

**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE AR&LW NEWSLETTER – FALL, 2011**  
**BRIAN SPINKS: EMBODYING A REFORMED LITURGIC IN TODAY’S**  
**ECUMENICAL CONVERGENCE**

**EMBODYING A REFORMED LITURGIC  
IN TODAY’S ECUMENICAL CONVERGENCE**

In his final chapter in *Pulpit and Table*, perhaps influenced by the different nomenclature in Roman Catholic and Reformed faculties in the Netherlands, Howard Hageman was clear to emphasize that he was not writing a Reformed liturgy, but setting out a Reformed liturgic. By this latter he seems to have meant the deep structures of the Reformed liturgical tradition, which “abhors a shrine, a fixed and permanent dwelling place of the presence of God on earth. Ours must always be a liturgy of the tabernacle, never of the temple,”<sup>1</sup> The earlier chapters had explored some of the historical liturgies of the Reformed tradition, and he drew on these in the quest for the deep structures, though he was not afraid to identify quirks that had entered the tradition and that were less than helpful for giving glory to God. At one point in the essay he noted that with Ostervald, Bersier, Spratt, and the men of Mercersburg, there was the beginning of an ecumenical concern for continuity with an older historical tradition. He observed:

But it is in recent years that this process has been accelerated tremendously with the advent of the ecumenical movement. Beyond any doubt it is our participation in this movement that has been largely responsible for the great liturgical productivity in Reformed churches in recent years. While we have always respected it, in recent years we have been much more responsive to the ecumenical factor.<sup>2</sup>

Hageman added that while this did not mean surrendering the Reformed tradition, it did imply not needlessly sundering Reformed worship from the liturgical ecumenical Christendom; “The ecumenical factor makes us see that in many ways that wholesale rejection was unnecessary and impoverishing.”<sup>3</sup>

Hageman’s lectures were given in the wake of the Faith and Order report, *Ways of Worship*, 1951 and just before the exciting ecumenical days of the 1960s and 70s, and the emergence of a whole new liturgical industry inspired by the reforms that came from the Second Vatican Council. It is ironical that Protestant churches, which valued the Bible so highly, had never

thought beyond an annual lectionary- if they thought of a lectionary at all! Suddenly it was the Catholic Church that compiled a three year lectionary in order to open up the treasures of scripture. Although the East always knew of a variety of eucharistic prayer, it was not until the Vatican II reforms that resulted in new four eucharistic prayers that other Western churches started to provide a variety of eucharistic prayers or prayers of consecration in their communion services. It was either a happy coincidence or no coincidence that in the same year as the promulgation of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the WCC Montreal report of 1963 outlined what it regarded as a growing ecumenical consensus on worship. Since then other developments in the Faith and Order discussions of the WCC have moved towards what some have termed an ecumenical *Ordo*.

**The Ecumenical Ordo**

Hageman, like the Presbyterian W.D. Maxwell,<sup>4</sup> had emphasized the unity of word and sacrament, pulpit and table. The WCC Montreal Report (Hageman was a delegate) focused particularly on orders of holy communion and observed that they usually include the following elements:

- a) A service of Word, containing:
  - i. the reading and preaching of the Word,
  - ii. Intercession for the whole church and the world.
- b) A service of the sacrament, having a shape determined by the actions of our Lord at the Last Supper:
  - i. taking bread and wine to be used by God in this service.
  - ii. blessing God for creation and redemption and invoking the Holy Spirit, or referring in some other way to the Holy Spirit, reciting the Words of Institution, whether before or within or after the prayer of thanksgiving, saying the Lord’s Prayer,
  - iii. breaking the bread,
  - iv. giving the bread and wine.

The list of liturgical items is not meant to exclude reference during the service to many other important theological themes such as the expression of contrition, the declaration of forgiveness of sins, the affirmation of faith in creedal form, the celebration of the communion of saints, the announcement of the

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<sup>1</sup> Howard G. Hageman, *Pulpit and Table*, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 126

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>4</sup> W.D. Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936).

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Lord’s coming and the self-dedication of the faithful to God.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequently to that report, the Faith and Order groups worked on baptism, the eucharist and ordained ministry, culminating in the celebrated report *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* 1982. That report explained that the three statements were the fruit of a 50-year process of study reaching back to the 1927 Lausanne Conference. The material had been discussed and revised at Accra 1974, Bangalore 1978 and then Lima 1982. This document, which in some ways marks the high water mark of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ecumenical movement, outlined not only a theology of the eucharist, but also outlined the ingredients normally found in a eucharistic liturgy. Paragraph 28 stated:

The best way towards unity in eucharistic celebration and communion is the renewal of the eucharist itself in the different churches in regard to teaching and liturgy. The churches should test their liturgies in the light of the eucharistic agreement now in the process of attainment.<sup>6</sup>

Most famously a liturgy compiled by Max Thurian, the Lima Liturgy, was put forward as one excellent liturgical expression of the theology expressed in the section on the eucharist.

