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# Development of Worship Skills

GEORGE W. HOYER

*This article continues the series in the "Reading Programs in Theology" offered under the sponsorship of the Department of Continuing Education of Concordia Seminary (see CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, Oct. '66, Jan. '67, April '67, Sept. '67, Dec. '67). The series is designed to provide an overview of an area of theology along with a recommended bibliography. Readers are encouraged to obtain the books for individual or group study. The present article was prepared by Prof. George Hoyer, professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary.*

Enrollees in the "Reading Programs in Theology" are entitled to purchase the books listed in the article at a 15 percent discount price from the seminary store. If you have not enrolled in the program, please send the \$2.00 enrollment fee, along with your name and address, to the Office of Continuing Education, Concordia Seminary, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63105. The enrollment fee is a one-time cost. This article introduces a new approach for purchasing the recommended books. Whereas formerly a letter listing the books and prices available from the seminary store was sent to CTM subscribers after the article had appeared, the data has now been incorporated into the article. All the books mentioned in the article are available to enrollees at the discount mentioned above. Send your order to The Seminary Store, Concordia Seminary, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63105. Should you desire to order any volumes in the "Ecumenical Studies in Worship" series or "Studies in Ministry and Worship" series mentioned in the article, the seminary store will send you a listing of all books in both series plus prices for the individual volumes in the series. Payment should accompany all orders.

ROBERT CONRAD  
 Director of Continuing Education

A review of bibliographic material in the areas of liturgy and worship at once requires both a definition of terms and a selection of accents. A choice in the direction of liturgiology might appear to be more academically profound; but an accent on worship would probably be more theologically sound and probably more practical for most.

The point is that worship obviously comes before liturgy. It has more than a chronological, a historical, priority over liturgy; it has a priority of importance. Worship is the word which describes the actual, existential, operative relationship of communication between God and man and man and God. Liturgy in its broader sense provides the media for the corporate expression of this relationship. Liturgy might also include words and forms for use in the individual expression of worship, but its principal accent is on the corporate. There is no issue of comparative worth between corporate and individual worship. All Christian worship must be aware of its corporate relationship. Or, more fundamentally, every Christian must be aware of his relationship to every other Christian in the body of Christ. The existence of the one Head, Jesus Christ, makes very real the necessity of that understanding. The contrast here is between worship and liturgy. Obviously, there can be no real liturgy without worship. It is only when the people of God gather to worship God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit that liturgy really exists. Liturgy is

actually something done, just as worship is action. The pastor who continues to study in this area, therefore, is primarily concerned with growth in the ability to worship personally, and with the growth in the ability to stir up the people of God to more active worship. He is concerned with a growing understanding of liturgiology as it contributes to the ability to strengthen the worship life of a parish people.

All this suggests that the choice of area and accent is not so simple as was first implied. The fact that Christians are a community indicates that a survey of their worship necessarily involves a consideration of their corporate communication with God and God's communication with the corporate community. This would say that a consideration of worship ultimately involves a consideration of the history and development of liturgy, because only in liturgy can corporate worship be expressed.

Every pastor in every parish needs repeated reminder that the doing of his worship is really the beating heart of his faith and Christian life, and the doing of their individual worship and their corporate devotion is the beating heart of the community of Christians organized as a congregation. It is fundamental, therefore, and vital that the pastor utilize his knowledge of worship and of liturgiology to the end of *worshiping* and the *doing* of the liturgy. It is basic in his approach to the study of the bibliographic material, whether this be done in detail as an expression of a concerted effort at continuing education or whether it be done simply with a single monograph at hand, that he see his objective as a growth in the action of worship and an advance in his ability to lead others in the development of their worship life.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD

This awareness has obviously been the outstanding characteristic of the literary production and the new developments in the area of worship. The most publicized evidence of this new articulation is apparent in the directives of Vatican II for the reform of Roman Catholic worship. The effectiveness of this accent is excitingly apparent in individual responses such as that reported in the *National Catholic Reporter* in which a young couple, dismayed at the "dismal baptismal" liturgy being conducted in their local parish, decided to baptize their child themselves. They developed a liturgy expressive of their understanding of the grace of God at work in the water and the significance of reception of this child by the people of God nearest in relationship to it. There are repeated instances of growing recognition of the people's part in worship. Within Roman Catholic circles this has come about through a minor revolution as laity and clergy both fight with and assist one another in a developing sense of the importance of the people of God in relation to the ordained clergy. Within Lutheranism and also within Protestantism the same accent is developing. There is on the one hand a renewed insistence that the ordained clergy actually be the priests of God toward the people of God; on the other a clarified understanding that the priesthood of all believers is not an excuse for individualism but is a clear statement of mutuality amongst the members of the brotherhood and of responsibility toward the God who creates Christianhood.

