



## ECUMENICAL LITURGY, ITS POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS

*Sarah Hinlicky Wilson*

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### *The Liturgical Movement and the Ecumenical Movement*

Already, among the ecumenically-minded, preparations are underway to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, which is regarded as the birthday of the ecumenical movement. What seems to be quite a bit less well-known is that *this year, 2009, is also a hundredth anniversary celebration, and for a movement that has impacted the Christian world every bit as much: the liturgical movement.*<sup>1</sup>

**Roman Catholic Beginnings** In 1909, at the Malines Conference, Dom Lambert Beauduin, a Benedictine monk in Belgium, delivered a paper on "The True Prayer of the Church." Following and building on the concerns of Pope Pius X to restore Gregorian chant and to urge more frequent communion among the faithful, Beauduin argued that the corporate liturgy of the church is the heart and soul of Christian existence. Therefore, it is necessary for the laity to attend worship, understand it, and participate in it fully and intelligently. This apparently simple observation sparked a much-needed renewal in the church's worship.

For the next fifty years or so, the seedling liturgical movement grew slowly, mostly at the initiative of monastic communities within the Roman Catholic church such as Maria Laach in Germany and Klosterneuburg in Austria. The liturgical movement was formally recognized by Pope Pius XII in 1947 with the encyclical *Mediator Dei et Hominum*.

But the most significant breakthrough for the liturgi-

cal movement came with Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). Since the faithful must "take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects" (§11), a number of reforms are necessary. There should be "more reading from Holy Scripture, and it is to be more varied and suitable" (§35.1); preaching is to be emphasized, improved, and included in every mass, with its content drawn "mainly from scriptural and liturgical sources, and its character should be that of a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation" (§35.2); the use of the vernacular is permitted (§36.2); and "communion under both kinds may be granted" (§55). Further, though the magisterium reserved to itself the right to approve all liturgical changes, it was conceded that "[e]ven in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples" (§37).

**Protestants, Orthodox, Pentecostals** It is easy to imagine how Protestants reacted. Four hundred years later, all these Reformation dreams were coming true—a renewed commitment to Scripture and preaching, liturgy in the vernacular, communion in both kinds, evangelical freedom in worship! Suddenly Anglicans, Lutherans, Reformed, and all the rest in the Protestant family of churches began to pay attention. The Roman Catholic church suddenly became a leader in the liturgical renewal of Protestant churches. This was possible also because the same Second Vatican Council issued the decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, officially announcing the entrance of the Roman Catholic church into the ecumenical movement. From here on out, the ecumenical and liturgical movements were intertwined.

Protestants had already seen some connections between liturgy and ecumenism before the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2</sup> In 1937, the newly formed World Council of Churches commissioned a study called *Ways of Worship* to compare liturgies.<sup>3</sup> Over the years there were also many formal attempts to pray across denominational boundaries, such as the World Day of Prayer, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Week of Prayer for World Peace, and the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle.<sup>4</sup>

After Vatican II, many Protestant churches adopted the three-year lectionary introduced in the Roman Catholic church, or at least a revised version of it. Common Scriptures raised the question of common language, since many denominations used their own translations of prayers and Bible passages in their liturgies. Once again, the Roman Catholic church led the way with International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL, later ICET and now ELLC), in which non-Catholics soon came to be involved. Many English-speaking churches now use the same words for common liturgical texts like the Lord's Prayer, the creeds, and biblical canticles like the Kyrie and Gloria. Parallel translation projects are also found in other languages.

The liturgical movement has been dominated mostly by Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants. The Orthodox churches have perhaps *made* an impact on the liturgical movement more than they have *felt* it. There was a hope that the Orthodox churches could reintroduce the West liturgically to the "undivided" church. Some Western churches therefore adopted Orthodox chants or an epiclesis in the eucharist. Evangelical, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches have a reputation for being "non-liturgical"—an imprecise term at best, meaning they don't use the traditional liturgies of the past—but it has been suggested that their success is to some extent a *product* of the liturgical movement.<sup>5</sup> These churches emphasize the full and active participation of their mem-

bers in worship and discipleship, and that was the founding insight of Dom Beauduin in 1909.