The Lima report can be regarded as the high tide of the ecumenical movement for a number of reasons. It expressed a consensus or a convergence that has not been attained in any document since. It was a high water mark because churches were invited to critique it, and many did, particularly when they felt their own tradition was being called into question on some particular issue or issues. And it was the high water mark because by the 1980s enthusiasm for ecumenism seemed to be waning, particularly as some churches were viewed as preferring Western liberal social and political agendas over theology, and as churches themselves became more cautious and revalued what

made them a distinct denomination, and particularly what has been perceived as a retreat from ecumenism by the Roman Catholic Church under Pope John Paul II. However, Faith and Order has continued with refinements of the Lima document. In 1995 a report entitled *So We Believe. So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship*, and known as the Ditchingham report was published. Considering that the American Lutheran liturgical scholar Gordon Lathrop was involved in the compilation of this report, it was perhaps no accident that it spoke of the pattern or *ordo* of worship, a term known from Alexander Schmemmann’s work, but one that Lathrop had used and re-popularized in his own book on liturgical theology, *Holy Things*.<sup>7</sup> In this report there was more of an emphasis on the local church and its worship, but urging that the deep structures of Sunday worship are word and table. This in turn prompted a further report, *Celebrations of the Eucharist in Ecumenical Contexts*. It asked groups planning eucharistic worship in an ecumenical context to consider three questions:

1. Do you recognize this liturgical pattern as bearing the historic catholic faith which unites your church to the other Christian churches?
2. Do you recognize this liturgical pattern as bearing the world in which we live, as showing forth its conditions plainly, and proclaiming its transformation in Christ?
3. If so, what implications flow from these recognitions?<sup>8</sup>

In addition, it made certain recommendations, such as not to have a concelebration of ministers, and also that a single loaf and cup should be used. Attached to the document was an *Ordo* prepared by a group of liturgical scholars. Entitled “The Fundamental Pattern (*Ordo*) of the Eucharistic Service,” it suggested the following:

GATHERING of the assembly into the grace, love and koinonia of the triune God.

WORD-SERVICE

*Reading* of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments

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<sup>5</sup> “Worship and the Oneness of Christ’s Church. Report of Section IV. of the Montreal Conference,” published in *Studia Liturgica* 2(1963): 243-255, p.248. In this issue Hageman contributed a paper entitled “The Coming-of-Age of the Liturgical Movement. Report on Section IV of the Montreal Conference,” *ibid.*, 256-265.

<sup>6</sup> *BEM, Faith and Order Paper No.111*, Geneva: WCC, 1982), 16.

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things. A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> ET in ed. Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller, *Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts. The Lima Liturgy- and Beyond* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), 29-34, here 30.

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*Proclaiming* Jesus Christ crucified and  
risen as the ground of our hope  
(and confessing and singing our faith)  
and so *interceding* for all in need and for  
unity  
(sharing the peace to seal our prayers and  
prepare for the table)

TABLE-SERVICE

*Giving thanks* over bread and cup  
*Eating and drinking* the holy gifts of  
Christ’s presence  
(collecting for all in need)  
and so

BEING SENT (DISMISSAL) in mission into  
the world.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting that apart from one or two refinements, much of this was already found in the 1963 Montreal statement. A good case can be made that this Eucharistic *Ordo* represents ecumenical convergence.

**Questioning the ecumenical convergence**

If what I have outlined represents the current ecumenical convergence, we need to bear in mind that there are other competing *Ordos*, which many find far more attractive.

It is noteworthy that the group of liturgical scholars who worked on this *Ordo* represent only a few denominations, all apparently Western, and all from the Protestant world. It included Anglican and Lutheran scholars, whose traditions have set liturgies and a eucharistic rite, which is closely and obviously derived from the Western Catholic rite. Members from other main line Protestant denominations have worship books that accept this Western *Ordo*, at least in theory, if not in practice. Reference is made to an Oriental consultant from the Indian sub-continent, but glaringly absent from the list is Roman Catholic participation, Eastern Orthodox participation, full Oriental Orthodox participation, not to mention Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. If we take for example, the Syrian Orthodox rite, it is difficult to identify a gathering in its rite. Of course people gather, but like all Eastern rites, the vesting of the celebrant and preparation of the elements are now an integral part of the beginning of the liturgy, even though they take place with the curtain closed and historically were not part of the public liturgy. People gather during these, but they are not what Western liturgists have come to identify as the gathering. Also

