

COMMUNIO

a theological journal

Published by the Protestant Theological Faculty
of Charles University in Prague

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Typography: Petr Kadlec

Printed by Arch, Brno

Administration: Janina Moskalová (cv-adm@etf.cuni.cz)

Annual subscription (for three issues): **30 €** or the equivalent
single copy: **10 €**

Please make the payment to our account to:

Bank name: Komerční banka

Bank address: Komerční banka

Spálená 51

110 00 Praha 1

Czech Republic

Bank identification code: SWIFT (BIC): KOMBCZPPXXX

IBAN (International Bank Account Number):

CZ4501000000511087550287

Account no.: 51-1087550287/0100

Account name: Univerzita Karlova v Praze

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P. O. BOX 529

115 55 Praha 1

Czech Republic

Subscriptions will be renewed automatically every year unless
canceled by January 1st of the year in question.

Cheques, orders, subscriptions and all business correspondence
should be addressed to:

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(ISSN 0010-3713)

VIATORUM

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The authors of the articles herein published are responsible for their contents, and while the editors have presented their ideas for discussion, they need not agree with them.

Communio viatorum is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, IL 60606, E-mail: atla@atla.com, WWW: <http://www.atla.com>.

LITURGY AND PROTESTANTISM

Liturgy and the protestant tradition seem to be in a love and hate relation. The return of the Reformation to the Holy Scriptures, as announced in the well known *Sola Scriptura*, included also a stronger or weaker hesitation towards ritual elements in the worship and towards ceremonial aspects of Christian life. The Word of God was to be preached, which especially in Calvinist circles led to the consequence that everything else than the sermon was of a lesser value. Too much space for the aesthetic part of Christian worship would only distract the soul from the true content of the gospel, which was about the relation between the individual and God. Liturgy got the label of something dangerous that by its ritualisation of this relation between God and the soul smuggled in certain elements of automatism without requiring the intentions of the human subject. In this discussion it became linked to notions as framing, lack of authenticity, forcing or even magic.

In the time of the scientific worldview and its ambition to explain everything in terms of causality, the aversion in Protestantism to liturgy got another boost. In the world of the laws of nature the sacred character of the God's presence in the world became a part of the world of the fairytales about fictitious characters and events. Miracles were to be explained by proper scientific research. Christian faith could not be a part of modernity if it did not accept the findings of objective science. Liturgy as a celebration of the mysterious relation between God and humankind got associated with the rituals of tribes in the wilderness of Africa or Asia, where the light of knowledge had not shone yet. Western civilisation had reached a higher stage of development, which had to be spread to the dark continents as well.

The key to the objective explanation of the world was to be the word in its alleged potential to describe processes, events and relation in an exact way. The word became an exponent of the claim that everything around us had its rationality, which waited to be discovered by humankind. Moreover, this verbal reality in its predictability and efficiency was to be opponent to the unreliable word of sacredness and spiritual experience. Many Protestants knew this language:

the Word had to be preached, because it was able to unveil the sins in the world, and the liturgical experience had to be kept to a minimum.

Later developments in the 20th century – most significantly ecumenical experiences – led to a different attitude in more liberal Protestant circles. In the environment of increasing sensitivity for the richness of Christian traditions a new interest emerged for the ways how in other churches the act of God's redemption of humankind was celebrated. A broad movement for liturgical renewal spread as an ecumenical platform for a new understanding of the several aspects of worship. In countries of Western Europe and North America, where the churches could freely express themselves, the activities of the liturgical movement got a different shape than in Central and Eastern Europe. In the first countries liturgical renewal was often related to a new understanding of the public role of the church. In the context of e. g. the peace and human rights movement in the churches during the 1970s and 1980s liturgy was discovered as not only as a means to deepen spirituality, but also to express within the boundaries of the Christian worship certain political concerns.

In Central and Eastern Europe the interest for liturgy in Protestant circles was inevitably coloured by the lack of freedom for the churches in the public space. In the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren this resulted in a situation where those who called for a critical voice of the church against the communist oppression, rejected a broader interest in liturgy as an escape from the real questions to an artificial world of ritual experiences.

In this context it could happen that a Protestant congregation from the Netherlands visiting its partner congregation in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s had a genuine dilemma when it came to gifts. The mere existence of a network of partner contacts between congregations on both sides of the Iron Curtain meant a small crack in the political division between East and West. On one occasion representatives of a Dutch congregation decided to bring a candle as a sign of the relation with the Czech congregation. The candle to the Dutch was a symbol of the shared experience of God's grace in the world, taken from the liturgy where it symbolised the light of Christ. It was given as a gift from the heart of the liturgy.

The reaction on the gift was unexpected. The Czech partners did not show a sign of enthusiasm about the candle, but responded rather embarrassed. Later the pastor of the Czech congregation explained to his Dutch colleague why they did not show a sign of joy about the gift. The candle is a symbol of liturgy, which the Czechs wanted as simple as possible. No signs of rituals should be present during the assembly of the congregation, because all concentration should be on the Word of God. “Nur das Wort!,” the Czech pastor underlined, and nothing that could distract from that. The candle never appeared in the church, but was put in a cupboard to be forgotten as a sign of confusion of tongues.