To summarize, the liturgical movement has had at its heart concerns that have found an eager ecumenical audience. It has stressed the participation of *all* the baptized in worship, not only the clergy. It has looked backward to a time before the division of the church, lifting up the earliest known information about the liturgy as found in Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and the Didache, among others. It has expanded the role of the Scriptures. It has looked to what other churches past and present have done. Perhaps most of all, the liturgical movement has promoted the eucharist (as it is generally called in ecumenical circles to emphasize the elements of prayer and thanksgiving) as the center, summit, and source of Christian life—as the main thing in which the laity ought to participate.

**Decline** The ecumenical and liturgical movements have one last aspect in common: namely, that both now seem to be in decline. It has been common for the past twenty years or so to say that we are suffering through an "ecumenical winter." Liturgical scholars have been saying much the same thing about the liturgical movement.

Roman Catholic theologian Aidan Kavanaugh has predicted the outcome of liturgical renewal as "liturgical paralysis... the bringing of prayer and worship into fundamental disrepute, and the dispersal of the Church itself as a worshipping assembly."<sup>6</sup> Another Roman Catholic, W. J. Grisbrooke, argues that "liturgical reform has been hijacked in the service of philosophies and attitudes, of movements and 'causes' which have nothing to do with liturgy, nothing to do with worship, nothing to do with prayer—nothing to do, in the end, with Christianity."<sup>7</sup> An initiative to increase the laity's participation in communion in Great Britain, called "Parish and People," is now seen to have done more to *reduce* churchgoing than to increase it! Other criticisms have been voiced:

there is a sense of loss in those who were used to older liturgical styles; the liturgical movement has caused a fixation on correct performance at one extreme and user-friendly entertainment evangelism at the other; what is passed off as progress, ecumenically or theologically, afterward appears to be a passing trend; language that is easier to understand decreases the sense of transcendence and mystery in worship; emphasis on public worship has undermined private devotion and prayer and, consequently, personal commitment to public worship; the "non-liturgical" churches have been completely ignored by the liturgical movement; the Roman Catholic church is seen to be pulling back from many of its original commitments to reform; and so on.

The relationship between the liturgical and ecumenical movements, their success and their failure, can be profitably analyzed through the example of ecumenical *eucharistic* liturgies. Since ecumenism and the liturgical renewal have seen the eucharist as the goal and center of Christian life, it is not surprising that these movements have come together in attempts to create common eucharistic liturgies.<sup>8</sup> The task here is to examine the *content* of the newly created eucharistic liturgies, not the *practice* of different churches communing together or individual churches' *policies* regarding other Christians at their table. The question is how well these liturgies as such represent and enable true ecumenical reconciliation.

#### *Ecumenical Eucharistic Liturgies*

Three eucharistic liturgies in particular have been significant for the ecumenical movement.

**The Church of South India** Since it was missionaries who started the ecumenical movement, it is fitting that they were also the authors of the first real ecumenical eucharistic liturgy. It is even more fitting that this liturgy was for one of the first churches

formed by the union of confessionally disparate bodies. In 1947, the Church of South India was formed out of several Anglican dioceses, a province of the Methodist church, the South Indian United Church (itself a merger of Presbyterians and Congregationalists some decades before), and the Basel Mission church. The Church of South India was the first instance of episcopal and non-episcopal churches joining together.<sup>9</sup>

The original plan was to let each congregation continue in its traditional worship practice. But very soon there was a need for a joint liturgy at services where members of different former churches would be together—ordinations, for example. So the framers of this new eucharistic liturgy, first made public in 1950, set out to appropriate “the great classical tradition of Christian worship, as found in the ancient liturgies, while subjecting it to the critical insights of the Reformation.”<sup>10</sup>

There’s nothing particularly *Indian* about about this principle. The people who wrote this liturgy were aware of that, even though “inculturation” didn’t become a major theme of the liturgical movement till decades later. Christianity still had shallow roots in Indian soil. It had not yet been so deeply appropriated by the local culture to express itself in a “natural” Indian form. And India is far too diverse a country to have one single “natural” form that could be expressed liturgically anyway.<sup>11</sup> So the Church of South India liturgy was composed in English as the base language. It was then translated into the many languages of India as needed.