The "liturgical movement" no longer strikes the ears of many as an accent on vestments and rubrics and ancient phrase-

ology. The liturgy has become the work of the people of God, and the movement is that people's movement. The liturgical movement is in the vanguard of the accent on the church's servanthood and its responsibility to give itself to the needy of the world.

It has been noted by many that a coincidental relationship exists between the evincing of a deep interest in worship by the pastor and other members of a congregation and a parish life that expresses itself in service to its community. What is happening, evidently, is that in its worship the congregation is actively, deliberately committing itself to God. Having taken that step, every member is involved in the responsibility of follow-through. There is more at work. Whenever a congregation learns to mean more and more of what it says to God, it hears itself preaching to itself more and more clearly the Word of God. There is a feedback of Word in every act of worship. Add to these factors the new accent on, appreciation of, and participation in the Lord's Supper. It proves itself to be what it is—a gracious food that builds life even as it gives forgiveness and salvation.

Lutheranism specifically and Protestantism in general has felt the new liturgical movement as a "thrill of life along her keel." The whole ship stirs. Its influence is seen most clearly in the best architecture but is apparent even in the less than best. The decision in the major Lutheran bodies in the United States and Canada to push ahead for a new hymnal with new forms and a new rubrical approach to worship and to do it in a joint relationship with one another is truly a liturgical movement. Moreover, it is a high-church movement in

the best definition—"a high sense of the Church and a high sense of worship." The deepening of the sense of servanthood on the part of congregations and individuals is also becoming apparent and can be explained as part of the follow-through of the deeper worship life. All this can be said even in the face of repeated instances of reluctance to advance beyond anything that has been standard for the last 50 years in any aspect of worship or of life.

The book notes that follow are of three types. Some are references to books in which more detailed bibliographic listings and surveys of developments in this area may be located by those interested in depth study or an overview of the literature. Others add up to a grouping of books that the average worshipping pastor with the average background in liturgics and worship provided by our seminaries, say 15 to 25 years ago, but who has not read much in the area since his graduation, might find helpful. Others, of interest particularly to the clergy of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, are books in the general areas of worship and liturgy that have been printed in the last few years by Concordia Publishing House. They indicate the wide range and the increasing helpfulness of materials that have been developed within the church body that produces this journal and argue for the increasing acceptance of the importance of worship and the value of liturgy.

Where should the pastor whom this article is imagining begin in order to develop a steadier, strengthened heartbeat of worship for himself and the congregation he serves? Ought he not first of all take stock of his own worship life?

We shy away from any kind of Dow

Jones worship average that is to be expected in the pastor's life, but all agree that a "How Now Doth Thou?" analysis is always a present necessity. How about buying:

*The Daily Office*, ed. Herbert Lindemann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965, \$10.00).

The price is adequate to force a decision as to whether the pastor is serious about his liturgical movement. But this is a buy—a credit to Concordia Publishing House (a prizewinner in fact)—recommended by at least one Roman user in the *National Catholic Reporter* as just what ought to happen to their Breviary to make it more helpful for today's priest. But the editor has designed this book for use not only for "the religious" but for all Christian men and women—odd to think of them in the other half of that *fundamentum dividendi*: the "nonreligious." But it is accurate to observe that those who would grow in their religiousness, their spirituality, their human response to the grace God gives must come to grips with the discipline of personal devotion. It is logical for children of the tradition of the church catholic—Western section—to make a serious experiment with the regular use of the Divine Office. All those Hours are given in the Appendix. But it is equally logical—and more feasible—for the Lutheran to concentrate on morning and evening prayer as Luther accented the adapted forms of Matins and Vespers. And they are the chief content of this book, arranged for easy use by one, or better by two, or best by a group, for each day. Of particular value are the many translations of ancient Latin and Greek hymns traditional for the Hours. (It is

possible to select tunes so that all these hymns can be sung.)

The prayers for each day provide a rich source for the pastor's task of leading in prayer, and the Scripture selections and psalms are most helpful Biblical pericopes to accent the church year thrust for each week. The suggestion that one psalm in Matins and one in Vespers be used for an entire week was determined only by space requirements and can easily be altered by another scheme for additional psalms for each day. It is also recognized that additional prayers are surely needed—but what is here provided should give impetus for improved *ex tempore* prayers. A great task has been achieved by a good editor, and faithful use of this volume should produce better pastors.

*Minister's Prayer Book*, edited by John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959, \$4.50), is a well known and much used book, providing not only prayers and a suggested sequence for their use but also devotional readings of a type of particular pertinence to the work of the pastor.

