one of the scribes, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” Jesus answers, “The most important one is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”<sup>459</sup> This very same framework of the Jewish *Shema* was present in the New Testament as Jesus revealed himself to his followers.<sup>460</sup> Jesus’ followers began to understand Christ’s deity and the Trinity. Their understanding of the words, “The Lord our God, the Lord is one,” included Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus lays the groundwork for this expanded creedal statement by teaching his disciples that God, the Father, and he himself are one. In fact, Jesus states, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”<sup>461</sup> Likewise, Jesus expands the understanding of the Holy Spirit as deity when

<sup>458</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 11.

<sup>459</sup> Mark 12:29-30.

<sup>460</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 17-18.

<sup>461</sup> John 14:9.



he states, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”<sup>462</sup> The words “another advocate” means that the Holy Spirit will be of the same kind; the same substance as Jesus and the Father.

Evidence demonstrates how the first church expanded the *Shema* to include the deity of Jesus Christ.<sup>463</sup> For example, John writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”<sup>464</sup> These words of the Apostle John reveal that John, and perhaps most of his readers, understood that Jesus Christ was one and the same with the Lord God of the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 8:6 also expounds on how the Christian creed expanded from the *Shema*. It states, “Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” These examples demonstrate how New Testament quotes from the *Shema* expands to include the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

## **Section Two: Creedal Statements in the New Testament**

The New Testament reveals how the earlier church expanded the *Shema* not only to include the deity of Jesus but also to include the story of his life, death, and resurrection. Several New Testament scriptures show how the earlier followers of Christ had compressed the life,

<sup>462</sup> John 14:16-18.

<sup>463</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 17-18.

<sup>464</sup> John 1:1-3.

death, and resurrection of Jesus into creedal statements. These statements did not reveal everything about Jesus, but they gave the church a way to express their faith. Thus, it was important for the earlier church to have a rule of faith to live by, which distinguished them from the Jewish nation. For instance, even though Christianity was rooted in Judaism, it was also separate from Judaism. Christ claimed to be the God and Messiah that was prophesied in the Old Testament, and the nation of Israel rejected him.<sup>465</sup> However, not all the Jews rejected him, most of his earlier followers were Jews. Therefore, a Christian creedal statement of faith helped to identify those who were followers of Jesus Christ.

One of the New Testament passages that tells God's story in creedal form is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

This passage is one of the Scriptures that reveal how the Christian faith was beginning to be organically formed into a creed that provided the church a way of expressing the truths of the gospel. Another passage is found in Romans 10:9; it states, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." These New Testament creed statements were incorporated into the disciplines by which converts were prepared for baptism, and they were also used as answers to questions that were usually asked during the liturgy of baptism.<sup>466</sup> Consequently, baptismal creeds became the seeds from

<sup>465</sup> John 1:11.

<sup>466</sup> Al Truesdale, ed., *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 137.

which grew the ecumenical creeds, such as those of Nicaea and Chalcedon; the traditional creeds, such as the Apostles'; and the more formal and scholastic creeds, such as the Athanasian.<sup>467</sup>

### Section Three: Writings from the Early Church Fathers

The use of baptismal creeds was not the only reason for the development of the creeds. One major reason for the development of a church creed by early church fathers was to protect the church from false teaching. For instance, Ignatius the bishop of Antioch wrote a series of letters to churches in Asia Minor and Rome targeting those who were known as Docetists.<sup>468</sup> Docetism denied that Jesus shared fully and physically in the human condition.<sup>469</sup> In Ignatius' Letter to the Trallians 9:1-2, Ignatius exhorts the church to,

Stop your ears, therefore, when anyone speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly begotten of God and of the Virgin, but not after the same manner. For indeed God and man are not the same. He truly assumed a body; for "the Word was made flesh," and lived upon earth without sin. For says He, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" He did in reality both eat and drink. He was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate. He really, and not merely in appearance, was crucified, and died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.<sup>470</sup>

Ignatius' words not only refute the false teachings of Docetism, but his argument shows the use of professions of faith that eventually established the standard creed of the church.

<sup>467</sup> Truesdale, 137.

<sup>468</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 22.

<sup>469</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 22.

<sup>470</sup> Ignatius of Antioch. *Epistles of Ignatius*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library Vol. 1. "Epistles of Ignatius to the Trallians, Chap. XI. Reference to the history of Christ." [https://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius\\_antioch\\_/epistles\\_of\\_ignatius/anf01.v.iv.ix.html](https://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius_antioch_/epistles_of_ignatius/anf01.v.iv.ix.html).

Another example of short, pre-creedal statements of faith found in the writings of the early church fathers is from the North African teacher Tertullian. Tertullian teaches a Rule of Faith by which genuine believers should live and against which the heresies of false teachers can be measured.<sup>471</sup> He states the Rule of Faith as this,

Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, *and*, under the name of God, was seen “in diverse manners” by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh. This rule, as it will be proved, was taught by Christ, and raises amongst ourselves no other questions than those which heresies introduce, and which make men heretics.<sup>472</sup>

This Rule of Faith revealed the progression the church made toward creating standard creeds.



Take a 20-minute break.

<sup>471</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 28.

<sup>472</sup> Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Vol. III. Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. “Chap. XIII. Summary of the Creed, or Rule of Faith.” <https://ccel.org/ccel/ter tullian/heretics/anf03.v.iii.xiii.html>.

## Section Four: The Apostles' Creed

From the first and second century creedal statements that were organically developing came the first standard form of a profession of faith known as the Apostle's Creed. "The earliest set form of this creed is found in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (ca. 215 CE). It takes the form of questions and answers:"<sup>473</sup>

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?  
 Do you believe in Christ Jesus, Son of God?  
 Who was born (natus) by the Holy Spirit out of Mary the Virgin, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate and died and was buried, and rose on the third day alive from among the Dead, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, to come to judge the living and the dead?  
 Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh?<sup>474</sup>

This creed was also called "the old Roman Symbol," and was used as a baptismal confession in the Christian church in Rome as believers were publicly and formally inducted into the Christian faith.<sup>475</sup>

A version of the Apostles' Creed is found in the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* composed by Rufinus of Aquileia (ca. 404).<sup>476</sup> Rufinus was the first to give an account of a legend concerning the writing of the Apostles' Creed. He states that the creed was written by the apostles themselves, and that each of the twelve apostles contributed a phrase to the creed.<sup>477</sup> This legend became very popular, however, historical criticism later proved that the legend had

<sup>473</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>474</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>475</sup> H. Ray Dunning, *A Layman's Guide: To the Apostles' Creed* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>476</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 51.