Still, there *are* some elements of traditional Indian culture and Christianity included in this liturgy. The most significant for the rest of the world is the restoration of the exchange of peace. In most churches, the peace had long since become a formal action of the clergy among themselves or had even disappeared. Because the exchange of peace was similar to the greetings of South Indian culture, the

liturgists restored the peace to congregational usage. From South India it spread back to Europe and North America.

Another interesting detail: in order not to scandalize a Hindu who thought the clergy were worshiping the cross on the wall behind the altar, the liturgists had the pastor stand behind the altar and face the people, instead of in front of the altar with his back to the people. This also became a common practice in Western churches.

A third significant decision was the adoption of Anglican monk Gregory Dix’s “fourfold action” model for the eucharistic liturgy. Dix had argued that every eucharist must include taking, blessing, breaking, and distributing. Because of this decision in the Church of South India, nearly all ecumenical eucharistic liturgies since then, and very many denominational liturgies as well, include these four actions. This is a case of liturgists deliberately re-forming liturgy on the basis of scholarship in the new discipline of liturgical studies. It is unfortunate that Dix’s theory has been discredited by more recent research!<sup>12</sup>

The South Indian liturgists knew they were creating something ecumenically bold. One of their bishops had told them: “[D]o not add heritages together, but restore to India the church of the fathers, and remember that it is provisional till there shall once more be an ecumenical church.”<sup>13</sup> This ecumenical eucharistic liturgy has been mostly successful, though a group of former Anglican churches ended up leaving the Church of South India to become Anglican again, for reasons that had much to do with the liturgy.<sup>14</sup>

**Taizé** A second important ecumenical eucharistic liturgy comes from Taizé. Not entirely by its own intention, Taizé became an important center of spiritual renewal for youth. It needed to develop a suitable form of prayer for young, short-term, international visitors. The result is familiar to most of us by now: simple songs

and chants with only a few words, musically beautiful but not complex, easy to understand and translate, and drawn mostly from scriptural texts.

The eucharistic liturgy of Taizé, composed in 1959 and revised in 1972, again followed many of the insights of the liturgical movement. It emphasized the active participation of the laity in spoken responses and song. It included some traditionally Orthodox elements. Stylistically it depended upon monastic prayer and chant, evoking if not strictly copying the sense of an ancient and undivided church. Like the Church of South India, it followed the latest scholarship on the fourfold action and the eucharistic prayer. The Taizé eucharist also tried to deal with denominational divisions: early in the morning there would be a Roman Catholic mass, the sacrament would be reserved, and then it would be distributed at the same time as the sacrament from the Taizé eucharist.<sup>15</sup> It was the closest they could get to a shared Supper.

**The Lima Liturgy** The most famous of the ecumenical eucharistic liturgies is the Lima Liturgy, composed by Taizé brother Max Thurian to celebrate the approval of the document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* by the Faith and Order Commission in Lima, Peru, in 1982. The Lima Liturgy was used again by the WCC later in 1982, and then most famously at the Vancouver assembly of the WCC in 1983. Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Reformed, Moravians, and United Church of Canada Christians all helped lead the worship. But by a decade later, it was no longer used at such assemblies. Everyone realized that the churches are really *not* united at the altar, and they couldn’t honestly act otherwise at ecumenical gatherings.<sup>16</sup>

The Lima Liturgy is an ideal example of the possibilities and problems inherent in all ecumenical liturgies. In the first place, it is a patchwork of many different elements. In addition to biblical texts, it includes the confes-

sion and absolution from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*; a Kyrie with Byzantine roots; the Nicene Creed, marked as the one from the year 381 to avoid filioque problems; intercessory prayers based on the litany of Pope Gelasius from the late fifth century; prayers before the eucharist based on Jewish sources and the Didache; an epiclesis derived from the liturgy of St. James in the fourth century; a fraction following Reformed practice; and overall many similarities to the Taizé liturgy. The second item to consider is that the Lima Liturgy is a “theme” liturgy. Since it was written to reflect the convergence of many churches around the topics of baptism, eucharist, and ministry, these three themes appear regularly—and, by liturgical standards, exhaustively—in the prayers.