the dismissal, or sending, is not actually a sending. The celebrant does indeed dismiss the congregation with the *zelun bash-lo-mo ahyn wha-bi-bayn* formulae (“Go in peace”), with signing of the cross at various points in this longish formulae. However, the celebrant’s final prayer is a farewell to the altar. It is indeed a private prayer, but it is now an integral part of the rite. Its omission would be unthinkable. It would seem to me that the Ecumenical *Ordo* has no Eastern flavor to it, and to suggest that it looks back to a primitive *Ordo* once shared by the East prior to the fifth century is simply to misunderstand Eastern ecclesiastical culture. It might satisfy the liturgical historian, but we do not and cannot live in the pre-fifth century, and the Orthodox Churches most certainly do not, even if Western Romanticism thinks they do.

The ecumenical *Ordo*, as I have noted, was given currency by Gordon Lathrop in his book *Holy Things*, and he further defended it in an article in the journal *Worship*.<sup>10</sup> In an important rejoinder, Melanie Ross questioned the methodology of Lathrop, particularly in his criticism of the worship in evangelical Free Church traditions which did not fit his *Ordo*. She noted that he had privileged structuralism and binary relations, and she urged instead a hermeneutical approach.<sup>11</sup> She appealed to the study of British Baptist Christopher Ellis who opined that structure and *Ordo* are not the logical starting point for the Free Church liturgical tradition.

For Ellis, the *Ordo* of his tradition is not about patterns, but values, and he posits the attention to scripture, the importance of devotion, gathering, and eschatology. This Free Church tradition, originated not from the continental Anabaptist tradition, but from Independents and radicals who could not accept the notion of a national Church of England. In the earliest accounts of English Baptist worship, the Bible was read and studied before worship, but in worship itself, no books of any sort were allowed. It was a service with a pattern, but led by the Spirit. Certainly in subsequent development, the Bible was read and

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<sup>99</sup> In *ibid.*, 35.

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, “New Pentecost or Joseph’s Britches? Reflections on the History and Meaning of the Worship Ordo in the Megachurches,” *Worship* 72 (1998): 521-38

<sup>11</sup> Melanie Ross, “Joseph’s Britches Revisited: Reflections on Method in Liturgical Theology,” *Worship* 80(2006): 528-550.

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used in worship, as were hymn books, and more recently, as a result of the Liturgical Movement, manuals for ministers, which present material that is not too unlike that found in Lutheran or Anglican books. However, within those developments Ellis finds four unchanging values. Thus, for example, worship is founded on the simplicity of scripture, which presents worship as a divine appointment, within which the place of Baptist laity is important. There is a concern for >real= or >sincere= worship, and hence the privileging of extemporary prayer. The Baptist community is envisaged as a holy people, a voluntary society with a concern for the Kingdom of God. Its petitionary prayers are prayers for the Kingdom, and from it is articulated a concern for evangelism. Ellis devotes chapters to each of the core elements. The spirituality of preaching is explored. Preaching in this tradition is crucial to worship, and takes the form of a kerygmatic presentation with an invitation to faith. It carries a huge expectation of personal change. But he notes:

While preaching needs an intellectual framework, the intention of that preaching should be directed to the building up of the congregation, the improving of their understanding of spiritual truths and the nurturing of their faith.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, in this ecclesial tradition, the sermon provides or expects a response, which liturgically usually takes the form of a carefully chosen hymn. But he notes, preaching cannot take place without a congregation, and in Baptist communities this is reflected in the design of the buildings which are usually of an auditory nature. Congregational song is also a crucial ingredient of Baptist worship. Ellis notes that in England it was with the 17th century Baptist writers Benjamin Keach and Joseph Stennett that hymn-singing became a regular liturgical element. More recent baptismal hymnals have an ecumenical flavor, having hymns writers and music from many traditions. This becomes something of a Catholic canon. Hymns represent a communal response to God; furthermore, Hymnody offers an intersection between the shared faith of the community and the personal experience of the individual worshippers. That intersection is an important place where issues of faith, encounter, belonging and sincerity meet and leads us to a

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 139.

consideration of the spirituality of congregational singing in Baptist worship.<sup>13</sup>

But if the Free Church tradition has a particular *Ordo* in which hymnody is crucial, there is a different *Ordo* in those newer Charismatic churches that use Praise and Worship music. Sarah Koenig notes that Praise and Worship services have some elements in common with the old Frontier services and the revival service of Charles Finney, and continued in Seeker Services as developed at Willow Creek, but she argues:

In contrast to the Frontier service, however, the elements of the Praise and Worship service are relatively independent. The Praise and Worship time is not a means to an end in the sense that Frontier preliminaries are; the purpose of the Praise and Worship time is simply to worship, which, in the charismatic evangelical sense, means relating with God in an intimate way. Worship is counterbalanced by the sermon but worship does not exist for the sake of the sermon. The sermon and the Praise and Worship time are discrete parts of a whole that functions as a coherent unit because of the differences, not the similarities, between its component parts. Because of this, the Praise and Worship service relates to the *Ordo* differently than the Frontier service does, and it must be examined as a separate phenomenon.<sup>14</sup>

Koenig points out that in comparison with Lathrop’s concern for juxtaposition of Word and Eucharist, the Praise and Worship service has a juxtaposition of Eucharist and Word, where Eucharist means intimate communion.