This issue of *Communio Viatorum* is dedicated to the confusion in the understanding of liturgy in Protestant traditions. As such the discussion starts as a reflection about the situation in mainline Czech Protestantism. The Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (Evangelická církev českobratrská), which is the largest non-Catholic church in the Czech Republic, began as a union of a smaller Lutheran church and a more sizeable Reformed tradition. The merger took place in 1918, shortly after the declaration of independence of Czechoslovakia. In the course of time the reformed identity took the upper hand in most of the congregations. Today only a few of the approx. 200 congregations practice the Lutheran tradition.

The liturgical renewal of the 1960s and the following decades, which affected many churches in Western Europe, left its traces also in Czech Protestantism. In the 1970s new hymnbooks and collections of liturgies for worship were published. Finally, a new translation of the Holy Scripture was completed by two ecumenical commissions from several churches, including the Roman Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, the liturgical renewal in Czech Protestantism of the 1970s took place in the political context of the decades after the Prague Spring of 1968. These years saw a polarization of the churches – especially the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. On the one hand, there were those who decided to concentrate primarily on the church, pastoral care and theology, and to give up activities with a potentially critical political nature in order to avoid confrontation with the communist regime. On the other hand, the position

could be found that because of the witness of the gospel the church or its representatives had also to raise their voice in the political arena, especially when human rights were violated by the regime.

The liturgical reform in those years was mainly inspired by the first position. It was part of an effort to build the church in politically difficult circumstances by stressing the ecumenical, historical, and rich traditions of the Church from the first centuries of its existence. From the other side, however, this was seen as an escape manoeuvre away from the context the church had to face under the communist regime to an idealized world of forms and rituals without concrete reality. The church had to concentrate on that reality by developing a language that was accessible to normal people. It had to be a civil interpretation of the gospel. In this spirit many songs were written or translated that had to be accompanied by instruments other than the traditional organ, e.g. the guitar. The civil character of these songs, often in the line of Afro-American spirituals, was reflected in the use of the words and the melodies. Moreover, the texts often alluded to the notions of freedom and justice, which were lacking in Czechoslovak society. These songs had to be the answer to the liturgical aspirations of the other party within the church.

The discussion in Czech Protestantism is reflected in two articles. The first one is written by Jaroslav Vokoun, pastor in Domažlice, a town in the hills of Southern Bohemia. He describes the development concerning liturgy in Czech Protestantism during the 20th century. The second article is an interview with two other pastors of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, Tomáš Trusina and Tomáš Drobík. They represent different positions on the issue of liturgy.

The third article "Reading the Word of God Together: The Revised Common Lectionary and the Unity of Christians" brings in the question of the broader ecumenical community. David Holeton, who teaches pastoral theology at the Hussite Theological Faculty in Prague, analyses the complicated development and the ecumenical importance of the common lectionary, which today is used in many churches in the world. A significant part of the contribution of Holeton is based on his experiences in several commissions working on liturgical issues. He was the Chair of the Consultation on Common Texts and is presently Secretary of the English Language Liturgical

Consultation and President of Societas Liturgica. Holeton was a part of the development of the *Revised Common Lectionary* from its beginnings at Washington DC in 1978.

One of the main problems in the discussion concerning liturgy, rituals, religious experience etc. is whether our concepts are accurate and whether we agree on their meaning. This is the subject of the fourth article in this issue, which is otherwise indirectly related to the main theme of Liturgy and Protestantism. Burcht Pranger, medievalist from Amsterdam, discusses the difference in the concept of (civilized) religion we use since Schleiermacher on the one hand and the concept of medieval theologians like Abelard and Bernard on the other. His conclusion is not only that the two are worlds apart, but also that we do not have methods at our disposal to come to a closer understanding of the medieval way of thinking about religion.

We hope that this special issue will help to understand the discussion about liturgy especially in the Czech context, within the wider historical and ecumenical framework.

Peter Morée

ANZEICHEN LITURGISCHER BEWEGUNGEN IM TSSCHECHISCHEN PROTESTANTISMUS

Jaroslav Vokoun, Domažlice

Um den historischen Ausgangspunkt der reformatorischen Bewegung im heutigen Tschechien wissend, würde man einen reich liturgischen Protestantismus etwa anglikanischer Art erwarten. Doch wiewohl die liturgischen Schätze des 15.-16. Jahrhunderts reich und noch immer nur teilweise entdeckt und herausgegeben worden sind, geschichtsmächtiger zeigte sich etwas anderes: Als nach dem kaiserlichen Toleranzpatent 1781 die Nachfahren von Hussiten und Böhmisches Brüdern ihr kirchliches Leben im Rahmen der zugelassenen reformatorischen Kirchen A. B. und H. B. organisieren konnten, wurde – wie es die inzwischen publizierten Protokolle des amtlichen Verhörs beim Antrag des Kirchenübertritts überzeugend bezeugen – ihre Identität nicht positiv vom Evangelischen her, sondern vielmehr negativ vom Antikatholischen geprägt. Als solche fanden sie die eingeladenen lutherischen Pastoren, die zu jener Zeit noch lutherische Messe im Ornat feierten, „zu katholisch“ und zogen helvetische Konfession mit ihrem einfacheren Gottesdienst vor. Nur in einigen Gemeinden Ostmährens konnten sich Reste der lutherischen Liturgie bis heute behaupten. (Da es sich in diesem Beitrag speziell um die tschechische Situation handelt, sehen wir hier von der allgemein europäischen anti-liturgischen Tendenz zum Spiritualismus, die sich damals mit dem aufklärerischen Liberalismus verbinden sollte, ab. Doch darf man nicht übersehen, dass die Situation einer verfolgten Geheimbewegung dem Trend zum formlosen Spiritualismus günstig war). Die Vorstellung, dass die Liturgie „etwas Katholisches“ und deswegen abzulehnen ist, bestimmt die Identität mancher evangelischer Christen Tschechiens bis zum diesem Tag.