As a result, despite its widespread use, the Lima Liturgy has come in for a great deal of critique and outright criticism.<sup>17</sup> As one liturgical scholar put it, Lima “seemed verbose and tended to bog down” on the local level, though it may have been “the appropriate and only possible solution for international ecumenical gatherings.”<sup>18</sup> Further, as a patchwork of various elements, no worshipper could feel particularly at home or in a position of focused prayerfulness. An “exotic experience” and “big event” for the sake of a “feeling of community” seemed to overwhelm all other considerations in this kind of liturgy.<sup>19</sup>

A eucharistic liturgy like Lima forces into the open the most basic questions of ecumenism. What is the church? Where is the church? Is an ecumenical eucharist the perfect expression of the goal of ecumenism, a kind of “super-worship,”<sup>20</sup> automatically better than all local, confessional liturgies? Or is an ecumenical eucharist a homeless imitation of the real thing, hosted by nobody, gathering only a self-selected number of individuals who have the time, money, and luxury to worry about church unity? Are we always going to be visitors in each other’s churches? Or will we ever really be at home there? If we recognize each

other as Christians, how can we fail to share the eucharist together? But if we are all really Christians, how can we disagree so profoundly about the eucharist?

In reality, the Lima Liturgy is “ecumenical” but only in a very limited way. This liturgy is *Western* in style and *ordo*. It is *mainline Protestant* in its open communion policy but not universally Protestant in that policy. It is *modern* in its sense of freedom to pick and choose among different elements to achieve a certain effect. It is *academic* in that it was constructed on the foundation of scholarly research rather than through organic local development. None of these things need be judged good or bad in themselves—but they are specific to certain ways of being Christian. In the end, as one scholar put it, the Lima Liturgy is truly a *local* liturgy.<sup>21</sup> The locality in this case is an international gathering of the kind of people to whom ecumenism and eucharistic sharing are of primary importance. Again, that may be judged good or bad, but if the term “ecumenical” intends also the ideal of “universal,” then the Lima Liturgy falls short.

#### *The Future of Ecumenical Liturgy*

Given the limited success of these eucharistic liturgies, what are our options for ecumenical liturgy from now on? I will try to answer this question in three ways: with an encouraging observation, a practical suggestion, and an ecclesiological challenge.

#### **An Encouraging Observation**

The hope that the Lima Liturgy, or something like it, *could* be universal reflects the liturgical scholarship of its time. There was an expectation that a unified Western rite or at least *ordo* could be formulated, resolving all ongoing doctrinal controversies about the eucharist and uniting all the broken fragments of the Western church again, chiefly through repristinating the primitive liturgy of the earliest Christians. The failure of this kind

of project, the move since then into ever-greater diversity in liturgy, and the disappointment that accompanied both of these things, has obscured the fact that nearly all the liturgy in our churches these days *is* ecumenical. Consider the following points.

Hymns cross boundaries more easily than any other part of worship. Non-Lutherans sing “A Mighty Fortress,” non-Roman Catholics sing Gregorian chants, non-Evangelicals sing contemporary praise songs, and non-Reformed sing Genevan psalms. Music is so close to the heart of faith, and yet we are willing to sing our faith in the words of Christians whose altars and pulpits we don’t share. This is a remarkable case of spontaneous reception.

Further, members of the same language group now read the same translations of the Bible, which are the work of ecumenically representative committees of scholars. Common translations of prayers and biblical canticles are also shared.

The church year is recognized almost universally, even if some churches celebrate it maximally with all the minor festivals and others restrict themselves to Christmas and Easter only. Likewise, a common lectionary means that a majority of the faithful are meditating on the same texts of Scripture most Sundays of the year.

Even preaching is ecumenical nowadays. It is almost impossible to find a contemporary biblical commentary or a book of theology whose author does not draw on cross-denominational scholarship. Pastors who read such books participate in a wider ecumenical conversation, which expresses itself in their sermons.