The counterpart to the Liturgy of the Word is the teaching time, which is information-oriented. In contrast to this teaching time, the Praise and Worship time is relationally oriented, and people take part outwardly with gestures such as raising hands in the air, clapping, swaying, kneeling, or in some cases, dance. The poetry of the genre allows as many subjectivized interpretations as there are people in the

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<sup>13</sup> *Gathering*, 164.

<sup>14</sup> Sarah Koenig, “This is My Daily Bread: Towards a Sacramental Theology of Evangelical Praise and Worship,” *Worship* 82(2008): 141-161, here 144.

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service, though the teaching helps provides boundaries. Koenig notes later that the object is to lead to intimacy of the worshiper with God, and it is perhaps important to point out that in this tradition at its best, the Praise and Worship songs are not randomly strung together. They often advance in emotion and change of tempo in an allegorical journey from outside the gates of the temple, into the outer courts, into the inner courts, and into the Holy of Holies. Quite literally, the songs go from praise of God to intimate worship of God, and the music often reflects romantic music of soft rock, and the lyrics echo secular love lyrics.<sup>15</sup> Koenig, however, is concerned to show how the songs are understood in this tradition in a way that parallel’s the *Ordo*. This is a feast of song, through which the worshipers come into close contact with the mercy and love of God, and the songs become a means of grace.<sup>16</sup> Just as in the ecumenical *Ordo* the Eucharist is the setting of encounter, invocation, anamnesis, thanksgiving, locality and universality, and charity, these elements are found by charismatic evangelicals in the Praise and Worship time. Christ is present like the sweet scroll of Ezekiel 2:8-3:1-3; congregational song is both the act that invites God’s presence and the act of response to God=s presence. It is the commencement and culmination of the work of the Holy Spirit. The songs serve an anamnetic purpose—they are the musical recollection of the saving work of Christ. They are a genre of thanksgiving and adoration, through which a sacrifice of praise is offered. Each community has its own body of songs—the church is particular, but together they are identity forming, and are thus also the universal common language of this ecclesial subculture. Koenig admits that sometimes the social justice aspect is not as clear in this genre as it might be, but mission and evangelism in practice frequently take the forms of assisting with housing projects, medical clinics, and sharing food. All in all, the songs provide a eucharistic encounter with God.

Further challenges to any perceived ecumenical convergence come from those conscious expressions of postmodern worship, such as alt.worship and emerging worship. In a paper entitled “Calvin meets Café Church,” Graham Redding notes what might be

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<sup>15</sup> Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books 2001) 67-74.

<sup>16</sup> Koenig, 147.

called two more *Ordos*.<sup>17</sup> One is in a church hall converted into a Café for the occasion. Cappuccinos and homemade baking, jazz background music, sitting around table, theme introduced by a kind of master of ceremonies through poetry and DVD clip, and there is discussion. The second is a contemplative service, with candles, lots of silence and guided meditation. Much more could be said on postmodern worship, as I have outlined in my book *The Worship Mall*.<sup>18</sup> What such services amply illustrate is that responses to contemporary culture often overtake and supplant the best intentions of ecumenical liturgical practitioners. The Ecumenical *Ordo* is seen as irrelevant, and the search is on for what works- or what worship planners think will work.

All these are a stark reminder—if indeed one was needed—that there are traditions, denominations and many pastors within the many denominations, for whom the Ecumenical *Ordo* means nothing. They seek an *Ordo* that is “relevant” and that has (in their judgment) popular appeal. That will include many Reformed pastors.

#### **Embodying a Reformed Liturgic**

Addressing an American Reformed audience in 1960, Howard Hageman had no easy task. Being from the Dutch Reformed tradition, he well knew that he was heir to a psalm book that contained fixed prayers. The Dutch Reformed Church first used Marten Micron’s 1554 Dutch rendering of Jan Laski’s *Forma ac Ratio*, and then later adopted Petrus Datheen’s 1566 Dutch rendering of the German Palatinate Liturgy of 1563. For a time they seemed to have been used alongside one another, but Datheen’s liturgy won the day. There was a liturgical order, but with provision for prayer for the occasions and time—a mixture of fixed liturgy and extemporary prayer, though by the nineteenth century the older classical prayers had largely been forgotten.<sup>19</sup> He knew that the

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<sup>17</sup> Graham Redding, “Calvin and the Café Church: Reflections at the Interface between Reformed Theology and Current Trends in Worship” in *An Introduction to Torrance Theology. Discovering the Incarnate Saviour*, ed. Gerrit Scott Dawson, 121-133 (London: T & T Clark, London).