Deswegen können wir nur von Anzeichen einer liturgischen Erneuerung sprechen, und wenn wir im Folgenden auch keinen

Anspruch an erschöpfende Darstellung erheben, wäre u. A. über die erwähnten Beispiele hinaus nicht viel zu berichten.

Zwei Pastoren

Jan Tydlitát

In den 80er Jahren strebte in der EKBB Vikar Jan Tydlitát eine liturgische Reform an. Er hielt sich an die katholische nachkonziliare Reform, was in dieser Zeit der Erneuerung und Politisierung des tschechischen Katholizismus in seiner und in der jüngeren Generation eine gewisse Resonanz hatte. Das Hauptproblem sah Tydlitát darin, dass die Katholiken ihre Reform früher als die Protestanten durchführten, weswegen sie für diejenigen Protestanten, die ihre Identität aus der Negation des Katholizismus schöpfen, „katholisch“ und darum unannehmbar wurde. Dieser Aspekt, dass man die liturgische Reform als ökumenisches Projekt beginnen konnte und sollte, bleibt, sofern ich sehe, meistens unberücksichtigt. Tydlitát war auch wohl der erste, der in unserem Raum dem Judentum als liturgischer Quelle seine Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet hat – er starb leider Anfang der 90er Jahre, also in der Zeit, wo er schon Sympathisanten und Mitstreiter hätte finden können. Pastoral ist er gescheitert – in einer Gemeinde, die sogar die offizielle kirchliche Gesangbuchreform abgelehnt hat, konnte es wohl kaum anders sein. Auch seine Freunde unter evangelischen Dissidenten lehnten seine liturgischen Aktivitäten ab, obwohl sie ihn als Persönlichkeit für seine tapfere Haltung gegenüber dem kommunistischen Regime respektierten. Theologisch war er übrigens ebenso liberal wie diese. Er bleibt als liturgisch Interessierter im evangelischen Dissens eine große Ausnahme. International nahm er am Leben der deutschen Hochkirchlichen St. Johannes-Bruderschaft teil und erhielt in ihr kurz vor seinem Tode die Presbyterweihe.

Wenn man ein Jahrzehnt nach dem Tode Tydlitáts über liturgische Erneuerung schreibt, merkt man doch eine große Veränderung: während zu der Zeit Tydlitáts das Wort Liturgie in den meisten evangelischen Ohren negativen Klang hatte, ist es heute fast zu einem Modewort geworden. Dies und jenes wird als Liturgie bezeichnet, und selbst die Gegner jeder festen liturgischen Form behaupten, dass unsere Kirche ja eine schöne Liturgie hat.

Jiří Štorek

Pastoral erfolgreich war dagegen Pfarrer Štorek, der in seiner kleinstädtischen Gemeinde unweit von Prag mutige, manchmal auch problematische radikale Schritte durchführte, womit er aber die Jugendlichen für sich gewinnen konnte und auch die Unterstützung der Kirchenleitung erfuhr. In seiner Gemeinde konnte er die Vorstellungen der offiziellen liturgischen Kommission weitgehend realisieren. Die Liturgie, die auch seine ersten Nachfolger im Pfarramt übernommen haben, entspricht im Wesentlichen der Struktur der Messe, nur der Bußakt folgte auf die Predigt. Das Abendmahl wurde am Sonntag zur Regel. Štorek konnte für seine Gemeinde eine alte unbenutzte katholische Kirche gewinnen, wo man auch räumlich die neue Liturgieauffassung realisieren konnte – Zentralstellung des Altars im etwa kreisförmigen Raum. Trotz der „katholischen“ Erscheinungsform war Štoreks Konzeption streng reformiert – die meisten Formen waren fürs Ohr bestimmt, an verbale Formulierungen oder an Klänge begrenzt. In seiner späteren Gemeinde in Prag hat sich Štorek mehr dem liberalen Katholizismus nebst der Homo-Trauung geöffnet und ist infolgedessen unter die kirchliche Polarisierung in dieser Frage geraten, was seine liturgischen Bestrebungen überschattete und bei einigen suspekt machte.

Zwei Gruppierungen

Die liturgische Kommission der Kirchenleitung

Im Unterschied zu Deutschland beispielsweise, wo die Agendenreform an zahlreiche liturgische Initiativen anknüpfen konnte, war die Agendenreform in der Evangelischen Kirche der Böhmisches Brüder Werk einer offiziellen Kommission, deren Mitglieder im Grunde eine einzige Richtung vertraten.¹ Da die Agenda keine verbindliche Geltung beanspruchen sollte, konnte die liturgisch uninteressierte Mehrheit der Kirche die Arbeit weitgehend ignorieren, und sich nur dann zu Worte melden, wenn sie meinten, dass einzelne Elemente oder Formulierungen „zu katholisch“ seien. Nach der Wende 1989 wurde diese Agenda manchmal als eine „Normalisierung-

¹ *Agenda českobratrské církve evangelické*, I. Teil, Praha 1983, II. Teil, Praha 1988.

sagende“ kritisiert (die Normalisierung war der offizielle Euphemismus für die Unterdrückung der Reformbewegung 1968 und die nachfolgende Ära). Doch ist die Agende auch nach der Meinung des Autors dieses Beitrages, der sicher theologisch in eine vollkommen andere Ecke als deren Autoren gehört, größtenteils sehr gut gelungen. Es ist wirklich ein theologisches Werk mit langen Passagen im Kursivtext, die das Ergebnis einfühend kommentieren. Man könnte schwerlich behaupten, dass die Agende irgendwelche Spuren opportuner politischer Kompromisse trägt, man staunt sogar an einigen Stellen (zum Beispiel in den Fürbitten), wie klar und eindeutig die Rede ist.