Since total uniformity in worship is neither possible nor desirable, it is important for us to recognize how much these things I have mentioned do show a real ecumenical convergence. We share a great deal of the same words, prayers, songs, and other kinds of content in our liturgies.

What about the eucharist? As long

as we continue to believe and teach very different things about it, we will have a hard time finding a common liturgy to satisfy all churches. This seems to imply that the great hope of ecumenism, a shared eucharist, cannot come true any time soon.

But we must put this in historical perspective. Why *is* the eucharist the summit of all our ecumenical hopes? In part, it is because the liturgical movement promoted the eucharist as the center of Christian existence. It is hard to believe there could be anything bad about this. And yet there are some indications that, in fact, the great emphasis on the eucharist has had some negative effects in the life of the church.

First, this emphasis has de-emphasized the importance of private prayer and devotion. Second, it has given the impression of ecumenical failure, but if measured by other standards—like the ones I just outlined—ecumenism is still going strong. Third, it has led to the neglect of many other forms of public worship that are possible within and across denominations,<sup>22</sup> which has been especially destructive for churches whose main worship, historically, was *not* eucharistic. And fourth, it has sometimes tried to avoid doctrinal discussion by rushing toward a premature consensus. This can only lead to further division or serious errors. Think of Gregory Dix's fourfold-action scheme that remains petrified in many denominational liturgies, or of the Anglican schism from the Church of South India. We may be justly impatient that we are unable to share the Lord's Supper together—but unity that comes too soon is unity that turns into division once more.<sup>23</sup>

**A Practical Suggestion** One writer has said about ecumenical liturgy that “[a]pparently convergent language may yet conceal divergent theology and ecclesiology,”<sup>24</sup> which is another reason for caution. But by the same token, divergent language and liturgy may conceal *convergent* theology and ecclesiology. Let me explain.

We have all had the experience of attending another church and completely misinterpreting some part of it, judging it by our own context. For example, I always found “contemporary” or “evangelical” worship downright offensive until my husband, who was raised in an evangelical church, explained to me its inner logic. As a result I have come to be much more appreciative of it, even able to see ways in which it is superior to my own preferred style of worship: for instance, there is often a much deeper immersion in the Old Testament and its praises to God.

Take another example: we all know people from “liturgical” churches who left because the worship felt dead or meaningless to them. They found renewed faith in a more spontaneous worship setting. Conversely, we've all known people who left spontaneous worship for something more formal and liturgical. Isn't the fact that Christians are fed with the same gospel in such different liturgical settings proof that it is *not* the exact *form, words, or actions* of the liturgy that are decisive? If this were the case, it would be impossible for the Orthodox to recognize Westerners as Christians at all, or for some Westerners to recognize other Westerners as Christians, especially across the “liturgical”/“non-liturgical” divide.

What crosses every liturgical boundary is our common faith in Jesus Christ, in the Father and the Spirit, for us and for our salvation. In other words, what we *must* have in common is the content of our faith, our *doctrine*. Yet at times the ecumenical movement has seen doctrine as the problem. There have been suggestions that we should ignore it and worship together anyway or focus all our energy on making the world a better place. The same opinion appears sometimes in the liturgical movement, hoping that the creation of a common liturgy would conceal or even extinguish troublesome doctrinal differences.<sup>25</sup>

This attitude is not only misleading but also naïve and possibly danger-

ous. A faith without content is a faith without God. Doctrinal differences covered up in this generation rise up in the next. And the truth is that ecumenists and liturgists always have doctrinal commitments of their own, though they are not always openly expressed. This is evident in the three eucharistic liturgies we looked at: none of them actually specify any doctrine about Christ's presence in the Supper, though they aimed to span a wide variety of beliefs. The unity of the assembly was more important than belief in the presence (or absence) of Christ. But the Church of South India liturgy lost the Anglicans while keeping the Reformed and Methodists; the Taizé liturgy was for a transient community, so it could avoid long-term doctrinal questions; and the Lima Liturgy was ultimately judged inadequate to ecumenical needs.