<sup>477</sup> Dunning, 11.

no truth to it. By the seventh century, the Apostles' Creed that we know today became the standard version. It reads:

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

One of the first features of this creed that is very noticeable is that it begins with the pronoun I, instead of we. This reveals that the Apostles' Creed was used mostly for a baptismal creed that was recited by each convert to the Christian faith before being baptized. However, this does not limit its use to only baptismal confessions. The Apostles' Creed is recited every Sunday in unison by local congregations across the world.

The words of the Apostles' Creed are framed around the Trinity, teaching that there are three persons of the Trinity that form one Godhead. However, the creed is very Christ centered, with most of its words telling the story of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. The words, "descended to hell," usually raises many questions. Most Bible scholars understand this to mean that Christ went to *Sheol* or *Hades*. *Sheol* and *Hades* are the Hebrew and Greek words for "the place or realm of the dead," also called, "the place of departed spirits." However, some students of the Bible connect "descended to hell," with 1 Peter 3:19, and imply that Christ gave the wicked dead an opportunity to believe. Nevertheless, what is important is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, thereby defeating death and the powers of darkness. One concern Protestant believers have about the Apostles' Creed is over the word "catholic." Some think this part of the creed is endorsing the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. However, the word

“catholic” in the creed does not in any shape or form imply the Roman Catholic Church but means the whole or universal church throughout all places and all times.

## Section Five: The Nicene Creed

The second official creed of the church is the Nicene Creed; however, it is the first creed to be produced by an ecumenical council meeting. The first ecumenical council meeting of Nicea in 325 A.D. was called by the Roman emperor Constantine for the unifying of the “newly Christian empire that had been severely divided by the teaching of a presbyter in Alexandria named Arius (256-336 A.D.). In defense of God’s absolute uniqueness and transcendence, Arius argued that God’s essence (*ousia*) could not be shared, for such sharing in nature would imply a division in the Godhead.”<sup>478</sup> Consequently, Arius taught that Jesus Christ (the Word of God), could not be fully God but must be a creature that God created, and that he was given the name, Son of God, only as an honorary title.<sup>479</sup>

The great bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, along with other orthodox bishops, opposed the false teachings of Arius and wrote the Nicene Creed as a statement of faith for the universal church.<sup>480</sup> The creed reads as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
Begotten [*gennethenta*] of the Father as only begotten, that is, out of being [*ousia*] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten not made [*gennethenta ou poiethenta*], one in being [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things are made, things in heaven and things on earth, who, for us humans and for our

<sup>478</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 50.

<sup>479</sup> Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. Collegeville (Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book, 1983), 60.

<sup>480</sup> Davis, 59-60.

salvation came down and became flesh [*sarkothenta*], becoming human [*enanthropesanta*], he suffered, and he rose on the third day, and having gone into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

Those who say, “There was a time when he was not” and “before he was begotten he was not, or that he was of another being or substance or a creature ... let the universal church consider them anathema.”<sup>481</sup>

Athanasius and the orthodox bishops stated in the creed that Jesus Christ is deity by declaring him “one in being with the Father”, and that anyone in the church who taught otherwise should be excommunicated. Therefore, the Nicene Creed is very different from the Apostles’ Creed and demonstrates the need for an expanded creedal statement that would protect the church from false teachings. In addition, the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. enlarged the creed and added that the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and Giver of Life,” “who proceeds from the Father,” is also fully divine, that is, “with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.”<sup>482</sup> As a result, the Nicene Creed is said to be the church’s first official affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

## **Section Six: The Chalcedon Creed**

As the ancient church began to grow in the Christian faith, it was necessary for the universal church to meet at different times to agree on creedal statements that would protect the church from false teaching. Therefore, it was necessary for the universal church to meet in 451 A.D. and establish the Creed of Chalcedon. This creed focuses on the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ. It affirms that Jesus Christ is one in substance, essence, being, and reality with the Father. However, it also affirms that Jesus Christ is the same in humanity as we are.<sup>483</sup> It declares

<sup>481</sup> Davis, 60.

<sup>482</sup> Truesdale., 138.

<sup>483</sup> Truesdale, 138.



Jesus Christ is both divine and human. “Divinity and humanity are not dissolved into or separated from one another”, but his two natures concur as one person.<sup>484</sup>

## **Section Seven: How the Creed Functions in Christian Formation**

There are several ways in which the creed functions in the worship services, and in the Christian faith. First, the creed brings to remembrance God’s saving activities through historical recitation. The creed teaches a precise historical statement of God’s salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. Secondly, the creed provides a “profession of faith”—a way to profess a statement of personal and communal identity.<sup>485</sup> Thirdly, the creed functions as a “Rule of Faith.” This points to the way creed provides a measure or norm for Christian identity, and a standard by which Scripture should be interpreted.<sup>486</sup> Fourthly, reciting the creed at worship is a counter-cultural act.<sup>487</sup> In a world that celebrates individuality and rejects tradition, the creed unites the church together as a body of believers throughout all church ages.<sup>488</sup> The fifth and sixth function of the creed is that it provides a definition of faith and a symbol for the Christian faith.

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

<sup>484</sup> Truesdale, 138.

<sup>485</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 46.

<sup>486</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 46-47.

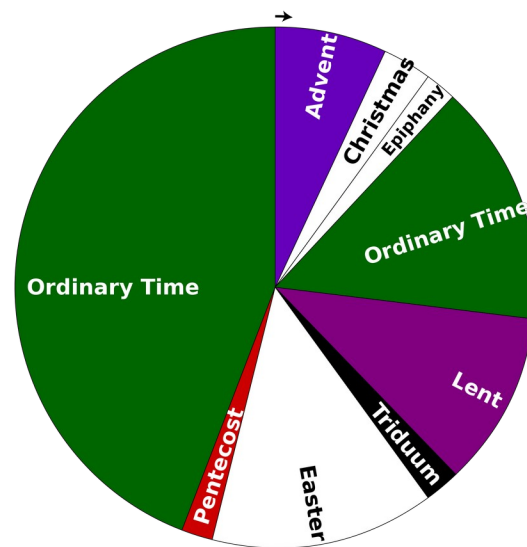
<sup>487</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 47.