Das Geheimnis dieser Agende liegt u. a. in der pro-ökumenischen Stimmung in der EKBB in den 70er und 80er Jahren, die auch manche ungewöhnliche Anleihen gestattet hat. Es war – man muss es heute leider in Erinnerung rufen – noch eine Zeit, wo es realistisch schien, die Einheit der Christenheit anzustreben, und im Rahmen dieses Prozesses war auch die Bereitschaft groß, sich das Fremde anzueignen. Die Identitätsängste äußerten sich noch relativ selten. Der Ökumenismus dieser Jahre stand im Zeichen des Limaer Prozesses, wo das besprochene Thema „Abendmahl“ von sich selbst die Liturgie – bzw. die Eucharistie als neues Fremdwort – an die Tagesordnung brachte. Das alles spiegelt sich in der Agende wieder, die in dem eucharistischen Teil solche ungewöhnliche Formulierungen wie Präfation, Sanctus, Eucharistisches Gebet, Epiklese, Lobopfer, Agnus Dei, Non Sum Dignus, Communio Sanctorum und anderes mehr beinhaltet. Die Gottesdienstformulare gehen vom Ostergottesdienst aus, bringen manches römisch-katholisches, orthodoxes sowie anglikanisches Gut, sprechen von einer Erneuerung der Taufe (auch wenn es dafür kein Formular gibt), rechnen mit Handauflegung und Epiklese bei der Ordination, auf der Rückseite des Umschlags steht das Apostolicum und das Nicaenoconstantinopolitanum (freilich mit filioque). Der Teil VI im 2. Buch heißt „Aus dem Gebetsschatz der Kirche“ und bietet u. a. Gebete aus der Zeit der Kirchenväter – meistens Fürbitten aus den alten Eucharistiegebeten, auch die Friedensektenie des byzantinischen Gottesdienstes und das Te Deum (leider kein Gloria) an. Aus der neuen Zeit findet man u. a. das Eucharistiegebet der Lima-Liturgie, was freilich bald Kritiken hervorrief und von der Kirchenleitung als „nach

Korrekturen brauchbar“ erklärt wurde. Im Formular B, das relativ breit von den Gemeinden rezipiert wurde, bittet man um den heiligen Geist, „zu heiligen uns und die Gaben von Brot und Wein“. In anderen Formularen lautet es geschwächt bzw. wird der Geist „auf diese Gemeinschaft eines Brotes und eines Kelches“ herabgefleht. Hier steht dann die Epiklese wohl als Kommunio-Epiklese nach den Einsetzungsworten, sonst bevorzugt man die lateinische Reihenfolge. Manches wird dem heutigen Leser nicht mehr so revolutionär klingen wie damals. Ich erinnere mich freilich noch an einen deutschen Kollegen und mit welcher Begeisterung er die Worte „Eucharistická modlitba“ [Eucharistisches Gebet] in unserer Agende las und meinte, damit ist der grundlegende Schritt zur Gottesdiensterneuerung eigentlich getan, den seine Landeskirche immer noch nicht gewagt hat.

Kennzeichnend ist die originelle graphische Ausgestaltung, die einerseits das Fehlen einer entsprechenden Erfahrung mit der Gestaltung liturgischer Bücher zeigt, andererseits (nach privater Erklärung eines Kommissionsmitglieds) die Konzeption ausdrückt, dass es eben kein Missale zur Zelebration, sondern eher ein Buch zur Vorbereitung des Gottesdienstes sein soll. Z. B. beginnen die Gebete manchmal mit einem einzigen Wort auf der untersten Zeile der Seite, man muss sogar während der Einsetzungsworte oder während der Epiklese umschlagen. Selbst für universitär gebildete Laien ist die angegebene Seitenzahl und der Anfang bzw. der Schluss eines Fürbittengebets manchmal kaum zu finden.)

Coena

Paradoxerweise kommt erst längst nach der offiziellen Kommission eine spontane Gruppierung vor allem junger Pfarrer und Vikare, die sich Evangelische liturgische Initiative Coena nennt. Sie ist pluralistisch, Versuche zu einer gemeinsamen Theologie hat man vorläufig aufgegeben. Im Unterschied zu der eher barthianisch-orthodoxen Kommission ist Coena eher liberal, offen auch für Frauenordination und Homo-Segnung, in den faktischen Reformvorschlägen dagegen eher altkirchlich-konservativ. Sie präsentiert sich durch eine eigene Internetseite.² Trotz starken innerkirchlichen Widerspruchs konnte sie

² <http://coena.edunix.cz>

zwei Jahre lang in der offiziellen Kirchenzeitschrift eine eigene Seite betreiben, publiziert liturgische Texte und hat es sogar zu eigenem Stundenbuch gebracht. Mehrmals jährlich veranstaltet sie kleine Konferenzen mit Vortrag und Gottesdienstpraxis. Neulich war sie indirekt auch an dem Eröffnungsgottesdienst des gesamtkirchlichen Pfarrertags beteiligt, was dann zur ungeplanten Momentaufnahme der Beziehung evangelischer Geistlichkeit zur Liturgie wurde. Die Reaktionen reichten von sofortiger Abfahrt und Boykotts des weiteren Programms seitens eines Dekans bis zu unerwarteter Unterstützung durch einen evangelischen Theologieprofessor.

