Formed and Reformed: What God Effects through the Liturgical Assembly of Christians

Paul R. Nelson

It is a privilege to be invited to offer a "keynote" address to the Institute of Liturgical Studies, where so much serious reflection and energy for the renewal and study of Christian worship has been generated. As will become clear to you almost immediately, "keynote" today does not mean key in the sense of offering the key concept that is needed to unlock all subsequent deliberation on the important topic of forming Christians. In my case, "key" refers more frankly and realistically to the indispensable need to start somewhere by opening the door to subsequent work in the institute—with its speakers, its group sessions and workshops, and its liturgies. In a real sense what is needed at this year's institute is not so much a key but a whole ring of keys. We who gather build on the two previous years' work on worship, culture, and catholicity. Having explored the tensions between worship and culture in 1997, and the eschatological dimensions of those relationships in 1998, the institute this year turns to a moment of advocacy for the indispensable task of forming Christians.

The word "forming" suggests to the hearer or reader an ongoing process which gives a fundamental shape. Call to mind if you will two examples of this process of forming: first, the potter. The potter works in clay and water. The potter or the potter's apprentice or helper prepares the clay by mixing earth and water until it is formable. When the potter takes up the clay it is prepared for his work already. The potter then forms the clay, into a useable shape. The shape is related to the fundamental mission of the vessel. The form of a vase is distinct from that of a plate; the size of a plate is different from the size of a platter; the form of a bowl is distinct from that of a pitcher. Knowing and understanding the use of the vessel contributes to the potter's ability to form it well and to the user's employment of it effectively and with satisfaction.

The story is told of the early pioneer of the English pottery and china industry, Josiah Wedgewood, that the acid test of design for each of the teapots of his new factories was its use by Mrs. Wedgewood. Imagine the scene as Josiah would carry home from the factory a prototype of a new design, carefully wrapped against premature display. There he would

160

carefully unwrap it and set it before his wife. Then came the moment of truth. She would put the kettle on to boil and make a pot of tea in the new vessel. They both would wait as the tea steeped in the fresh-boiled water. At last, Mrs. Wedgewood would "pour out," as the English say. If even a single drop of tea fell from the lip of the spout or ran back along the spout and down the side of the pot to stain her crisp-pressed tea cloth, the design would not do. Josiah would return it to the chagrined designer to try again.

Second, the silversmith and refiner of silver. Unlike the potter working in clay and water, this craft works in metal and fire. Here the material is not humble clay but precious silver. The tools are the hammer in the hand and the fire close at hand. Unlike the potter, whose work when dry or fired is not subject to being reshaped, the silversmith can take a silver vessel and reform it from cup to plate, from pitcher to vase, from coins to platter. Understanding the purpose of the silver vessel and its maker shape the way we evaluate it.

Hester Bateman was a much admired nineteenth century silversmith, renowned both for the quality of the execution of her craft and her beautiful designs in silver. Last summer I was standing in a London shop admiring a piece of her work being offered for sale. Two other Americans were also viewing the piece—admiring would not be the right word. The lady was quite put out that the holes in the salt shaker were just to big for it to be of any use. The man with her differed in his evaluation because he was sure that with a salt shaker that big you would only have to fill it twice a year. The three of us were not looking at a salt shaker, but a sugar caster! Our evaluations of the piece were based almost entirely on our understanding of how it was used and what job is was designed to do.

Both of these crafts, when well exercised, exemplify the dictum of modern design, "form follows function." Both crafts exhibit features that serve our discussion of forming Christians. Both crafts are known to the scriptures (Isa 64:8; Jer 18:3; Rom 9:21; Mal 3:2-3). When the image of the potter or silversmith is applied as it is in scripture to human life and human community, the potter, the shaper, is clearly understood to be God.

Formation can also be construed in ways that are more organic. Two more examples to consider: formation takes place in nature as water drips against stone. Over time the repetitive effect can be noticeable—slight indentation on a paving stone where water has dripped quietly upon it, or a pebble worn smooth by the tide and surf on the beach. Over great lengths of time, its effect can be dramatic—the Colorado River carving away at the desert, forming the Grand Canyon.