<sup>18</sup> Bryan D.Spinks, *The Worship Mall. Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010).

<sup>19</sup>See Klaas-Willem de Jong, “A Century of the Liturgical Movement within the Dutch Protestant Churches,” in *Patterns and Persons. A*

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German Reformed Church had also had a similar form and in the USA at Mercersburg, produced a Provisional Liturgy that was well ahead of its time. He knew also the heritage of John Calvin, and the experiment of Ostervald. But he was also painfully aware that the largest and most influential Reformed bodies in the USA were first the Presbyterians, who managed to be the only major Reformed Church that had ended up disowning its written liturgy, and the Congregationalists who had never had one in the first place. Both of these have helped cast a mantle of liturgical skepticism across the English speaking Reformed tradition. Presbyterians in America had not had the direct benefit (if it in fact was a benefit) of the liturgical revival inspired by the Church Service Society in Scotland. They had only the memory of the Westminster Directory, which itself had been metamorphosed by the immigrant Scots-Irish adaptation of the Cambuslang communion revivals, and the needs of the Frontier worship tradition. They may, as Kimberly Bracken Long has shown, have resulted in mystical communion piety, but they were certainly not mystical liturgies.<sup>20</sup> Hageman had to encompass not only the differences between the older Reformed Forms of Prayer but also the liturgical free-for-all of the Presbyterians, which was a daunting task. The task is no easier today, in spite of attempts at an ecumenical *Ordo*, for the very reasons already mentioned. Presbyterians have a magnificent *Book of Common Order*, 1993 with an extremely rich rite of Word and sacrament. However, many ministers still tend to use it as a Directory, if they use it at all, and are happy to truncate the liturgy and especially the eucharistic prayer. The Reformed Church of America has its 1968 liturgy, which embodies many of the principles Hageman urged, and more recently, *Worship the Lord*.<sup>21</sup> The German Reformed strain of tradition became part of the Evangelical and Reformed, and then part of the UCC, where any liturgical tradition was immediately up against New England Congregationalism. The UCC *Book of Worship* was compiled with one criterion only—

inclusive language, and the resulting prose is lamentable. But as far as the Word and Sacrament being adopted as the norm, that is only realized in most congregations once a month. The *Ordo* on other Sundays is hardly the Genevan *Form of Prayers*' ante-communion so beloved by W. D. Maxwell, but often the hymn sandwich, or even worse, the random rite. Let me stress that this is not a specifically Reformed disease; but for the constraints of the *Book of Common Prayer* or the Roman Missal, clergy of both those Churches, left to their own devices, would do similar horror productions—it seems a clerical disease due to lack of liturgical training and theological sense. It is simply that the Reformed freedom gives the perfect conditions for liturgical anarchy. And such anarchy is encouraged by the temptations of megachurch worship, charismatic worship, and the perceived need to be always relevant and expressing the culture, as in Emerging Worship and Seeker Services. In the light of this preamble, then what might be the necessary items for a Reformed Liturgic today with an eye on the WCC ecumenical *Ordo*?

*1. In good faith to promote one of its inherited Ordos and discourage others.*

At the risk of generalization, it seems to me that the Reformed tradition in its USA setting has inherited three different *Ordos*, though of course have improvised and developed each of them.

(a) Zwingli in Zurich developed the medieval vernacular preaching service, the Prone, as the basic Morning Service. It consisted of a Prayer in accordance with 1 Tim.2:1-7, the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, notices, sermon, confession and absolution. Four times a year a communion service was celebrated that was based directly on the structure of the Mass., but the usual Morning Service was derived from Prone.

(b) Bucer and Calvin, as demonstrated by W. D. Maxwell and others, developed a Reformed ordo from the Mass. Sunday worship, ideally, was Word and Sacrament, but Calvin was never able to persuade the Genevan magistrates that communion should be weekly. A Lasco's *Forma ac ratio*, as well as the German Reformed and Datheen's liturgy seem to have taken their cue from both the Zurich pattern and the Strasbourg-Genevan pattern, and so might be termed hybrid.

(c) The English and New England Independents outlined a service that they were certain was dictated by Scripture. According to John Cotton,

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*Historiography of Liturgical Studies in the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Louis Van Tongern, Marcel Barnard, Paul Post and Gerard Rouwhost,, 69-100 (Louvain: Peeters, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Eucharistic Theology of the American Holy Fairs* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> *Worship the Lord. The Liturgy of the Reformed Church of America*, (n.p.:Reformed Church Press, 2005).