Zwei Professoren

Zwei Namen können unsere Darstellung umrahmen, wobei der erste Name für die Zeit der Anfänge³ und der andere für die Gegenwart steht.

Josef Smolík

Er befasste sich in der Nachkriegszeit mit dem Gottesdienst der alten Böhmischen Brüder und versuchte in der Kirche Sinn für „sakramentalen Raum“, wie er es nannte, zu wecken. Man hat ihm einen baldigen Übertritt zum Katholizismus prophezeit, sonst wusste man seine Ansichten nicht zu rationalisieren. Er war auch der Orthodoxie gegenüber offen und hat die Anregungen der ökumenischen Arbeit (seinerzeit war er einer der Präsidenten des Weltkirchenrates) in der sog. neuen Agenda als Vorsitzender der Kommission vorsichtig realisiert.

Mit Smolík ist freilich ein speziell tschechisches Phänomen der Liturgie-Erneuerung verbunden: Während sich Smolík in den sechziger Jahren für die sog. Neuorientierung der Beziehungen zwischen Kirche und sozialistischem Staat engagierte und in diesem Sinne auch seine Studenten motivierte, hat er sich nach der Unterdrückung des Tschechoslowakischen Frühlings 1968 zurückgezogen und sich eher der Liturgie und der Kirchengeschichte gewidmet, was seine Schüler,

³ Vgl. Josef Smolík, Das gottesdienstliche Leben des tschechischen Protestantismus, in: *Jahrbuch für Liturgik*, 1966, S. 224-227.

die sich inzwischen zu Dissidenten entwickelt haben, als eine Flucht vor politischer Verantwortung in einen angeblich sicheren sakramentalen Raum beurteilten. Bis heute gibt es viele, die die Liturgiefrage mit der Normalisierung assoziieren, was auch die oben erwähnten Reaktionen an dem Pfarrertag wieder bestätigt haben.

Pavel Filipi

Auch bei Filipi steht die Liturgik im ökumenischen, konfessionskundlichen und praktisch-theologischen Rahmen. Er konnte endlich der EKBB ein Buch schenken, mit dem man das Informationsdefizit in Fragen Liturgie überwinden konnte.⁴ Leider war das Buch kein Bucherfolg, im Unterschied zu anderen Werken Filipis. Er ist auch derjenige Professor, von dem oben gesagt wurde, dass er sich der (von ihm sonst kritisierten) Coena annahm, und die Kritiker mit einer klaren Erklärung belehrte, dass nämlich der umstrittene Gottesdienst des Pfarrertags nicht besonders reich, sondern umgekehrt unreduziert war. Er drückte auch seine Überraschung aus, dass die Kritiker aus seinen Vorlesungen nicht Besseres wissen.

Es bleibt die Aufgabe einer Theologie des Gottesdienstes

Der Autor dieses Aufsatzes wurde in den 90er Jahren mehrmals als Referent zum Thema Liturgie und Gemeinde eingeladen. Man erwartete fast ausschließlich, dass er bestimmte liturgische Formen bzw. Formeln anbieten würde, wie der Gemeindegottesdienst umzustrukturieren wäre. Dieser Erwartung konnte er nicht entsprechen. In seiner Sicht ist die Liturgiereform nicht mit neuen Formen zu beginnen. Mit bloßer Liturgiewissenschaft ist es eben nicht zu schaffen, notwendig ist nach seiner Meinung eine solide Theologie des Gottesdienstes. Anknüpfend an Edmund Schlink sucht er beim Gottesdienst die Fülle der Antworten an Gottes Wort als innere Struktur des Gottesdienstes (die primären Strukturen Schlinks). Diesen Antworten entsprechen klassische Stücke der Messe, doch sie sind an diese Formen und Worte nicht streng geknüpft. Hauptsache ist, dass der Raum

⁴ Pavel Filipi, *Hostina chudých* [Gastmahl der Armen], Praha 1991

für Glaubensbekenntnis, Sündenbekenntnis, Lob, Dank, Bitte, Lehre, Anbetung usw. bewahrt bzw. erneuert wird.

Die Liturgiereform hat im Raum des Protestantismus nur dann eine Chance, falls es gelingt, sie als eine von der Bibel her notwendige Sache zu präsentieren. Damit wäre ja auch der Grund der Misere überwunden, den wir darin sehen, dass es zu einer Trennung zwischen Bibel, Liturgie, Theologie und Kirche kam. Das recht verstandene Wort Gottes, das ja nicht nur ein Sprechen ist, schafft sich die Formen. Wer umgekehrt meint, dem Worte Gottes nur mit Predigt oder Unterricht genügend zu dienen, hat wohl eine arme Auffassung vom Worte Gottes. Die Alternative Wort oder Liturgie ist als falsch zu zeigen.