Those who wish to take a running start from farther back into the race of a prayer life might find a book like *Teach Yourself to Pray* by Stephen F. Winward (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961, out of print) useful. There is a helpfully developed "how to" section and then a month's suggested pattern for morning and evening praying. The goal of the procedure is more than the ability to read good prayers—to pray both others' prayers and one's own.

An even simpler suggestion for making a beginning or a way to introduce another attempt at a prayer life involving both in-

habitants of the parsonage now that the kids are grown ("Here we go again, dear!") would be *A Diary of Private Prayer* by John Baillie (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, \$1.50). Take it as it reads if you are working on your singular worship. A simple shift to the plural brings in your wife—and the teen-age friends still living and praying around the house. There are enough places in these freshly phrased prayers for the mornings and evenings of 31 days that force the "pray-ers" into individually expressed petitions to develop the habit and the ability in the family group for the personal expression of prayer that is a vital part of every prayer life.

This obviously leaves great strata of great books of prayer and on prayer unexcavated. But before moving on, particular mention should be made of an excellent approach to the development of the worship life in the family. The book is *Family Worship Idea Book* by Edward C. May (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965, \$1.00). The preface claims at once that this is "not primarily a devotional book, but it is a book to encourage and stimulate more creative devotions in the family." And that's the best kind. This is an excellent, briskly detailed guide for the stimulation of the kind of pertinent, involving worship that will help make the living presence of Christ realized in the home. It will raise up children who know the joy of worship and who will be glad when you say to them that it is time for family prayers. *Responsive Table Prayers for Families*, prepared by Harry N. Huxhold (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964, \$ .50), is a good companion booklet to make the saying of grace gracious. Hux-

hold's *Bless We the Lord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963, \$2.00) is another of his helpful approaches to involving family worship in the great cycles of the church year and into an awareness of the fact that we worship with all the people of God.

The Family Worship Series produced by Concordia (*God and Your Family*, \$1.00, by L. Vogel; *God's Wonderful World of Words*, out of print, by Charles S. Mueller; *Design for Family Living*, \$1.00, by Roy Blumhorst, and *New Courage for Daily Living*, \$1.00, by Martin Franzmann) is slanted with an aim (that should be applauded) at various age levels and at family mixtures that demand special materials. They reflect, however, the accent on word intake which so frequently minimizes the amount of specific worshiping response that ought to be a major element in family as well as personal devotion. This presentation of meditation material is the basic shape and (it should be recognized and valued) the chosen premise of the reissued *Family Altar* by F. W. Herzberger (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1936, 1964, \$5.95) and of *Adventures with God* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966, \$3.50), both of which were edited by Harry Huxhold. Whenever a definition of worship is given which simply equates the whole Christian life with worship, adequate differentiation is often not made among the various lines of force we include under the term worship, and usually it is the movement Godward focused in adoration that is diminished.

The direction of responsibility and growth moves from the personal, through the family, and into the corporate worship of the church. Here the many possibilities require a selection of favorites. Many of

the major works contain the kind of adequate bibliography that will serve the scholar.

*The Lutheran Liturgy* by Luther D. Reed (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947, \$10.50). In the revised edition the bibliography runs to 22 pages. This book is itself a basic text known to every Lutheran seminarian of recent years and of primary value to any who are not as yet familiar with it. In addition to the detailed history of worship, Reed provides a commentary on the service and a study of the propers for each Sunday together with comparison tables of the propers in the *Roman Missal* and the *American Book of Common Prayer*. The use of the *Service Book* results in various divergences from *The Lutheran Liturgy*, but the differences are just frequent enough to keep the LCMS pastor from becoming slipshod in his use of the tables.

*The Shape of the Liturgy* by Dom Gregory Dix (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945, \$8.40, discount price). Here the history of the liturgy through the Reformation period is handled famously by an Anglican. Some of his views have been subsequently questioned, but the book has done much for many to move them to "do their liturgy."

*The Worship of the Church* by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1952, and subsequent printings, \$1.75). This is a very useful book aimed at interested laymen and therefore at ordained laymen also. It develops an appreciation of worship through a study of the service in the Book of Common Prayer. A helpful bibliography is included.

*Worship* by Evelyn Underhill (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936, \$1.95). This volume is in paperback in the Harper

Torchbook series. It is still (the appearance of hackles at this point is indicative of the fact that many do debate me) the best book for a real deepening of an understanding of the meaning and significance of worship in the lives of those who have been reared in a Lutheran frame of worship reference. There is a great deal of stress on the Eucharist, and the impact of the Word in Scripture is called "the completing opposite" to the sacramental stress. The study begins with worship in its broadest sense, including all mankind in its activity. But soon the focus is sharply Christian. There is no better treatment of the necessity of involving the whole man in the worship of the Christian God, who Himself took on man's nature. People use the word "mystic" in trying to undercut Underhill, but as learned as she was in mystical theology, in *Worship* she is talking about a God who reaches to man in the stuff of life and in the incarnation of the Son of God and the means of grace. The greatest value of a friendly study of this book will be the realization of the fact that the apex of worship is adoration and that "he who deliberately kneels is rewarded by an increase of worshiping love." From that understanding an entirely new approach to parish worship can be structured.