161

Formation, too, can take an intimate biological form as cell joins to cell in the female body and comes finally to birth—with an individual formed to carry on its place in its own biological niche. Scripture knows this too: Jeremiah's conviction in 1:5 and Isaiah's in 49:1 and also Psalm 22:9 and 71:6 come to mind. The references in the early church to baptismal fonts as "wombs" must surely draw upon this image. Our investigation in this year's institute is about the *purposing* and *re-purposing* (forming and reforming) not of clay or silver but human life.

In his poignant novel *The Once and Future King,*[1] T.H. White introduces us to the greatest knight in the world—and one invariably cast by Broadway and Hollywood as the perfect male form from head to toe—Sir Lancelot. But in White's book the chapter where we meet Lancelot is titled "Le Chevalier Mal Fete"—the ill-formed knight. His ill-formed physical appearance (described, as I recall, as being like a reflection in the bottom of a dented cooking pot) drives him on to reform himself into the perfect—or, as the story unfolds, nearly perfect knight. His tool for this formation was the "*ordo*" or pattern of Christian knighthood and chivalry.

For those who believe, with Tertullian, that Christians (like medieval knights) are made and not born, that is, that they are formed for a particular purpose beyond that which they share with all human beings, there are several often unspoken convictions that need to be made explicit. I have identified six for consideration: 1) God forms Christians; 2) God uses a Christian community to serve this purpose; 3) the Christian community uses its assemblies for this purpose; 4) Christian assemblies make specific choices about worship and culture to serve this purpose; 5) these choices reflect the community's fundamental convictions about who God is and where God is to be found; and 6) in an on-going process, God continues to form and reform Christians and their communities. I propose to look at each of these assertions in turn.

God forms Christians. This conviction is probably self-evident to Christians. However, when this conviction is in doubt, or called into question—for any reason—the result is destructive to Christian formation of individuals and the community itself. It can precipitate a crisis. Simon, the magician in Acts 8, is an example of such a tragic misunderstanding, as are Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. As these stories in Acts indicate, this misunderstanding was not a theoretical possibility for the first generation of Christians. It is much more than a theoretical possibility for

---

[1]T.H. White, *The Once and Future King* (London: Putnam, 1958).

Christians today. If it is not apparent that God is at work in forming Christians, then how can we have any confidence in any strategy that is employed to make this happen? My need to identify God as the potter and silversmith and former in the womb from scripture betrays my own uneasiness with how obvious the church currently makes this commitment. It is not always clear.

God uses a Christian community to serve this purpose. The primary purpose of a Christian community is not to celebrate endlessly and replicate itself. It is to live in the eschatological promise that our end reveals itself in the worship of Jesus Christ as he has asked to be remembered and in service to the neighbor. Among its purposes is the welcoming of the stranger. This welcome is not conditional. But it is also not the same as being joined to the community and being formed by its faith and practice. Formation is more than welcome. We know that God reveals himself through means. The primary means God employs for the shaping and purposing of individual Christians is a Christian community.

Here the scriptural story I have chosen is one that is usually used to proved the reverse of my point. The story I have in mind is Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8. The ingredients of the story are well known to all: distinguished Ethiopian minister of state is riding in his chariot. As he rides, he reads. He is reading from the prophet Isaiah. We surmise from this that he is already motivated and inquiring. Philip asks the catechetical question: do you understand? The official responds how can I—all alone? I need someone to explain. I need a community of faith and practice out of which to draw my understanding. Philip climbs in and begins to explain. The Ethiopian is moved by the catechetical experience to ask for baptism. Philip is moved by his readiness and provides baptism. A new Christian is made.

Because the time frame of this story is short (and the catechumenate appears so long to some) and the community is only represented by Philip (while the catechumenate involves so many as sponsors, catechists, etc.), many who suspect the methods employed by the catechumenate appeal to this story as a counter-proof to its methods. They conclude that all the Ethiopian has to do is ask. My own view is that all the requisite ingredients are present here for catechumenal formation. The Ethiopian has discovered or sought out a basic experience of the Word. He has found a teacher who can catechize and explain. He is baptized in water. He is joined to a community by the apostolic ministry of Philip.