<sup>488</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, 47.

## Week Five

## Chapter Six

## *The Christian Calendar*



## Main Points

- ★ The Christian calendar “refers to a yearlong calendar that marks time according to God’s activities.”<sup>489</sup>
- ★ The Christian calendar has its roots in Judaism.
- ★ The meaning of the word “Advent” comes from the Latin, *adventus*, which means “coming.”
- ★ The Christian Year began with a weekly rhythm of observing the Lord’s Day, the day Christ had risen from the dead.

<sup>489</sup> Cherry, 207.

- ★ The season of Ordinary Time is the longest period in the Christian year.

## Section One: Defined

The Christian calendar is also referred to as the Liturgical year or the Christian year. It “refers to a yearlong calendar that marks time according to God’s activities.”<sup>490</sup> It is a way of observing the life of Jesus Christ and provides a way to tell God’s story. The Christian year consists of observing two major cycles in Christ’ life and ministry, the Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle.<sup>491</sup> Together these cycles form what is called the temporal cycle, and when completed, the Christian calendar starts over again much like the civil calendar.<sup>492</sup> The Christian year begins not with January as does the civil calendar, but with Advent, which is always the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. The last day on the Christian calendar before the year starts again is called Christ the King Sunday, and this day is celebrated on the Sunday before Advent begins.

## Section Two: Time

God created time. Genesis 1:14 tells us that God created the sun, moon and stars not only to separate night from day and to give light, but also to mark seasons, days and years. After each day of creation in Genesis chapter one, God describes the day as a twenty-four-time period by calling it evening and morning. Therefore, God created time with its structure of events and rhythms of life, such as rest, worship, work, and play. Christianity has sought to use time as a

<sup>490</sup> Cherry, 207.

<sup>491</sup> Cherry, 207.

<sup>492</sup> Cherry, 207.

way to worship God and to tell God's story of his saving acts. "Our present time is used to place us in contact with God's acts in time past and future."<sup>493</sup> Consequently, time is God's gift to help individuals structure their lives around him.

The New Testament uses two different words for time and each of these words depicts a different aspect of time. The first word is *Kairos*, and it is used in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near." *Kairos*, in this verse, means the right or proper time present in which God has accomplished a new dimension of reality.<sup>494</sup> It describes a special occasion and moment in which God has or will act in human history. The second word for time is *Chronos*, and it refers to clock or calendar time. The Bible uses this word in Matthew 2:7, "Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared." Therefore, *Chronos* refers to the actual date and hour of an event, and from it stems the word *chronology*.

A third New Testament word that is important for the understanding of how the Christian calendar functions to tell God's story is the word *anamnesis*. *Anamnesis* is a noun derived from the verb that means "to remember."<sup>495</sup> However, biblical use of this word in the Greek form varies differently from the western mind-set. The western mind-set thinks of remembering as recalling past events that are fully concluded. "Rather, *anamnesis* depicts an active remembrance. To remember, in the biblical sense, is when the present and the past come together; it is a claim that what God did in the past to benefit humankind is equally active and

<sup>493</sup> James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 48.

<sup>494</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 49.

<sup>495</sup> Cherry, 208

efficacious in this present moment.”<sup>496</sup> Therefore, the Christian calendar, through remembrance, makes the power and salvation of God in the past also real and present in lives today.

### **Section Three: Jewish Roots**

The Christian calendar has its roots in Judaism. The Bible teaches that the law with its teachings, holy days, and festivals were only a shadow that pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>497</sup> For this reason, God established holy days, and festivals on a spiritual calendar for the Jewish people to celebrate so that God could reveal his plan of salvation not only to the Jews but also to the whole world. God knew that the Jewish nation and Christians today would need a spiritual calendar to help them remember his saving acts. Therefore, these festivals were to be celebrated and enjoyed by the whole Jewish nation, just as the whole church is to embrace the Christian year that is rooted in these Jewish festivals.

One example of the Jewish roots of the Christian calendar is the Christian’s celebration of Easter. Easter is a time to remember the cross, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ death and resurrection took place during the Jewish Passover that was celebrated each year as described in Exodus 12. Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover with his disciples before going to the cross and taught them that he was the fulfillment of this celebration by the giving of his blood and body on the cross. Jesus Christ became the spiritual lamb that was sacrificed for our sins. Christ established the sacrament of the Eucharist before going to the cross to represent the fulfillment of the Old Testament Jewish Passover. Furthermore, all the dates and times that are

<sup>496</sup> Cherry, 208.

<sup>497</sup> Heb. 10:1.

observed in the Christian Year concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ have a direct link to a Jewish teaching, festival, or holy day that foreshadowed the coming of Christ.

## **Section Four: How the Christian Year Developed**

Most of the first Christian worshippers were Jewish and they continued many of the Jewish holy days that they had always observed from the Jewish liturgical calendar. However, these Jewish practices began to be infused with Christian meaning and interpretation as these practices told God's story.<sup>498</sup> One example of how a Jewish practice began to be infused with Christian meaning can be seen in the words of the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth. The Bible states in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, "For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."<sup>499</sup> Nevertheless, the first Christians did not forsake the rhythm and benefits of the liturgical calendar that was already in place; instead, they discontinued some observances, continued others, and added Christian observances to tell God's story of salvation through Jesus Christ.<sup>500</sup>

The Christian Year began with a weekly rhythm of observing the Lord's Day, the day Christ had risen from the dead. Therefore, the first day of the week, Sunday, is the heart of the Christian Year. In fact, the earlier church saw the spiritual connection with this day and the first day of creation, when "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light....And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."<sup>501</sup> Furthermore, "the four gospels are all careful to

<sup>498</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>499</sup> NRSV.

<sup>500</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>501</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 50. Scripture is from Genesis 1:3;5 NRSV.

state that it was on the morning of the first day, that is, the day on which creation began and God ‘separated the light from the darkness,’ that the empty tomb was discovered.”<sup>502</sup> Although earlier Jewish Christians observed both Saturday and Sunday, Sunday became the dominant day for worship because it was the day that Christ rose from the dead.