Doctrinal differences require scholars to do slow, patient work. Liturgies will always be different across national and confessional boundaries. What could ecumenical liturgy even mean in such circumstances? My practical suggestion is this: our best hope for unity lies not in common liturgy but in common teaching.

It is impossible for every Christian to know, much less enjoy, every style of liturgy. Most will stick with one style through their whole lives. But Christians who truly understand the faith shared everywhere, always, and by all will be able to recognize this same faith in the diverse liturgies they encounter. For example, one way I have learned my trinitarian faith is through the invocation of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at every liturgy. I recognize the same trinitarian faith in the Byzantine rite when the congregation makes the sign of the cross every time the holy name is said. I recognize the same trinitarian faith in Pentecostal worship when Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each glorified in turn over the course of many praise songs during worship, though not in the tight formula to which I am accustomed. It is not the similarity of liturgy but

the similarity of the faith that reveals to me I am with fellow Christians. By the same token, this would mean the ability to recognize genuine departures from the common faith in a local liturgy, despite the common consensus of a tradition, confession, or institutional church. An example of this is baptism in the name of the “Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier,” deliberately eschewing the name “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

If our common faith is how we recognize each other as Christians, then it follows that ecumenical liturgies will only ever be as good as our doctrinal consensus. That is one reason why the Lima Liturgy was so powerful for members of the mainline Protestant churches who participated in it: it really did express significant doctrinal convergence for *them*.

### **An Ecclesiological Challenge**

A final matter for supporters of both the liturgical and ecumenical movements to consider is whether the unity of the church and its worship lies in the past or in the future. The liturgical movement from its beginning has had impulses toward antiquarianism. Already in 1947 the papal encyclical *Mediator Dei* saw the need to comment: “Assuredly it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the sacred liturgy... But it is neither wise nor laudable to reduce everything to antiquity by every possible device” (§62).

Why is the pull toward the past so strong? The past is where the ecumenical and liturgical movements alike saw their best hope. Ecumenists caught a glimpse of the “undivided church”—an image that casts a powerful spell. The liturgical movement thought it had found the pure, primitive, original liturgy without corruption. Since the Didache, Justin Martyr, and Hippolytus—our earliest sources of Christian liturgy—are part of the common heritage of all the churches, no one could object to using them. These ancient liturgies were taken to be the key to an undivided church in our own time.<sup>26</sup>

It was an attractive dream—and as always happens with dreams, scholars eventually woke up. Now scholars recognize that the earliest Christians worshipped in many ways and with different words and orders. Uniformity happened only gradually—and even then, diversity was still more normal. Justin Martyr and Hippolytus were local men speaking of their local traditions. The reason they seemed authoritative is because their writings alone survived to the present.<sup>27</sup>

The question is, then, how do we evaluate the change and movement of the liturgy over time? Does liturgical change signify a gradual abandonment of, or alienation from, the church’s origin in the words and actions of Jesus? Or is the change of liturgy a sign of the church’s deepening understanding of its own faith and message—in fact, a refinement in the expression of its doctrine?

Where the early church is in question, I take the latter view, and this is the reason why. The “undivided church,” as we sometimes call the early church, could equally well be called the “not-yet-divided church,” or the “eventually-to-be-divided church.” What we see in the earliest history of the church is the progressive rejection of false interpretations of the faith: the Arian claim that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist; the Nestorian downplaying of the true divinity of the human Christ; the Pelagian location of salvation in human efforts rather than divine grace. These questions arise after Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and the Didache. They were problems yet to be resolved and furthermore problems that *had* to be resolved. It would be foolish and dangerous to suppose we could retreat to an “undivided church” and ignore the serious doctrinal questions that came directly out of the church’s worship of not only the Father but also the Son and the Spirit.<sup>28</sup>

Even if we chose a later date in church history, how would we agree on when to stop the clock? That too would provoke doctrinal disagreement!

The liturgy, and faith itself, continually raise doctrinal questions. The church’s task of discerning which developments in liturgy and theology are true and which are false cannot and will not stop.