Die neuen exegetischen Methoden lehren uns, wie eng die biblischen Texte mit dem Gottesdienst zusammenhängen und wie viel Liturgisches selbst in der Bibel steckt. Wir brauchen den eucharistischen Gottesdienst als notwendigen Kontext, in dem das Wort sprechen und richtig verstanden und beantwortet werden kann. Die Erneuerung einer Kirche, die nach der Confessio Augustana definiert ist, ist eben eine liturgische, eucharistische Erneuerung. Die gegenwärtige theologische Produktion sollte zu der Realität des eucharistischen Gottesdienstes zurückkehren, wo echte Theologie ihre Quelle hat.

Solange wir noch fragen, „wie wir es machen sollen“, ist der Ausgangspunkt verkehrt. Es ist zuerst die Fähigkeit zu erneuern, zu sehen, wie Gott in unserem – auch so unliturgischen – Gottesdienst handelt. Nach lutherischer Auffassung ist es vor allem in der Verkündigung des Evangeliums und im Sakrament. Erst wenn wir dieses Handeln Gottes innwerden, können wir darauf auch mit formalen Elementen aufmerksam machen.

Es ist auch fraglich, ob man sich immer unbewusst an die westlich-lateinischen Formen halten muss und im Falle einer gelungenen Liturgiereform einen Gottesdienst anzubieten hat, den es in der römisch-katholischen Kirche um die Ecke ohnehin schon gibt. Sollte man nicht lieber den byzantinischen Gottesdienst einer längst fälligen Liturgiereform unterziehen? Würde es nicht der Sendung der Reformationskirche als eines ökumenischen Labors gut entsprechen? Dieser Vorschlag kann wohl nur denjenigen überraschen, der noch nicht bemerkt hat, dass in der ostkirchlichen Orthodoxie schon seit

mehr als hundert Jahren ein Reformprozess läuft, in dem sich diese der seit dem Fall Konstantinopels anwachsenden Überfremdung durch lateinische theologische sowie liturgische Einflüsse zu entledigen versucht. Das liturgische Leben und seine theologische Deutung wird einer Kritik unterzogen, die dem reformatorischen Fragen nach der Alten Kirche des Evangeliums und der Patristik in etwa entspricht, freilich mit einer Kenntnis der theologischen und liturgischen Quellen, die der Reformation im Westen leider noch gefehlt hat. Keineswegs empfehlen wir also die auch in den Westkirchen heute verbreitete Mode einer unverbindlich-postmodernen Auswahl einzelner ostkirchlicher Elemente oder einen irrational-mystischen Hang zu angeblich altertümlich-unveränderlichen Gottesdienstformen heutiger byzantinischer Liturgie, die sich bald als gar nicht so unveränderlich und altertümlich herausstellen. Inspiration wäre dagegen zu suchen bei Autoren wie Afanasjev, Bulgakow, Schmemmann, Sove, Uspenskij u. a.m.

Da der Autor des vorliegenden Beitrages am internationalen Projekt eines evangelischen ostkirchlichen Gottesdienstes teilnimmt,⁵ ist der Vorschlag nicht mehr eine reine Theorie. Aus der Beschäftigung mit der Theologie des ostkirchlichen Gottesdienstes seien exemplarisch folgende Anregungen erwähnt.

Realsymbol „Reich Gottes“ statt „Sakramentalität“

Die liturgischen Reformen im Rahmen des Protestantismus gehen oft von der Konstatierung eines angeblichen „sakramentalen Defizits“ protestantischer Kirchen aus. Die Kategorie des Sakramentalen ist freilich als unbiblisch im protestantischen Raum kaum zu vermitteln. Die Bibel bietet dagegen eine Auffassung vom Königreich Gottes, das schon da und noch nicht da ist. Von der Präsenz des Reiches Gottes ist auch das zu entwickeln, was mit der Sakramentalität legitim gemeint ist. Gegenüber dem sakramentalen Realismus, bei dem die typisch protestantische Verdächtigung, dass mit ihm etwas „massiv“ und disponierbar fixiert wird, kaum abzuwenden ist, hat der symbolische Realismus den Vorteil, dass er den eschatologischen Vorbehalt respektiert und Hunger nach dem Reich Gottes wach hält, statt

⁵ Siehe www.ostkirchlicher-konvent.de

sich als *beati possidentes* in dieser Weltzeit einzurichten. Nach Autoren wie Schmeeman sind übrigens die westlichen Kontroversen um die Realpräsenz ohnehin erst dadurch entstanden, dass man die Realität des Symbols nicht mehr verstand und trotz der neuen, nur bildlichen („nur symbolischen“) Auffassung die Wahrheit des Inhalts retten wollte.

Epiklese statt Magismus

Im protestantischen, einseitig christomonischen Verständnis des Abendmahls stehen die sog. *Verba Institutionis* im Vordergrund. Das führt freilich leicht in die falsche Alternative, dass man die Worte Christi nicht „magisch“ verstehen möchte und sie deswegen lieber schwächt. Dadurch entwertet man jedoch nicht nur die Eucharistie, sondern indirekt auch die Predigt. Der epikletische Charakter des Abendmahls, des ganzen Gottesdienstes, aller übrigen sakramentalen Handlungen und des ganzen Kirchenlebens zeigt hier den Weg aus der Aporie. Die Bestätigung der Epiklese mit „Amen“ seitens der Gemeinde hilft noch zusätzlich die Vorstellung einer an den Pastor isoliert gebundener „Macht“ zu korrigieren.