Evidence of Sunday being the dominant day of worship for the earlier Christians is indicated in 1 Corinthians 16:2 when Paul told the Christians in Corinth to set aside money for the collection on the first day of the week. This verse indicates that the giving of money to the poor in Jerusalem should be done when the church met together on Sunday for worship. Another Scripture pointing to Sunday as the dominant day of worship for the earlier Christians is found in Revelation 1:10 when John wrote that he “was in the spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Nevertheless, the term “Lord Day,” became a Christian term for the first day of the week.

Therefore, without the weekly rhythm of creation and recreation given by observing the Lord’s Day, there is no basis for the rest of the Christian year.<sup>503</sup> Later, the annual feast of Easter, Pascha, was added to the Liturgical year by the end of the second century and celebrated throughout the church.<sup>504</sup> Next, Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, was added to the Christian calendar, and this marked the end of the joyful season of Easter. The season of Lent was added to the Christian year in the third century.<sup>505</sup> Moreover, when the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity in 321 CE, church leaders took advantage of the opportunity to expand the Christian year, and Sunday became recognized as the day of rest by imperial decree.<sup>506</sup>

<sup>502</sup> White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 50.

<sup>503</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>504</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>505</sup> Cherry, 210.

<sup>506</sup> Cherry, 210.

Later, the observance of Christmas and Epiphany were added during the fourth century. Next, “The Paschal Vigil and Feast (Easter) expanded into the Easter Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the great Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.”<sup>507</sup> A fourth-century source, a diary by a Spanish woman named Egeria, confirms that by the fourth century, the events already mentioned were firmly established and observed as part of the Christian year.<sup>508</sup>

Other holy days and special observances by the Church were later added to the Christian year throughout the ages. For example, the Church has called the longest period between Pentecost and Advent by the name Ordinary Time. This is a time on the Christian calendar for the Church to teach from the gospels about the work and ministry of Christ. In addition to other holy days being added to the Christian year, colors as symbols were added to represent the different seasons of the Church Year.

## **Section Five: Advent**

The meaning of the word “Advent” comes from the Latin, *adventus*, which means “coming.” Advent marks the beginning of the Christian year, and it begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day and ends on Christmas Eve. The major themes during this time are: the Annunciation, the Prophetic voice of John the Baptist, the anticipation of the incarnation, the preparation to celebrate the coming of the Savior, and the recognition of the three comings of Christ (Christ has come in the incarnation, Christ is come in that his presence lives in and among us even now, and Christ will come at the end of the age).<sup>509</sup> The colors that are displayed during

<sup>507</sup> Cherry, 211.

<sup>508</sup> Cherry, 211.

<sup>509</sup> Cherry, 211.



Advent are purple, blue, and white on Christmas Eve.<sup>510</sup> Purple represents penitence and royalty. Blue is associated with Mary and symbolizes hope and anticipation.<sup>511</sup> Lastly, white represents purity, joy, and celebration.<sup>512</sup>

## **Section Six: Christmas**

The next season of the Christian year is Christmas, and this time period is centered on celebrating the birth of Jesus. As Matthew 1:21-23 states, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, God with us” (NIV). Therefore, Christmas is a time to celebrate God with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Christmas is derived from “Christ’s mass,” and it begins on Christmas Day (December 25th), and ends twelve days later January 5th. The colors that are displayed during this time period are white and gold.<sup>513</sup> White represents the joy, and celebration that is felt for the birth of Christ, and gold represents the spiritual richness of his birth.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>510</sup> Cherry, 213.

<sup>511</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>512</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>513</sup> Cherry, 213.

<sup>514</sup> Cherry, 216.



Take a 20-minute break.

## Section Seven: Epiphany

Epiphany begins on January 6th and ends the day before Ash Wednesday. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, which means manifestation. The major themes during Epiphany are the revelation of God (manifestation) to the entire world, including the Gentiles, celebration of the revelation of Jesus as Messiah, visitation of the kings (magi) to worship the baby Jesus, baptism of Jesus, the first miracle Jesus performed, and emphasis on Jesus’ earthly ministry (teaching, healing, preaching).<sup>515</sup> Also, during Epiphany, Transfiguration Sunday is observed the last Sunday before Lent. Transfiguration Sunday recalls the time when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain with Elijah and Moses in the presence of Peter, James, and John. The color that represents this time period is green, and it symbolizes growth, life, and fulfillment.<sup>516</sup>

## Section Eight: Lent

Lent is observed in the Christian year from Ash Wednesday (forty days before Easter) until Holy Saturday. The word “lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lencten*, meaning “spring,” when the daylight hours lengthen.<sup>517</sup> The major themes of Lent are: recollection of Jesus’ temptation, conflict, suffering, and death, contemplation of our discipleship in light of Christ’s passion, catechesis (time for instruction in spiritual formation), renewal of baptismal commitment, opportunity for spiritual disciplines, encouragement for self-denial, and a call to repentance.<sup>518</sup> Lent begins with observing Ash Wednesday, which emphasizes humanity’s

<sup>515</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>516</sup> Cherry, 214-216.

<sup>517</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>518</sup> Cherry, 214.

mortality and sinfulness. During the Ash Wednesday service, ashes are placed on individuals as a sign of repentance. As a result, the color purple is displayed during this time period representing penitence, and the royalty of Jesus Christ.<sup>519</sup>

The highlight of this season is Holy Week, also called Passion Week because of the suffering of Christ. Holy Week begins with celebrating Palm Sunday, which remembers when Christ rode into Jerusalem riding a donkey, while the people praised him and waved palm branches. Holy Week traces the last seven days of Jesus' life on earth. The three days prior to Jesus' resurrection are referred to as the Great Triduum. Maundy Thursday remembers the Last Supper, the washing of the disciples' feet, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, his betrayal, and his arrest.<sup>520</sup> Good Friday remembers the trial before Pilate and Herod, and Christ' crucifixion. Lastly, Holy Saturday ends Lent with the Great Easter Vigil.

## **Section Nine: Easter**

Easter begins on Easter Sunday, the day Christ rose from the dead, and it ends fifty days after Easter. It is the oldest feast in the history of Christianity, and Easter (Resurrection Sunday) has been celebrated in the church every Sunday since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>521</sup> The major theme of this season is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As a result, there is a focus on new life, light, and freedom from death. Scriptures that are read and preached during Easter are the gospels, which describe the story around his resurrection. There is also a focus on

<sup>519</sup> Cherry, 214-216.