The Christian community uses its assemblies for this purpose. While the community is gathered by the Spirit for the worship of God revealed

163

in Jesus Christ, this worship can be shaped to help form the newly evangelized and to reform those more practiced in the faith. It welcomes the uninitiated. It organizes its own life around retelling the story of Jesus. This retelling for the gathered assembly becomes a telling for the uninitiated. To the extent that its practices for telling the story are at odds with the surrounding culture, it is made noticeable or even conspicuous to the inquirer.

The pattern or *ordo* of the assembly is very important here. This is a place for repeated behavior, like a strength trainer doing "reps" (repetitions) with weights to build muscle. This is a place for confidence in the power of the story itself and the Christ at the heart of the story and the God that Christ points to. Novelty is a danger here. To the extent that the telling of the story is not recognizable as a retelling for the gathered assembly, the integrity of the enterprise can be clouded or all together lost. The community must know itself in order to be authentically welcoming. A community that is perceived as asking the question: "Who do you want us to be? Just tell us! We'll be it for you!" is a community of little interest to someone seeking the witness of a community to the reality around which it is committed and already organized. Note here that the Christian community does not only use the eucharistic assembly for formation. It must also rely on assemblies of special purpose as well—assemblies for study, prayer, story telling, service, and song. Sadly, many congregations lack these assemblies and are impoverished in their tools for formation by that lack.

Christian assemblies make specific choices about worship and culture to serve this purpose. Examples of these choices could include the church's long-standing decision to celebrate baptism at Easter (calendar); the church's choice of lectionary readings in Lent to complete the liturgical instruction of catechumens (lectionary and preaching); and the practice of admitting the newly baptized to the Easter/Sunday celebration of Eucharist. Each of these choices points to the fact that the Christian community, while retelling its fundamental story, has organized its repeated rehearsal of that story with a heart for those God is calling to and forming in faith.

These choices reflect the community's fundamental convictions about who God is and where God is to be found. That fundamental conviction is that God is to be found, uniquely, definitively, reliably in Jesus Christ and that Christ is to be found where he promised to be: in Word and sacrament. This means that while Christ may reveal himself elsewhere, the

Christian community is obligated in a special way to these meeting points and not to others.

Here we encounter a real challenge to the prevailing view of our present culture. George Lindbeck has characterized a basic orientation of modernity: a characterization of culture going much deeper than the typical characterization of this generational cohort or that.

> The structures of modernity press individuals to meet God first in the depths of their souls and then, perhaps, if they find something personally congenial, to become part of a tradition or join a church. Their actual behavior may not conform to this model, but it is the way they experience themselves. Thus the traditions of religious thought and practice into which Westerners are most likely to be socialized conceals from them the social origins of the conviction that religion is a highly private and individual matter. This pattern was already well established in American Protestantism by the nineteenth century.[2]

Is it any wonder that aggressive church growers today not only give new voice to this perspective as they describe "seekers": those who are looking to find, build upon, or find others who share the same deep personal experience. Or that they also replicate the patterns of nineteenth-century American and English religious revival as the way in which to form these "seekers." This makes sense to our culture. It makes only marginal sense in the context of catholic Christianity, where personal experience is always measured against God's mediated self-communication in history.

God continues to form and reform Christians and their communities. This continual formation and reformation is often seen in the interaction between worship and culture. Consider an ancient case study: The council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, where first-century Hebrew religious practice and first-century Gentile practice, the dominant culture outside of Jerusalem, are weighed in light of the overall purpose of forming community around Christ. The result is to begin to reform one pattern of community life into another pattern: from exclusively Jewish to Jewish and Gentile patterns.

Or consider this contemporary case study. Lent: is it Passiontide or Baptismtide? In the waning consciousness of Christian culture, and by this I mean a time so recent as many of our own childhoods, for the already baptized Lent was a strategic time to rehearse the passion of Christ in preparation for Easter. Yet over the present generation, in many church

---

[2]George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1984), 22.