Sobornost' statt Individualismus

Die Tendenz zum Individualismus liegt in den Wurzeln des Hellenismus und wurde durch die neuzeitliche cartesianische Erkenntnislehre noch bestärkt. Sie erfasste auch die kirchliche Lehre. So werden auch die Sakramente von dem Individuum her definiert und manchmal auch praktiziert. Die ostkirchliche Auffassung kann sie dagegen als (sicher auch für den Empfangenden wichtige) Ereignisse im Leben der Kirche sehen. Der Individualismus brachte uns einerseits die nie gewesenen individuellen Freiheiten, andererseits lässt er uns nicht mehr eine feste Gemeinschaft bilden und erhalten. Das kirchenslawische Wort *sobornost'* entspricht zwar im Credo einfach dem Worte Katholizität, doch wird hier auch üblich die Konziliarität (*sobor* = Konzil) und Kirchlichkeit (*sobranije* = ekklesia) mitgehört. Die traditionelle reformierte Sicht und Nennung des Gottesdienstes als Versammlung wird von der ostkirchlichen liturgischen Theologie im Grunde als richtig bestätigt und wieder in einen Kontext gestellt, der im Protestantismus längst weitgehend verloren gegangen ist.

Epilog

Dieser Text beschränkt sich auf die Evangelische Kirche der Böhmisches Brüder. Doch sei es hier auch erwähnt, dass z. B. unter tschechischen Methodisten heute – nach ihrer charismatischen Phase – ein liturgisches Interesse erwacht, dass sich die Evangelische Kirche A. B. (ehemalige slowakische Gemeinde in Prag) in hochkirchlicher Richtung entwickelt, dass sich in der Tschechoslowakischen Hussitischen Kirche manche Pfarrer an der ostkirchlich-orthodoxen, an der tridentinischen oder sog. nachkonziliaren römischen Liturgie orientieren und dass in der Tschechoslowakischen Hussitischen Kirche die Frage der Weihe in apostolischer Sukzession heftig diskutiert und mancherorts auch im Stillen praktiziert wird.

CZECH PROTESTANTISM AND LITURGY. FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN SACREDNESS AND AUTHENTICITY

The fall of the communist regime had its impact on the discussion about liturgy and its renewal in Czech Protestant circles. Members of the younger generation of pastors and theologians, who could study and work under different, democratic circumstances, feels a need for a renewal of liturgical forms in order to give better shape to Christian identity and spirituality. They founded an ecumenical initiative for the development of liturgy under the name *Coena*.

In order to understand the situation of liturgy in Czech Protestantism this situation is obviously important. The editorial board of *Communio Viatorum* has therefore decided to invite two pastors of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, who represent different position on this question, to explain their concept of liturgy. We hope that in this way the situation concerning liturgy in Czech Protestantism might be sufficiently explained. The first participant in the interview is Tomáš Trusina, pastor in the town of Benešov, south-east of Prague, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Protestant*, very much bringing the views of the ‘civil interpretation.’ His colleague is Tomáš Drobík, pastor, currently teaching practical theology at the Husite Theological Faculty of Charles University and co-founder of the association *Coena*. The interviewers are Ivana Noble and Peter Morée.

What is worship?

Peter Morée: This interview is dedicated to the significance of liturgy in evangelical theology and the evangelical tradition. Our first question is general: What does the term worship mean to you?

Tomáš Trusina: It is difficult to answer such a question. There is a wide variety of stimulating elements for worship in the Church of the Czech Brethren: The classic Lutheran liturgy performed facing the altar with one's back to the congregation, Scottish Presbyterianism, the Böhl-movement in Moravia, who were a different reformed movement, in the 1960s there were impulses from Taizé, etc. While pondering upon what worship means to me, the first answer that came to mind was a little bit biblical and hymn related – Psalm 100 is a kind of confession in which we proclaim that in worship we do not create a place for God or a place for meeting him, but that this meeting is an undeserved gift that we may await with confidence from the very beginning. It seems to me that the meaning of worship can be illustrated by the example of hymns, e. g. the hymn “*Pán Bůh je přítomen*” [The Lord is present], popular among Czech evangelical Christians, expresses what happens in awe before God. In worship, it is the visible and audible boundary between us and that with which God comes to us.

Ivana Noble: Tomáš Drobík, why do you think that liturgical renewal is important for Protestantism and why is it important to address this issue today? Why is it important to rediscover traditions that have been suppressed in Protestantism?

Tomáš Drobík: The words “liturgical renewal” are a certain type of stratagem, a banner in discussions. I think it would be more appropriate to speak of contents. I will pick up where Tomáš left off: if worship is a space that I have been granted then I move about in this space and react to God's invitation. And worship happens through this interaction. The important thing is for this to really happen.

Ivana Noble: Does that mean that liturgy is a tool for interaction?

Tomáš Drobík: A tool for communication between the congregation and God, God and the congregation. Here, the instrumental role is present.

Ivana Noble: There is, however, a difference between worship based on readings from the Holy Scriptures, sermons, hymns, and prayers of the person leading the congregation and dialogic worship immersed in tradition.

Tomáš Drobík: There is no such thing as non-dialogic liturgy, just as there is no such thing as, for example, a non-mobile car. Liturgy is dialogic in essence, although it may not always be obvious. Every church service is liturgical and therefore dialogic. Basically, even a sermon is dialogic.