So here is my ecclesiological challenge: I propose that we consider the unified church for which Jesus prayed to lie not in the past but still in the future. When we have a true reconciliation of all baptized Christians, this will be a *better* unity than the church has ever known, better even than the unity of the early, not-yet-divided church.

This means several things for the future of ecumenical liturgy. First, plurality among liturgical forms is normal and should not be considered a problem for unity. Second, liturgy must be held accountable for how it expresses the Christian faith—in its words, music, actions, and rituals. Third, liturgy must be able to develop to express better the faith of the church and to correct mistakes or inadequacies in received liturgies (including sometimes correcting the corrections!). Last of all, truly ecumenical liturgy still lies in the future, not in the past. As the South Indian bishop said, our liturgy is “provisional till there shall once more be an ecumenical church.” Speed the day, merciful Lord!

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### *Notes*

1. For an excellent introduction to the history of the liturgical movement, see John R. K. Fenwick and Bryan D. Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995). More briefly, see Teresa Berger, “Liturgical Movement,” in *The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Nicholas Lossky et al. (Geneva: wcc, 2002) [hereafter DEM], 695–97.

2. See Dagmar Heller’s account in “Ecumenical Worship—Experiences, Problems, Possibilities: Some Basic Considerations,” in *Worship Today: Understanding, Practice, Ecumenical Implications*, Faith and Order Paper No. 194, eds. Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller (Geneva: wcc, 1994), 232–37.

3. A more recent version of this study is *Worship Today*; see previous note.

4. See also John Carden, “Prayer in the Ecumenical Movement,” in DEM, 925–27.

For a local case study, see Ondrej Prostednik, "Prayer: An Instrument for Strengthening the Unity of Christians," *Ecumenical Review* 59/4 (2007): 437–44.

5. Fenwick and Spinks, 112–13.

6. Aidan Kavanaugh, "Liturgical Inculturation: Looking to the Future," *Studia Liturgica* 20/1 (1990): 95–106.

7. W. Jardine Grisbrooke, "Liturgical Reform and Liturgical Renewal," *Studia Liturgica* 21/2 (1991): 136–54.

8. For an interesting case of an ecumenical liturgy long before the ecumenical and liturgical movements, see Jesse A. Spohnholz, "Multiconfessional Celebration of the Eucharist in Sixteenth-Century Wesel," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 39/3 (2008): 705–29.

9. Fenwick and Spinks, 54, and ch. 6 generally.

10. T. S. Garrett, *Worship in the Church of South India* (London: Lutterworth, 1958), 10. The eucharistic portions of the liturgy can be found in *Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration*, eds. Max Thurian and Geoffrey Wainwright (Geneva: wcc, 1983), 178–80.

11. For more on this point, and especially how Christians have tried to make sense of India's Hindu heritage, see K. Virginia Kennerly, "The Use of Indigenous Sacred Literature and Theological Concepts in Christian Eucharistic Liturgy in India," *Studia Liturgica* 19/2 (1989): 143–61.

12. Credit for this goes to Bryan D. Spinks, "Mis-Shapen. Gregory Dix and the Four Action Shape of the Liturgy," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (1990): 161–77, whose point has been generally acknowledged by liturgical scholarship.

13. J. R. MacPhail, "Worship in the Church of South India," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 17 (1964): 25, quoted in Phillip Tovey, "Liturgy and Ecumenism: Three Models of Development," in *Liturgy in Dialogue*, eds. Paul Bradshaw and Bryan Spinks (London: SPCK, 1993), 71.

14. Paul Meyendorff, "Christian Perspectives on Worship," in *Worship Today*, 293.

15. Tovey, "Liturgy and Ecumenism," in *Liturgy in Dialogue*, 80–84. English translations of two eucharistic prayers from Taizé can be found in *Baptism and Eucharist*, 180–2. The French liturgy itself can be found in *Eucharistie à Taizé* (Taizé-Communauté: Les Presses de Taizé, 1971).

16. See the essays by Max Thurian and Gordon Lathrop, and the text and music of the Lima Liturgy itself, in *Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts: The Lima Liturgy—And Beyond*, eds. Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller (Geneva: wcc, 1998) and Teresa Berger, "The Lima Liturgy," in DEM, 694–95.