<sup>520</sup> Cherry, 214.

<sup>521</sup> Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of The Spiritual Life*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2009), 159.

Christ post resurrection appearances and teachings during this time, along with the remembrance of his ascension. Moreover, Christ's ascension is observed and remembered on Ascension Sunday, which is celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter. The colors that are used to symbolize this time period are white and gold.<sup>522</sup>

## **Section Ten: Pentecost**

Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter and ends the day before the first Sunday in Advent. However, Pentecost in the Ancient Church did not mean the feast day fifty days after Easter. It meant “the great fifty days,” or “the fifty days of Easter,” which gave an entire period of rejoicing and praise.<sup>523</sup> This time period of rejoicing for many days in a row was referred to as Paschal tide or Eastertide. The word “Pentecost” comes from the Greek word *pentekoste* which means fiftieth. The major themes during this season are celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit, celebration of the church, acknowledgment of spiritual power for the church, and a call for people to receive and rejoice in God’s power.<sup>524</sup> During this season, Trinity Sunday is observed the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday. Trinity Sunday celebrates God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The color for this season is red, which symbolizes flames of fire and blood.<sup>525</sup>

## **Section Eleven: Ordinary Time / Season after Pentecost**

<sup>522</sup> Cherry, 215-216.

<sup>523</sup> Chittister, 172.

<sup>524</sup> Cherry, 215.

<sup>525</sup> Cherry, 215-216.

The season of Ordinary Time is the longest period in the Christian year. It begins the day after Pentecost and ends the Saturday before Advent. Christ the King Sunday is celebrated at the end of this period on the Sunday before Advent. It brings the celebration of Jesus full circle from incarnation to final Lordship when Christ will rule in glory.<sup>526</sup> The color used to symbolize this season is green.<sup>527</sup> The liturgical year is a “catalog of the dimensions of the spiritual life, it is not unlike life itself.”<sup>528</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to have a period of time in the liturgical year called “ordinary time.” It represents what we ordinarily do every day in living out our lives for Jesus Christ. Therefore, Ordinary Time is observed twice during the liturgical year. It begins the Sunday after Epiphany, the feast of the baptism of Jesus, and extends until Ash Wednesday in Lent. The second period of Ordinary Time begins after Pentecost Sunday and goes to the beginning of Advent.<sup>529</sup>

## **Section Twelve: Reasons for Observing the Christian Calendar**

The first reason for observing the Christian calendar is that it provides a way to tell the full narrative of God’s story. Churches that do not observe the Christian calendar throughout the year risk the danger of only focusing on a few aspects of God’s story. For example, without observance of the complete liturgical year, some emphasize only the cross of Jesus Christ and neglect emphasis on his resurrection and birth. Observing the Christian calendar allows for balance in telling God’s story. Each event is given a specific time and date on the Christian

<sup>526</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>527</sup> Cherry, 216.

<sup>528</sup> Chittister, 182.

<sup>529</sup> Chittister, 184.

calendar. Therefore, the Liturgical year gives structure in planning church worship services and promotes worship and praise to God for all the ways in which he has revealed himself in time.

A second reason for observing the Christian year is that it provides a guide for the spiritual pilgrimage of the church and for each member in the church. A third reason is that the liturgical year is Christocentric and sets out to attune the life of the Christian to the life of Jesus Christ.<sup>530</sup> Fourthly, the Christian year views time as sacred and helps the Church to celebrate all of time as Holy unto God, thus dispelling the dichotomy of secular versus sacred time.<sup>531</sup> Lastly, observing the Christian calendar remembers God's story through dramatic reenactment. As a result, there are many embodied liturgical practices included in the Christian year, which help the church visualize and imagine the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the Christian Year provides spiritual formation using all of the senses of the body.

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

<sup>530</sup> Chittister, 6.

<sup>531</sup> Cherry, 211.

## Week Six

## Chapter Seven

## *Eucharist*



## Main Points

- ★ The English word “Eucharist” is from the Greek *eucharisteo*, meaning “thanksgiving.”<sup>532</sup>
- ★ A second word that is used for the Eucharist is called “Communion.”
- ★ The Eucharist has its roots deep in the Jewish Passover and the Jewish Exodus from Egypt.
- ★ “The word *symbol* refers to an object or pattern that is used to represent an invisible metaphysical reality and that also participates in the reality it represents.”<sup>533</sup>

<sup>532</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>533</sup> Staples, 51.



- ★ The Eucharist is a perfect liturgical practice that helps the church to reenact God's story through biblical remembrance and anticipation.

## Section One: Eucharist Origin

### 1. Defined

The English word “Eucharist” is from the Greek *eucharisteo*, meaning “thanksgiving.”<sup>534</sup> Both Mark 14:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 11:24 use this term, indicating that there is reason to celebrate what Christ has done at the Table.<sup>535</sup> The meaning of the Eucharist stems from the institution of Christ’ prayer when he “gave thanks” after taking the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:24; Mt. 26:27).<sup>536</sup> Moreover, Eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. In connection, the Latin term, *Christus Victor*, proclaims our Lord to be victorious, triumphing not only over death, but over the evil one for all time.<sup>537</sup> Many churches seem to have lost the understanding of Eucharist as a time to celebrate what God has done through Jesus Christ.

A second word that is used for the Eucharist is called “Communion.” It comes from the Greek word *koinonia*, and it articulates the communal nature of the Table.<sup>538</sup> Paul uses the same Greek word in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 to point out the importance of participating together in the

<sup>534</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>535</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>536</sup> F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church*. Rev. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 570.

<sup>537</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>538</sup> Cherry, 88.

bread and cup as the body and blood of Christ.<sup>539</sup> Moreover, the word communion communicates the idea of unity, oneness, participation, and fellowship together. By partaking together at the Communion Table, the Church is one with Christ by feeding on his body and his blood, according to John 6:53-58. Not only is the Church one with Christ through participation at the Communion Table, but there also exists deep oneness and fellowship with one another through the Holy Spirit.