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like Zwingli, it took as its starting place 1 Tim 2: 1-7, with prayer and thanksgiving, reading, psalm singing, preaching, a psalm, and probably—Cotton skips over the conclusion—a prayer and dismissal.

It is somewhat strange that Zwingli should have used a mission-type service as the basis for his normal Sunday worship, and this represented an innovation. The 19<sup>th</sup> century counterpart was Finney’s anxious bench worship, and the contemporary parallel is probably the Seeker Service. Congregationalists were absolutely certain that all things necessary for salvation were contained in the Word of God, and that included material for worship. Our understanding of Scripture and the formation of the canon suggests to most of us that that is quite absurd, and it is impossible to reconstruct any particular worship service from Scripture. I would suggest, therefore, that the ecumenical *Ordo* within the Reformed tradition is the Bucer-Calvin paradigm, which anchors Reformed worship, albeit at times tenuously, in the ancient Western and Eastern Sunday Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist. It is that pattern, of Word and Sacrament, which needs to be promoted, and forcefully so. Even the Free Church of Scotland theologian, Donald Macleod affirms, “preaching must lead to the sacraments.... the Table defines us.”<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the norm needs to be weekly Word and Sacrament, with once a month a mission—or evangelistic/seeker service—type *Ordo*.

*2. The Ordo as envisaged by Calvin at least was Word and Sacrament weekly.*

The New England Independents were radical in insisting on monthly communion—the church that they left, the Church of England, tended to celebrate communion only quarterly in the seventeenth century. Most Reformed traditions celebrated only quarterly, and Presbyterians, influenced by the Radical party of the Kirk, had shifted to Communion Seasons, which were intense spiritual occasions, but led to only occasional celebrations of the sacrament. The result is that in most Reformed churches today, communion is monthly at best. The Genevan magistrates can no longer be an excuse, and it is simply the powerful force of tradition and inertia that prevents a weekly

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<sup>22</sup> Donald Macleod, “Word and Sacrament in Reformed Theologies of Worship. A Free Church Perspective” in *Worship and Liturgy in Context. Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice*, ed. Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay, 81-91, here 91 (London: SCM Press, 2009)..

Eucharist from being established. There is also the odd idea that because Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Anglicans celebrate weekly Eucharist, somehow the Reformed tradition has to be different to show that it isn’t any of those three. The logic is hard to comprehend. There is also a residual anti-sacramentalism that defines itself over against what it perceives to be Roman Catholic teaching. In the recent collection of essays on the worship of the Reformed Church of America, Norman Kansfield identified four areas that militated against a denomination-wide commitment to a liturgy for the Lord’s Supper:

1. We don’t really believe that Jesus is specially present in the sacraments. We believe that the scriptures rise above other writings because Jesus is in them, but we can’t really confess the same for the sacraments.
2. We don’t really see the sacraments as anything more than a remembrance of Jesus’ past acts.
3. We aren’t really entirely to hand the sacraments over to God, as God’s acts, and to see them therefore as seals of God’s faithfulness and of our being placed in union with Christ.
4. We aren’t ready for them to be for us mystery, intended to move us, rather than to be theologically reasoned acts that we do.<sup>23</sup>

Here we do well to remind ourselves that the Christological teaching of Cyril of Alexandria, embraced differently by Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches, included a logical eucharistic dimension, that is certainly not transubstantiation, but is certainly a real presence within the *mysterion*. Given the undefined but embraced eucharistic doctrine of Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy and even the Church of the East, it is time perhaps to reaffirm Article XXXVI of the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* of 1559, that by the secret and incomprehensible power of his Spirit Christ feeds and strengthens us with the substance (*de la substance*) of his body and blood, as well as Calvin’s conviction that the Supper is a mystery felt rather than explained.<sup>24</sup> That is powerfully ecumenical and also absolutely Reformed. The words of the English

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<sup>23</sup> Norman J. Kansfield, “A Response to Chapters 5 and 6,” in *Liturgy Among the Thorns. Essays on Worship in the Reformed Church of America*, ed. James Hart Braum, 215 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> For Calvin see *Institutes* 4.17.4.

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Congregationalist P. T. Forsyth seem apposite here, namely, that mere memorialism is a more fatal error than the Mass, and far less lovely.<sup>25</sup> Dare one add, ”and far less ecumenical”?