17. For some examples, see Robert Gribben, "The 'Lima Liturgy'—An Ecumenical Liturgical Text," *One in Christ* 20/3 (1984): 249–56; Placid Murray, "A Proposed Text for a Common Eucharist," *Studia Liturgica* 17 (1987): 118–32; Heinrich Holze, "Unreformatorischer Gottesdienst? Die Abendmahlsfeier der Lima-Liturgie aus der Sicht frühreformatorischer Gottesdienstordnungen," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 88/3 (1991): 287–312.

18. Eugene Brand, "Response to the Berakah Award: Ecumenism and the Liturgy," *Worship* 58/4 (1984): 313.

19. Heller, "Ecumenical Worship," in *Worship Today*, 239.

20. *Ibid.*, 231.

21. Gordon Lathrop, "The Lima Liturgy and Beyond: Moving Forward Ecumenically," in *Eucharistic Worship*, 23.

22. A recent collection called *Ökumenische Gottesdienste: Anlässe, Modelle und Hinweise für die Praxis* [Ecumenical Worship Services], ed. Deutsches Liturgisches Institut/Gottesdienst-Institut (Freiburg: Herder, 2003) presents liturgies for joint Roman Catholic/Protestant use around the following themes: remembrance of baptism, blessings, a reading service from the Scriptures, praise and thanksgiving, repentance, worship in the time of catastrophe, remembrance of the dead, lamentation, prayers for peace, and many more. These are not formative liturgies, the kind the faithful say week in and week out till they are completely internalized. But as occasional and adaptable pieces, they are powerfully ecumenical while honestly recognizing the current state of reconciliation among our churches.

23. Sheerly the fact of the internal strife among American Lutherans regarding hymnals over the past decades should be proof enough of how much more difficult it gets outside the confessional fold! For just the tip of the iceberg, see Oliver K. Olson, "Contemporary Trends in Liturgy Viewed from the Perspective of Classical Lutheran Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 26 (1974): 110–57; Timothy C. J. Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*

*on American Lutheranism*, Drew Series in Liturgy No. 3 (Lanham: Scarecrow, 1997); and Maxwell E. Johnson, "Liturgy and Ecumenism: Gifts, Challenges, and Hopes for a Renewed Vision," *Worship* 80/1 (2006): 2–29.

24. Paul Sheppey, "Worship and Ecumenism," in *Worship Today*, 314.

25. See the comments of Eugene Brand, a principle framer of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, in "Worship and the Ecumenical Movement," *Ecumenical Review* 51/2 (1999): 184–92. On the flip side, the most unifying force in Lutheranism one hundred years ago was the Common Service, fiercely committed to the faith articulated by the Confessions in continuity with the historic liturgy proceeding it and widely adopted across Lutheran boundaries as these communities moved into use of the English language.

26. This impulse appears also in "non-liturgical" churches that seek to recreate the New Testament worship experience, common among charismatics and Pentecostals, or in primitivist churches, like the Church of Christ, which among other things bars instrumental music on the grounds that New Testament churches didn't have any.

27. See Paul F. Bradshaw, "The Liturgical Use and Abuse of Patristics," in *Liturgy Reshaped*, ed. K. Stevenson (London: SPCK, 1982) and "The Search for the Origins of Christian Liturgy: Some Methodological Reflections," *Studia Liturgica* 17 (1987): 26–34.

28. I would consider changes in the liturgy introduced by Luther and his companion reformers to fall into this category as well, as better refinements of the expression of the Christian faith. See the excellent essay by Dorothea Wendebourg, "Den falschen Weg Roms zu Ende gegangen? Zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion über Martin Luthers Gottesdienstreform und ihr Verhältnis zu den Traditionen der Alten Kirche," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 94/4 (1997): 437ff, which takes up the conflict over whether the truth of faith is best expressed liturgically in the origin or in the origin's development; she favors the latter approach. Her view accords with the presentation of the development of doctrine in Robert Jenson's *Systematic Theology: The Triune God* (New York: Oxford, 2001).