A third way of understanding the Eucharist is as “The Lord’s Supper.” The reason it is called “The Lord’s Supper” is because Christ wanted to share this symbolic meal with his disciples before his death and resurrection. Furthermore, the Greek word *kuriakos deipnon* in 1 Corinthians 11:20 is the English word for Lord’s Supper.<sup>540</sup> In connection, the Lord’s Supper is sometimes viewed as a memorial meal.”<sup>541</sup> Thus, the bread and wine are eaten and drank in memory of Christ's blood and body, with great emphasis upon Christ's words, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

A fourth way of viewing the Eucharist is through what the Roman Catholic Church calls Mass. The word “mass” in Latin is *missa*, from *mittere*, “to send.”<sup>542</sup> Likewise, the liturgy in which the Eucharist is celebrated and, more generally, the entire Roman Catholic worship service is referred to as Mass.<sup>543</sup> Traditionally, *Ite, missa est* (Go, this is the dismissal), is said at

<sup>539</sup> Cherry, 88.

<sup>540</sup> Cherry, 87.

<sup>541</sup> Cherry, 87.

<sup>542</sup> Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Second Edition: Revised and Expanded, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014). <http://0-search.ebscohost.com/kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=780304&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>543</sup> McKim.

the end of the service.<sup>544</sup> Furthermore, mass means sacrifice, and in Roman Catholic teaching, Mass is a time when Jesus Christ is re-sacrificed for the communicant's sins.<sup>545</sup> It is identical to the time when He was sacrificed on the Cross, except that, on Catholic altars, it is an unbloody sacrifice.<sup>546</sup>

## 2. Passover

The Eucharist has its roots deep in the Jewish Passover and the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-15, and Luke 22:7-10 all record Jesus asking his disciples to prepare the Passover meal for him to celebrate the Passover with his disciples. The Jewish Passover is celebrated every spring and was instituted on the night God brought Israel out of Egypt.<sup>547</sup> According to God's command, Moses instructed each Jewish family in Exodus 12 to slaughter a lamb for roasting and to eat. In addition, the Jewish people were to put the lamb's blood over the lintel and door post of each house.<sup>548</sup> The death angel would pass over Egypt that night and every first-born male would die whose house did not have the lamb's blood over its lintel and door post. Consequently, the Egyptians were the ones who lost their first-born children, including Pharaoh, because Pharaoh and the Egyptians did not believe in Jehovah.

Jesus used the liturgy surrounding the Jewish Passover and the Exodus to institute the Eucharist. The meaning of the Passover appears in Exodus 12:13:<sup>549</sup> "The blood shall be a sign

<sup>544</sup> McKim.

<sup>545</sup> Taylor, 330.

<sup>546</sup> Taylor, 330.

<sup>547</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1237.

<sup>548</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1237.

<sup>549</sup> Cesare Giraudo, "The Eucharist as Re-Presentation," *Religious Studies Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (1984): 154-55.  
<http://0-search.ebscohost.com/kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000964926&site=ehost-live>.

for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (RSV). In connection, God uses blood in Exodus 24:8 to make a covenant with his people. When we look at 1 Cor. 11:23-25; Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Luke 22: 17-20, we can see Jesus telling his disciples that the cup of wine is his blood, establishing a new covenant with them. Likewise, Jesus told his disciples to eat the unleavened bread, because it was his body. Therefore, the bread and wine of the Eucharist point to Christ as the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover and is an invitation to participate in a new exodus. This new exodus is the salvation of humanity through the death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>550</sup>

### 3. History

First generation Christians celebrated the Eucharist daily and weekly according to Acts 2:42-46 and Acts 20:7. The celebration of the Eucharist was the focus and center of the worship service for many centuries. Interestingly, “the early church fathers did not see bread and wine as a mere human reminder of Jesus. Instead, they approached bread and wine with a clear sense of the supernatural.”<sup>551</sup> The writings of Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch in AD 110, and the writings of Justin Martyr, second century apologist, both describe the bread and wine of the Eucharist as the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>552</sup> This description of the Eucharist is called *Real Presence*, and it emphasizes the actual Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>553</sup>

<sup>550</sup> Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper* (Vol. 1st ed. New York: Image, 2011), Chapter 3. <http://0-search.ebscohost.com/kc-towers.searchmobius.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=741826&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>551</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 137.

<sup>552</sup> Webber, *Ancient – Future Worship*, 137-139.

<sup>553</sup> Cross and Livingstone, 1379.

The understanding of the Eucharist as *Real Presence* continued in the church for many centuries until the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. It was during this time that Protestant theologians and Protestant movements took a different view of the Eucharist. The Roman Catholic Church, however, held onto its original view of the Eucharist as *Real Presence*. Consequently, it came to be called *Transubstantiation*. The word *transubstantiation* is a compound of two Latin particles (*trans* = across and *substantia* = substance),<sup>554</sup> thus indicating that the invisible substance or essence of the bread becomes the essence of the body of Christ and the substance of the juice or wine becomes the essence of Christ's blood.<sup>555</sup>

Three dominant views exist among Protestants regarding the Eucharist.<sup>556</sup> Martin Luther taught *consubstantiation* (*con* meaning *with*), the reality of Christ's body and blood in the elements "like light is in your eye."<sup>557</sup> John Calvin taught a spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the Swiss Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, taught a symbolic presence in which the sacrament is a mental remembrance of the cross of Jesus Christ.<sup>558</sup> Of all these views, John Wesley's view is more similar to John Calvin's view of the spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>559</sup> However, Calvin speaks of the presence of Christ's body in terms of power, mediated by the Holy Spirit, whereas Wesley stresses the presence of Christ in terms of His

<sup>554</sup> Taylor, 528-529.

<sup>555</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>556</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>557</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>558</sup> Taylor, 529.

<sup>559</sup> Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1991), 226.

divinity.<sup>560</sup> Nevertheless, in comparison to the Roman Catholic church, Wesley understood the Eucharist as *Real Presence*, but only in a spiritual sense.<sup>561</sup>

A close look at the many hymns that John and Charles Wesley compiled together in a book called *Hymns of the Lord's Supper* reveals how John and Charles understood the Eucharist.<sup>562</sup> Their hymns are filled with praise and thanksgiving to Christ for his presence in the Eucharist. However, Christ's presence in the Eucharist is always a matter of doxology without metaphysical and philosophical definitions.<sup>563</sup> Although the presence of Christ in the Eucharist remains a glorious mystery in their hymns, it is this mystery that leads them to worship Christ.<sup>564</sup> Therefore, Christ's presence in the Eucharist is a mysterious promise that should not be exhausted by attempting a science of the sacraments.<sup>565</sup>



Take a 20-minute break.