165

bodies, it has become a time to prepare for Easter in another way—by catechizing the unbaptized and recatechizing the baptized.

Understanding these six assertions drives us back to the question to which we must return again and again. What do we mean by "Christian community" in this context? Who is it that forms Christian life? Who teaches the church's story? Who teaches the church's song? Who teaches the Church's discipline? An entire culture: Christendom? The church catholic? A denomination as church? A particular local community: congregation or parish?

Wherever one turns today, in the American context, the recognition that Christendom is a passing reality is to be found. Yet this recognition not withstanding, does anyone really want to be rid of Christendom? Do we not glory in the artifacts of Christendom? Do those who live in "high culture" really let go of its claims? Do those who live in "pop culture" really believe that culture could not become the next expression of Christendom, if only Christians would take it seriously enough?

Permit me to argue there are at least two moments in the eucharistic liturgy (and other liturgical forms centered in the Christian assembly) that bring us face to face with this struggle between worship and culture. They have already been identified by speakers and leaders of worship and commentators at this institute over the last two years. I mean the gathering rite (or rites) and the sending rite (or rites), as the introduction to *With One Voice* calls them.[3] I intend to look mainly at the gathering rite in this lecture and return to the sending rite in the next. In the Western culture and the Western rite, by which those of us here are largely formed, these two moments presume *transition*. Gathering presumes a transition from ungathered to gathered; from separate or isolated to joined and together. This makes most sense when a vision of Christianity, like that found in the New Testament, is posited, where Christian individuals or Christian households lived intermingled among persons who did not share their faith in Jesus Christ. This ordinary state was altered when these Christians came together around Word and sacrament in assembly. Their gathering constituted them as a conspicuous community within their dominant culture. Pliny's famous letter also gives evidence to this point of view: They come together—gather—before dawn on the first day of the week.[4]

---

[3] *With One Voice* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 8–9.

[4] Pliny, *Letters,* 10:96. Latin text with English translation in *Pliny,* ed. W. Melmoth and W.M.L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) 2:400–405.

This is when the community becomes visible in the culture. At other times, individual Christians could be visible in their conspicuous ethical practices in the market place and forum. What rituals they used to make this transition from ungathered to gathered, we have not directly inherited.

By the time of the *Ordines Romani* the "gathering rite" (in this context, anachronistically so-called) had already become an "entrance rite."[5] It is from this Roman "entrance rite" pattern that our "gathering rite" in the contemporary mass seems more likely to be derived. It was not so much designed to ritualize the gathering of a scattered people from out of a dominant culture as it was designed to ritualize the arrival and entrance into an already formed community of that community's officials, ritual president, and assistants.

In the case of the earliest Roman *Ordines* the presumption behind the gathering rite is that the whole city of Rome is understood to be a Christian entity. Its bishop moves from one part of the city to another—from one great basilica to another—in a stational liturgy. Parts of the civic population wait for the bishop to arrive and enter a space in which they are already "gathered." A glimpse of this pattern can also been seen in the descriptive accounts of Egeria in and around Jerusalem.[6] At least one pattern described is for the community to gather long before the liturgy proper began and long before the presiding and assisting officials arrived—or deigned to put in an appearance with the pilgrims and local devotees. We might note in passing that Egeria describes the important role that music—singing together—has in making the "gathering" of the local faithful and the visiting pilgrims actually happen so that a community is formed and coalesces.

Waiting in the nave of a great church, or in our case here at this university, of an even greater "chapel,"[7] ordinarily takes place prior to the entrance of the officials. But not today! Today you found a different presumption in place and a different ritual pattern employed, a pattern drawn from the recovery of the catechumenate. The work leading to the recovery and reform of the catechumenate and its attendant rites in the

---

[5]M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen-âge* (Louvain, Belgium: Specilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1951–1956).

[6]John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1981).

[7]This remark refers to the size of the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University, one of the largest collegiate chapels in the world.

Roman Church in the course of the last two generations has reclaimed a concern for *real* gathering of catechumens and the faithful rather than mere entry of the officials.