*Liturgy Coming to Life* by John A. T. Robinson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, \$1.45). This book was copyrighted by A. R. Mowbray and Company in 1960 and is here reprinted in paperback in spite of the fact that "the liturgical revival has moved on considerably in the past ten years." But its description of "how liturgy can come to life in both senses so that the Holy Communion may

occupy its central and creative position in the common life of a community" is as stimulating for any parish situation today as it is reflective of the experiments conducted at Clare College, Cambridge, from 1951 to 1959.

There are two series of paperback studies in the broad area of worship and liturgy that are worth purchase and study. The one is "Ecumenical Studies in Worship," edited by J. G. Davies and A. Raymond George and published by John Knox Press, Richmond, Va. The other is "Studies in Ministry and Worship," edited by G. W. H. Lampe and David M. Paton and published by SCM Press, Ltd., London.

In this connection specific recognition should be given to publications by Concordia Publishing House over the last years that lend considerable distinction to that house and supply useful helps to the pastor who leads worshipers in worship.

*Ceremony and Celebration* by Paul H. D. Lang (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965, \$4.95).

*What an Altar Guild Should Know* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964, \$3.75, [filmstrip available]).

When these volumes were first published, there were voices that felt an opportunity had been missed to set a new course for worship in the Lutheran Church, voices that felt an old, rubric-tentacled approach to the liturgy was being advocated that missed the chance to bring "liturgy to life." That opportunity remains. The new directions need to be mapped. But these volumes dealt realistically with the situation as it still exists in a great number of the churches to which they were directed. There still remained the necessity of stating clearly the old, the traditional, the inherited

that must continue to be the premises out of which new developments can be built. In a recent article in the *Christian Century* (Feb. 21, 1968) James F. White wrote:

Responsible experimentation leads to the building up of the church; irresponsible experimentation tears it down. A more important distinction is that between responsible experimentation, carefully prepared and matured, and irresponsible experimentation, lacking such preparation, often premature, carelessly conceived, inconsequential. But how do you tell when experimentation is based on proper preparation? I would suggest three criteria by which to judge effective preparation: that experimentation be historically informed, theologically reasoned and pastorally relevant.

These volumes remain effective aids in one aspect of building that necessary preparation.

*God and Our Parish*, edited by Roland H. Seboldt (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963, \$5.00), is another volume that supplies a need. When a congregation really begins to pray, it needs resources to help it pray together. This book set out to provide such help. It gives patterns and prayers for the many groups that meet together in the contemporary parish.

A sample of another type of resource is *The Year of the Lord* by Theodore J. Kleinhans (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967, \$2.25). Chaplain Kleinhans speaks with many pleasing insights about the customs and ceremonies of the church year and traces some of the interesting details of its growth. This area at once opens a wide field of volumes that would merit study, but here again if the basic appreciation of what the church year can do for lining up our worshipping days



in meaningful sequence has not been awakened, a beginning might well be made here — in pastors or in other people of God.

*The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* by Ernest B. Koenker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966, \$2.95), a paperback reprint of a volume that helped the Roman Church decide what to do at Vatican II, is still an excellent vantage point from which to see the real significance of the accents and approaches of the liturgical stress in today's church. For an even more pertinent overview of "The Protestant Worship Revival and the Lutheran Liturgical Movement" the chapter by Arthur Carl Piepkorn in *The Liturgical Renewal of the Church*, Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960, \$3.25), should be given high priority.

One of the best ways to check out one's reservations about the general liturgical movement of the whole church is to see the way it is being appraised and advocated by those church denominations which have

long been suspicious of it all. *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* by J.-J. von Allmen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, \$6.50) is something of a revelation of the shift among top-level Reformed theologians, and at the same time a clear picture of the vast spread of the one holy church. It helps Lutherans see where they stand in relation to the vast company of fellow redeemed who gather to praise the Lamb who was slain.

If a review article such as this begins with the problems of where to start, it finds an even larger problem in where to stop. So much that is obviously basic and should be called to the attention of those who are first beginning to run the bases must be left unmentioned; so much that is no longer of prime interest to veterans ought to be mentioned. In any case, stepping up to any of the volumes that deal with the very heart of the life of the church can result in the transplant of a new joy and new vigor in the worship life of the church, its pastor, and its people.

St. Louis, Mo.