<sup>560</sup> Staples, 227.

<sup>561</sup> Staples, 226.

<sup>562</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

<sup>563</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

<sup>564</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 178.

<sup>565</sup> Brent D. Peterson, 177.

## Section Two: Eucharist as Sacrament and Symbol

### 1. Sacrament

Eucharist is referred to as a sacrament. “The Roman and Greek Catholic churches observe seven sacraments: baptism, the Lord’s Supper, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony.”<sup>566</sup> The Protestant doctrine, however, generally only recognizes two sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.<sup>567</sup> The word sacrament comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, “originally applied to money deposited in a sacred place by parties involved in court proceedings. It was regarded as a pledge in which the participants considered their cause good and just.”<sup>568</sup> However, the word later came to signify the oath Roman soldiers took in their pledge to be loyal to the Roman empire.<sup>569</sup>

Early Latin church fathers used the term *sacramentum* to translate the Greek word for mystery.<sup>570</sup> Therefore, the term sacrament came to “signify a sacred ordinance or rite in which the Christian believer receives blessing from God and deliberately binds himself in covenant to Him.”<sup>571</sup> Similarly, the Wesleyan Tradition has come to understand a sacrament as John Wesley

<sup>566</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>567</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>568</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>569</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>570</sup> Taylor, 465.

<sup>571</sup> Taylor, 465.

defined it: “an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.”<sup>572</sup>

Thus, a “sacramental theology draws deeply from the well of symbolism.”<sup>573</sup>

## 2. Symbol

“The word *symbol* refers to an object or pattern that is used to represent an invisible metaphysical reality and that also participates in the reality it represents.”<sup>574</sup> Christian theology contains many symbols. For example, the sacrament of the Eucharist and its elements are symbols of the Christian faith. In connection, Augustine referred to the sacrament of the Eucharist as a visible word,<sup>575</sup> a word that has power to communicate through symbols and can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled.<sup>576</sup> Therefore, when the Church participates in the Eucharist, it is proclaiming the gospel message by using the senses, dramatic action, and symbolic gesture.<sup>577</sup>

The word *sign* in Wesley’s definition of the sacrament of the Eucharist is not merely the physical element (water, bread, wine) of the sacrament, but the entire action surrounding its proper use.<sup>578</sup> The argument can be made that Wesley uses the word *sign* the same as one would define a symbol. A sign can only point to something outside of itself, but a symbol participates in the power of that which it symbolizes.<sup>579</sup> Wesley believed and understood the bread and wine in

<sup>572</sup> Staples, 53.

<sup>573</sup> Staples, 51.

<sup>574</sup> Staples, 51.

<sup>575</sup> Staples, 52.

<sup>576</sup> Staples, 52.

<sup>577</sup> Cherry, 86.

<sup>578</sup> Staples, 53.

<sup>579</sup> Staples, 58.



the sacrament of the Eucharist to be symbols that not only pointed to the body and blood of Christ but are also the means of grace by which the church participates in the body and blood of Christ.

### **Section Three: Eucharist as Sacrifice and Eschatology**

#### **1. Sacrifice**

The Eucharist embodies the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ revealed this embodiment in Luke 22 when he took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”<sup>580</sup> When eating at the Lord’s Table, hearts and minds are fixed on the sacrificial love that Christ gave at Calvary. However, this is not the only thought that is evoked while participating in the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit reveals that “a reception of the Eucharist demands a response of sacrificial love and humble service to the other.”<sup>581</sup>

Christ said in Luke 22:20, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” The word *covenant* is an agreement between God and man which becomes the basis of divine blessing and eternal salvation.<sup>582</sup> Therefore, a covenant requires two parties to enter into an agreement with one another. Jesus Christ agreed to give his life sacrificially for the church, and the church can do no less. Romans 12:1 states it perfectly: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to

<sup>580</sup> Luke 22:19-20 (NIV).

<sup>581</sup> Brent Peterson “Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Community of Joyful Brokenness.” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 5, no. 2 (2006): 1-10 Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library.

<sup>582</sup> Taylor, 363.

God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” Thus, when the church participates in the Eucharist, it is saying to Christ, “I enter into a covenant with you by giving you my life as a sacrifice.” The sacrifice that the Church makes to Christ is to be his hands and feet in a broken world. Therefore, the “church exists to be broken before the world, thus in its brokenness the world will find hope.”<sup>583</sup>

## 2. Eschatology

The eschatological nature of the Eucharist is clear in Luke 22:16. He said, “For I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” This verse points to the end of the ages when Christ comes back and sets up his kingdom and the Church joins him around the table to celebrate the Eucharist with him.<sup>584</sup> Therefore, every time the Church participates in the Eucharist, it enters an eschatological imagination of what God’s kingdom will be like when it comes in its fullness. In fact, when the Church shares in the Eucharist, it has already entered God's kingdom and his transforming work.

Nevertheless, the Eucharist gives a theology of hope which does not seek to illuminate the reality that exists, but the reality which is coming.<sup>585</sup> As a result, the Church lives in this already present, but not yet consummated Kingdom of God on earth where ultimately “God will be all in all.”<sup>586</sup> Therefore, the Church is able to go into a broken world as the body of Christ with a message of hope that helps people see themselves in light of the Kingdom of God. It is the

<sup>583</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology.”

<sup>584</sup> Rev. 19.

<sup>585</sup> Moltmann, Jurgen, *Theology of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 18 quoted in Brent Peterson “Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Community of Joyful Brokenness.” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 5, no. 2 (2006): 5 Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library.

<sup>586</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology,” 5.

Kingdom of God that Christ taught his disciples to pray to come in Matthew 6:10, and it is through the Eucharist that this kingdom is illuminated.