This phenomenon of gathering or being gathered, which you tasted in the liturgy just celebrated, illustrates the care and the new emphasis on transition from a dominant cultural reality to another reality in faith. (By way of footnote, these two realities are not completely disjoined or separable. An example from Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine* illustrates this. While we may be taught to drive our cars on the right in the United States, when we visit Britain, it becomes a matter of life and death, our own and others', to drive our cars on the left. We can obey the rules of both cultures. But we exercise our obedience in only one context at a time.[8])

Some years ago a scientist spoke to me about the strange phenomenon she experienced when she came to her Lutheran congregation for worship. She said it was as though she had to change—not hats—but heads. She had to adopt a new way of thinking while she was in the assembly from when she was in the laboratory. This speaks of genuine transition.

The gathering rites of the Christian churches of our day are places where the uncomfortability with the cultural alliance (so-called Christendom) can been seen to be in evidence. Not all churches express this uncomfortablitiy in the same way or resolve it with the same remedies. The ritualization of gathering found in American Pentacostalism is not identical to that found in American Epsicopalianism, American Lutheranism, American Roman Catholicism, the American Free Church traditions, etc. The experimentation and redesign of these rites in and of itself are signs of ferment on this question.

This ferment is evident even in the forming and reforming of architectural spaces for Christian worship. Contrast the little white church on the prairie of the nineteenth century with the churches being designed and built today. The little white church on the prairie, no matter what color it was or how large it was, was usually built without any significant narthex or foyer. My own first parish church in rural Wisconsin had a flight of outdoor stairs leading to the front door—which had to be opened slowly so as not to hit the aisle end of the back pew! Its architecture spoke of a community that already lived in a gathered state, protected by geography, language, and cultural practices.

.

---

[8]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 18.

Contemporary church design aims at providing an ample community space between the parking lot and the space for worship. Room to gather, meet, make introductions, hang coats, have coffee, sign up for this or that activity, undress and redress small children points to a different relationship to the surrounding culture. This new architectural component speaks of real transition and real gathering.[9]

In what is perhaps an unexpected turn of affairs, the new ecumenical environment in which we find ourselves as Christian people makes the categories of American denominational identity less and less relevant or useful to untangling the issues of worship, culture, and catholicity. Closer relationships among denominational churches have moved us or are moving us through several phases on this question. Full communion among denominational churches means that no negative judgment on the Christian quality of a church is needed in order to account for differences in practice. Its corollary should mean we are largely free from the need to homogenize and blend practice among denominational churches (although we may find it desirable to do that anyway). We are, or should be, free to establish and maintain or even re-establish clear parameters for practices which individual church bodies may choose for themselves. (In some respects this puts me in mind of sixteenth and seventeenth century German church orders—*Kirchenordnungen*[10]—which were absolutely binding within their own political territory and territorial church. These orders were not necessarily regarded as the only standard for Christian church life. It is the discipline and practice within each ecclesiastical reality that is the measure of integrity—not its similarity or dissimilarity to other church bodies. The drive to be all things to all people in every place—to be relevant—may in fact not be the most promising or fruitful strategy for our time. Not along ago a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voiced a similar insight to me when he stopped me after a very carefully "blended" liturgy and said that he thought it was about time we made up our mind as a denominational church what we would do and do that well; that we would focus on our contribution and leave other contributions to other contributors.

---

[9]The space utilized by the 1999 Institute of Liturgical Studies at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Valparaiso is a fine example of this new architectural expression.

[10]A.L. Richter, ed. *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop: B Degraff, 1967; [1st ed. Weimar, 1846]) and Emil Selig, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 15 vols. (Leipzig: O. R. Riesland; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1902–1955).