A footnote to this is the use of individual cups and grape juice. Many older Reformed churches still have the spectacular church plate with cup or cups, but the collective memory has forgotten that only when grape juice replaced wine in the wake of the temperance movement, were individual cups necessary for the late Victorian mind because grape juice does not have the sterilizing properties of alcohol. There is no reason why grape juice and wine cannot both be used, and wine for those who wish for wine, in one of those beautiful old cups or goblets.

*3. The Ordo is about worshipping the triune God.*

Hageman was clear at several points in his essay that in worship we respond to the grace of Jesus Christ, and that we worship God and to him alone belongs the glory. One of the hallmarks of much modern and postmodern worship is a concern to gather to celebrate ourselves, and our achievements, and entertain ourselves with some ritual and religiosity. It is surprising and alarming how many worship bulletins I see that begin the Invocation, not with ”Our help is in the Name of the Lord,” or anything like it, but a statement addressed to anyone who might happen to be listening, be it God or just the bats in the belfry, that we are here doing something or expressing something about us. That is a deformed liturgic, not a Reformed liturgic. The other tendency is to speak of God, and little about Jesus Christ, suggesting a closet Unitarianism, and this is compounded by the insistence of trying to find substitutes for Father, Son and Spirit, such as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Trinitarian theology suggests that the Name of God is revealed as persons, and that Father, Son and Spirit are Names of the Name. All three in Constantinopolitan Trinitarian theology are involved in creation, redeeming and sanctifying. I am not here attacking inclusive language so much as that exclusive inclusive language that unwittingly becomes a liturgical Unitarianism.

The Reformed Confessions are all solidly Trinitarian, and at its best, the Reformed tradition can enter into deep dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox where the Trinity is valued highly. Being Trinitarian does have ramifications for worship. James Torrance

in his Didsbury Lectures noted that in addition to praying to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit,

We pray to each of the three persons. We pray to the Father and to the Son (“even so come, Lord Jesus”) and to the Holy Spirit (*Veni Creator Spiritus*) “who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified” (Nicene Creed). Here we see the significance of the Nicene “one in being” (*homoousios*). We only pray to one God, but we have a warrant in the New Testament and in the Church’s worship life to pray to each of the three persons.<sup>26</sup>

Thus it is not about repeating ”in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” as many times as possible in the rite, as though it were some strange mantra. It is about embodying Trinitarian conviction in prayer. It does mean that some prayers will be addressed to the Son, and some to the Spirit—for all are one Lord in our one faith. Richard Baxter’s “Reformed Liturgy” of 1661 had a eucharistic prayer, which could be prayed as one prayer, or as three separate prayers, part addressed to the Father, part to the Son and part to the Spirit. He divided his prayer and liturgical actions into consecration, which was centered on the Father, commemoration, which concerned the Son, and covenanting and communication that concerned the Spirit. His contemporary, Jeremy Taylor, had authored a liturgy in which he borrowed the Syriac version of the eucharistic prayer of St. James, where the institution narrative and anamnesis are addressed to the Son. The Reformed tradition has the ability and theology to author good eucharistic prayers that give full weight to the consubstantiality of the Trinity, and thereby could set a strong ecumenical example. A Reformed Liturgic should be bold in naming the triune God by embodying this in prayer.

*4. Form as well as freedom.*

One of the hallmarks of Reformed worship has been its insistence that fixed forms alone stultify worship, and that freedom for timely prayer and prayer of the heart is crucial. That may be so, but it has its drawbacks when prayers are never repeated because they are never fixed, and change from week to week. It is through listening to prayer on Sundays that individuals learn to pray. That is how they also

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<sup>25</sup> P.T.Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacrament* (London: Longmans, 1917) xvi.

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<sup>26</sup> James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996) 25.



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learn their theology. No Trinitarian prayer, how can they begin to grasp that God is triune? If congregants are Unitarian it is because the leaders of worship have unwittingly or deliberately taught them to be so. What is articulated in prayer is important. But humans remember things and internalize them by hearing them and doing them frequently. Extemporary prayer, and change every week, is bought at a huge price.

David Hilborn, when minister in the United Reformed Church in the UK, did his doctoral dissertation on the language of prayer in his denomination.<sup>27</sup> He recorded services in a number of URC congregations over a period of some weeks. His final observations are of some importance.

First, ministers have their stock of phrases and concepts that they pray over and over again, but just in a different order. Extemporary prayer is not really extemporary. Second, as the ministers tried to draw out from their memories the phrases they wanted, they interjected “ahs” and “umms” and other noises which, concluded Hilborn, just distract, and hinder the congregation from following the flow of the prayer.

We might contrast this with the eucharistic prayer of St. John Chrysostom, which is prayed most weeks in the Eastern Orthodox churches; it has an abbreviated twin in Syriac, Twelve Apostles, which is used in the Syrian Orthodox and Maronite Churches. But our concern is the Greek version, which was undoubtedly the original language. It has been carefully analysed, and is in fact a carefully crafted work of Greek rhetoric, compiled to withstand frequent repetition, and to make an impact on its audience.<sup>28</sup> In other words, it was deliberately compiled or at least edited to make it memorable.