#### **Section Four: Reasons for a Weekly Participation in the Eucharist**

The Eucharist is a perfect liturgical practice that helps the church to reenact God's story through biblical remembrance and anticipation. The cross, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is both taught and spiritually reenacted when congregants participate in the Eucharist. Therefore, in addition to divine revelation and response, participation in the Eucharist has many benefits. First, weekly participation in the Eucharist shapes congregants to view the church as a body and not as a collection of individuals. "The Church, gathered in the Eucharist, even when limited to two or three is the image and realization of the body of Christ."<sup>587</sup> Therefore, the Eucharist causes the body of Christ to see themselves as one, thereby bringing about a relational transformation in the body of Christ.<sup>588</sup>

Secondly, experiencing Christ at the Table brings to remembrance Christ' sacrificial love for everyone. Thus, the reception of the Eucharist demands a response of sacrificial love in return, which can only be the total surrender of lives in service to him and to one another. Jesus said, "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."<sup>589</sup> Therefore, participation in

<sup>587</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. Trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2003), 24.

<sup>588</sup> Peterson, "Eucharistic Ecclesiology."

<sup>589</sup> Matt. 10:38-39.

the Eucharist necessitates a call to every Christian to be broken for a lost and hurting world, “thus in its brokenness the world will find hope.”<sup>590</sup>

Thirdly, a weekly participation in the Eucharist shapes and forms Christians to live out the eschatological hope of the kingdom of God, because participation in Eucharist involves the use of all the senses of the body being used to train the desires of the heart for the kingdom of God. John and Charles Wesley considered the Eucharist as an eschatological taste of the consummation of God’s kingdom. According to the Wesley’s, “We cannot partake of the Cup without realizing that one day we shall drink it with our Savior when He drinks it anew in the Realm of God.”

❖ See Appendix A for practice quiz

<sup>590</sup> Peterson, “Eucharistic Ecclesiology.”

## Appendix A

### Practice Exercises

#### Week One

1. What is the center or essence of a human being?
2. What is the Greek word for heart?
3. What shapes how one sees and understands the world?
4. What is Augustine's famous saying?
5. What does telos mean?
6. What are fixed dispositions?
7. What are virtues?
8. What are vices?
9. What are the most loaded forms of ritual practices?
10. Are all liturgical practices religious?

#### Week Two

1. How does Albert Outler and Gregory Clapper describe Wesley's approach to spiritual formation?
2. How does Randy Maddox describe Wesley's approach to spiritual formation?
3. According to Stephen Long, what sermon is at the heart of Wesley's understanding that Christian formation is moral theology?
4. What two theologians influenced Wesley in his doctrine of illumination?
5. What are the two main components in Wesley's moral theology?
6. What has been awakened in Wesley's understanding of the new birth?
7. What are means of grace?
8. What involves the presence of God and the identity of God?
9. What are rich and complex and can be multidirectional?
10. What was strangely warmed at Aldersgate?

#### Week Three

1. What is God's story according to the ancient church?
2. How did the ancient church practice biblical remembrance?
3. What are two forms of worship in telling God's story?
4. How did David practice biblical remembrance?
5. What is eschatology?
6. What are the building blocks of worship?
7. What is at the heart of Christian worship?
8. What was the ancient church's worship structured around?

9. What are the four movements of the ancient church?
10. Who and what is worship first about?

### Week Four

1. What is a Creed?
2. What does the Latin term *credo* mean?
3. What did the Old Testament *Shema* provide?
4. Whom was the Old Testament Shema expanded in the New Testament to include?
5. What Creed was organically developed?
6. What Creed was the result of the first ecumenical council meeting?
7. Who called the first ecumenical council meeting?
8. What does the words “Holy Catholic Church” mean in the Apostle’s Creed?
9. Who mainly opposed the false teachings of Arius?
10. What provides both a definition and symbol of the Christian faith?

### Week Five

1. What does the Christian calendar refer to?
2. What does *Kairos* mean?
3. What does *Chronos* mean?
4. What does the Christian calendar have its roots in?
5. During what Jewish Feast did Jesus establish the Eucharist?
6. What marks the beginning of the Christian Year?
7. What is the heart of the Christian Year?
8. When does Pentecost begin?
9. What is the color for Pentecost?
10. What is the longest period called on the Christian calendar?

### Week Six

1. What does the Greek word *eucharisteo* mean?
2. What does the Greek word *koinonia* mean?
3. How often did the early church celebrate the Eucharist?
4. What is a covenant?
5. What does the Eucharist embody?
6. In the Eucharist, what is the cup and bread?
7. When will Jesus again drink the fruit of the vine?
8. What are Christians to do in remembrance of Christ?
9. What is participating in Eucharist a reenactment of?
10. What does a symbol refer to?

## Appendix B

### Answer Key for Practice Exercises

#### Week One

1. The heart
2. Kardia
3. Desire
4. You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.
5. An end
6. Habits
7. Good habits
8. Bad habits
9. Liturgies
10. No

#### Week Two

1. As the renewal of the human heart.
2. As an affectionate moral psychology
3. The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God
4. Augustine and Aquinas
5. Illumination and participation
6. The spiritual senses
7. Liturgical or spiritual practices which Christians use to train their hearts and desires toward the things of Christ.
8. Grace
9. The heart's desires and affections
10. Wesley's heart

#### Week Three

1. Creation, incarnation, recreation.
2. Through historical recitation and dramatic reenactment
3. Biblical remembrance and anticipation
4. By reading the Scriptures
5. Study of future events
6. Liturgical practices
7. Revelation and response
8. Word and Table
9. Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending
10. God and what He has revealed

## **Week Four**

1. A brief, authoritative, doctrinal formula confessed within the Christian Church
2. I believe
3. A communal, creedal statement for the Jewish people
4. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit
5. Apostle's Creed
6. Nicene Creed
7. Roman Emperor Constantine
8. The whole or universal church
9. The great bishop Athanasius of Alexandria
10. A Creed

## **Week Five**

1. To a yearlong calendar that marks time according to God's activities
2. The right or proper time present in which God has accomplished a new dimension of reality.
3. Clock time or calendar time
4. Judaism
5. The Passover
6. Advent
7. The first day of the week, Sunday
8. 50 days after Easter
9. Red
10. Ordinary Time

## **Week Six**

1. Thanksgiving
2. Communion
3. Daily and weekly
4. An agreement between God and man which becomes the basis of divine blessing and eternal salvation.
5. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ
6. Jesus' blood and body
7. When the kingdom of God comes
8. Participate in Eucharist
9. Cross, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
10. To an object or pattern that is used to represent an invisible metaphysical reality and that also participates in the reality it represents



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