The great American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, made his home for a time and pioneered his design philosophy in Oak Park, Illinois, only a few blocks from where I live. Wright is credited with having said that every one of his houses was a missionary! In his characteristic modesty he meant, of course, that they were missionaries for his design principles. But even in Wright's case the houses did not spring without development and experimentation from his brow. Wright populated a neighborhood with houses, some that look very Victorian, eclectic, and just plain odd to us now, before accomplishing the beginnings of the "prairie style." Finally, what endured of his vision is not the houses that were most appealing to their owners or their neighbors but those which exhibited an integrity over, against, and in the midst of the surrounding architectural environment—dare I say culture? In his analysis of a postliberal age, George Lindbeck also observed:

> The general point is that, provided a religion stresses service rather than domination, it is likely to contribute more to the future of humanity if it preserves its own distinctiveness and integrity than if it yields to the homogenizing tendencies associated with liberal experiential-expressivism.

> This conclusion is paradoxical: Religious communities are likely to be practically relevant in the long run to the degree that they do not first ask what is either practical or relevant, but instead concentrate on their own intratextual outlooks and forms of life.[11]

Christians in North America are already retraining themselves to function in this way. After the seventh or eighth visit to the Episcopal Church across the street from our apartment in Oak Park, my wife and I were surrounded one morning following the Eucharist by six or seven members of the congregation. They earnestly and hopefully invited us to join the congregation. Speaking through our unease and embarrassment, we said, "We are so sorry; we are Lutherans and are already members of a church." To which one replied, "Oh, that's all right! I am a Presbyterian." Another said, "Sure, I am a Methodist, and my husband here is a Catholic." Still another said, "I am charismatic."

Perhaps with Joshua we will come to the point where denominational churches will find the freedom and courage to say: "Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Josh 24:15).

---

[11]Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 128.

170

That is to say, drive on the right when you are with us. We will drive on the left when we are with you. Let the label actually describe the faith and practice of each denominational church. This might look something like what multiple rites within one church look like today, or what multiple religious orders within the Roman Church look like—at least to an outsider.

This drives me to believe that the project or opportunity for the next generations of Christians is being formed and reformed to make a peculiar and conspicuous witness not on the horizon of denominational churches, but in the arena of a culture losing its once ostensible Christian presuppositions and trappings. This needs to be a thoroughgoing forming and reforming. The liturgy can help. Its repetitive patterns of gathering and sending on the first day of each week, its rehearsal of the repetitive proclamation of the story of Jesus Christ in changing contexts of understanding, its insistence that Christ is present in Word and sacrament—really, personally, and effectively present—are all ways of re-organizing life around God in the midst of this culture or that.

If the culture can no longer be relied upon to form Christians, and denominational churches are not the primary locus for this activity (yet), then the local worshiping assembly seems to be the real focus. I believe that is true with one caveat.

In the last three years the work of the institute has been gathered under three concepts: worship, culture, and catholicity. We have talked some about worship and culture. I would like to take just a moment to hold up "catholicity." Vincent of Lerins' dictum that what is catholic is that which has been believed always, by everyone, everywhere, is a useful measure.[12] It identifies "extent" by its appeal to "everyone" and "everywhere." It identifies duration by the "always." Under these categories, the reference to "everyone" can easily be understood as a reference to what is now often called "inclusiveness." The truth of the matter, however, is that understood in its historical context, this dictum was not advocating general "inclusiveness" or openness. It was instead an "exclusionary principle" meant to keep certain ideas and the practices and persons associated with them not *within* (included) but out of (excluded from) the Christian assembly.

---

[12]Vincent of Lerins, *"quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus."*

The Ecumenical Creeds add questions of content to this principle.[13] There are bounds, at least, beyond which the catholic faith cannot be stretched. The Athanasian Creed and its rude assertions that "This is the catholic faith ..." is a reminder of this. Every local community must test its practices against the catholic content of the faith. To do this the local experience is not enough and must be balanced by a community that embraces many local expressions as recognizable forms of this catholic faith. Those Christians who are committed to catholic Christianity understand that to the extent the liturgy forms us as Christians by its working on individuals and a community over time, it also reforms those individuals and communities—that is to say us—to meet the challenges of faith lived together in our time. God is preparing us to live without the scaffolding of Christendom to support us. While God uses our poor assemblies to form Christians, he is reforming all of us and the church itself.

[13]These are "The Three Chief Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith which are Commonly Use in the Church," as designated in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 17. They include the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.