These two factors might suggest that a Reformed *Ordo* might have a few more fixed forms other than the Creed and Lord’s Prayer. That eucharistic prayers might be carefully crafted that can be used for a

particular season, or for a number of Sundays, so that congregants can become familiar with them. And eucharistic prayers should be *eucharist* prayers, and not simply a few words of thanks before the recitation of the words of institution. New Testament scholars assure us that the Last Supper narratives were never supposed to be liturgical texts, and liturgical scholarship tells us that the earliest eucharistic prayers that have come down to us did not contain the institution narrative. It is the calling on the Spirit—the epiclesis—that is one of the oldest core pieces in eucharistic prayers, and it is perhaps no accident that we find a petition for the Spirit in the 1563 German Reformed Liturgy, Datheen’s Dutch version, and in the Westminster Directory. But all give or insist on a thanksgiving, and John Knox provided a fine one in 1556. There is no need not to adopt the classical form with a *Sursum Corda* and *Sanctus*, that Reformed congregations are quite capable of singing as well as, if not better than, Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican congregations, and thus take a more obvious doxological part in the eucharistic prayer. As much care should be extended on this prayer as on the sermon.

*5. Music and the arts*

These are really two subjects in their own right but do impinge upon rite! The Reformed tradition championed psalmody, but in many places has simply abandoned psalmody for hymns or modern praise and worship music. It is not a question of “either/or,” but of “both/and,” and “and.” All styles and traditions may be appropriate in some settings. But all of us fear the Eastern traditions because they are so different. We should not. The Maronite Church in the USA has a CD with a chant for the institution narrative—there is nothing in Reformed theology that says the narrative cannot be sung.

Icons, candles and even sometimes incense have all made entries back into our worship via Taizé. One of the problems is that just as some ministers define themselves over against Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, similarly there is a mentality that says that since we are Reformed, we cannot possibly use these in the same way as Catholics or Orthodox. There are ways of doing such things—by adapting, but honouring the tradition from which they come. In Scottish Presbyterianism, St. Andrew is an important saint, being patron of Scotland. So why not have an icon of St. Andrew? Why not lead the prayers of the people or pastoral prayer near such an icon—not addressing Andrew, but with Andrew, unless we are afraid of our own eschatology? And of course many

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<sup>27</sup> David H. Hilborn, “The Pragmatics of Liturgical Discourse with Special Reference to English Reformed Worship and the Performative Language Doxology of Jean Ladrerie,” PhD Thesis, Nottingham University 1984.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel J. Sheerin, “The Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: Stylistic Notes,” in *Language and the Worship of the Church*, eds David Jasper and R.C.D. Jasper, 44-81 (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1990).

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Reformed are still shocked when they discover that Zwingli retained the Hail Mary. Why did he? Because it is biblical, and because he held a Chalcedonian Christology, and believed in the resurrection! If we think that one sister church has said far too much about Mary, it is poor theology and churlish to respond by saying nothing. Two extremes are just that—two extremes. In a visual age our younger people are far more open to the visual than their forebears. We need to learn about those traditions that have always had the visual, and see what we can helpfully learn from them. How such a liturgic can be marketed alongside such other tempting *Ordos* that are culture-driven, is another matter. But it might be possible if we focus less on entertaining and more on enchanting and mystery.

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*6. To encourage ecumenical celebrations that enchant rather than entertain*

It was Frank Senn in his book *Christian Liturgy* who made what seems to me an important distinction between worship that entertains and worship that enchants.<sup>29</sup> We all have different ideas, of course, as to what might enchant us and our Christian neighbor. But let me give a practical example of an ecumenical liturgy that I concelebrated in Marquand chapel at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. It followed the *Ordo*, but it draws on East and West, ancient and modern. All the concelebrants have stepped out of their normal *Ordo*, including vesture. I am C of E, my wife UCC, and Fr. Professor Kesrouani is a Maronite priest. It is not presented as the perfect liturgy, but one which attempted to enchant through music and ceremonial so that the worshipers could glimpse something of mystery. It combined new age Christian music, medieval Western music, and Lebanese Maronite music. It used Syrian Orthodox vestments and fans, and it used the Syrian version of the Eucharistic Prayer of St. James in English, though the narrative of institution was chanted in Syriac.<sup>30</sup> Worship needs to enchant rather than entertain.

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<sup>29</sup> Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy, Catholic and Evangelical*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> DVD of Marquand Chapel service 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010. This DVD is not commercially available. Copies may be available on request for private research only.