Ivana Noble: Would you agree with that, Tomáš?

Tomáš Trusina: Basically, yes. I perceive liturgy as formulating an answer. We attempt to respond to God's presence. The congregation as a particular communion formulates answers. During worship our own confession of faith becomes relevant. One encounters the living God, the resurrected Christ experienced as the power of truth, the annunciation of forgiveness, new hope, the vision of something new, gratitude for the Lord wanting us to be here. This tradition is in a struggle with a certain convention emphasising repetition and conserving elements that people are accustomed to.

Tomáš Drobík: It has to do with the inner feeling of each individual person, the authenticity of this feeling and the extent to which this feeling ceases to be dependant on one's personal dispositions and the extent to which it begins to be objective in worship.

Tomáš Trusina: I have just re-read what Martin Prudký wrote about liturgy and the meaning of the Hebrew *zakar* in *Rozpravy/Samenspraak* "Remember, or remind yourself, that things of the past point to the future and that we may encounter them."¹ One looks upon other

¹ Martin Prudký, "Být pamětliv" (z-k-r) jako stěžejní prvek naší víry, klíčový termín biblické teologie a pilíř bohoslužby, in: *Rozpravy/Samenspraak 1998, Jak bolí Bůh (Biblická teologie a liturgie)*, Heršpice 1998, p. 16 ff. Also available in the Dutch version as 'Indachting zijn' (z-k-r), kernpunt van het geloof, sleutelwoord voor Bijbelse Theologie en pijler van de eredienst, in: *Rozpravy/Samenspraak 1998, Onrustig om God, Bijbelse Theologie en Liturgie*, Heršpice 1998, p. 18 ff.

aspects of tradition in a similar manner. Liturgy is formed by things of the past and the epiclectic present, and as such encompasses reminiscence that through the Holy Spirit becomes present. That is substantial. One cannot say A without also saying B. That would be like saying the words of the institution without the epiclesis at the end.

Tomáš Drobík: Neither epiclesis nor these elements explain anything.

Tomáš Trusina: I was not trying to give an explanation. What I had in mind was the fact that one may rely on what I call God's presence.

Tomáš Drobík: But how does that happen?

Tomáš Trusina: Through the Holy Spirit.

Tomáš Drobík: Is there such a thing as a Church without tradition, theology without tradition and immediate God's presence? There is not. It depends on how broadly we define the subject - which is an anthropological and sociological category. From a psychological point of view, tradition is what my grandmother can still remember and what she tries to pass on to me. Anything older is no longer my tradition.

Sacredness

Ivana Noble: Let us return to the liturgical renewal. I was the one who introduced the term. The so-called liturgical churches speak not only of tradition but also of a sacred tradition in the sense that certain forms of communication between God and his people are so well-tried that, though they cannot lead one to a certain destination without inner conversion, they can be helpful on the way to inner conversion. The difference between spontaneous and liturgical prayers is being discussed, and liturgical prayers allude to exactly this tradition. Were we to have only your agreement to go by, we could come to the conclusion that it is possible to celebrate the liturgy of Hyppolitus or

John Chrysostom in an evangelical church, or that there is no difference between spontaneous worship and worship prepared and based on the reading of the Bible and on prayers. But we experience certain tension in this matter, which is why we want to talk about it.

Tomáš Drobík: The question is whether such a thing as sacred texts exists. You mentioned sacred tradition, which, for some reason or other, is supposed to help the contemporary congregation to respond to God. What exactly is the Bible? Is it still the Holy Scripture or have we critically explained it all, are we done with it? I am purposely being provocative. We have been analysing biblical texts for so long that they no longer seem to be what we are looking for. They have become, so to speak, Catholic Epistles. Something authentic could possibly be found in the Gospels, although not there either, apparently. Perhaps Paul's first letters ... this is how pastors used to discuss the Holy Scripture in their debates in the past.

Tomáš Trusina: I happen to have gone a step further in this matter. Towards the end of my studies I came across the Amsterdam School of Biblical Exegesis and I realised that it is a hermeneutical step ahead, that analytical dissection and the search for assumed *verba dixissima* has been abandoned in favour of accepting the vital testimony in the biblical canon to be the testimony of the biblical text. The structure of the text structures my discourse and aids me in structuring worship. It doesn't always work, but, in a biblical text, a pericope, or a Psalm, individual liturgical steps are recognized and the entire worship is livened up. From the beginning to the end I am in an area outlined by the biblical text. That is, by its contents, by echoes it carries from elsewhere, and by what can be extracted from it. That way, the sermon need not become a lecture on exegesis or archaeology, a moralization, or a dogmatic tedium in order to proclaim a resolute 'yes' to mankind. It is a space created by the text which I open with the audience. I try to follow only the text in front of them, which is the same text as I have, and I don't work with any extra knowledge I have at my disposal. I work with the text and we discover the space together. The sermon itself then becomes much more dialogic and, to a certain extent, liturgical by what resonates in

it – it becomes liturgically poetic. And worship can profit from this, too. It ceases to be a mere show, and whatever takes place during worship – prayer, singing – suddenly becomes meaningful. The biblical text forms it into a certain shape.

Peter Morée: Tomáš, are ‘words’ a space that lead to a certain structure?

Tomáš Drobík: To me, some texts represent sacred texts that have been read before me and these texts specifically form all possible options. I find the worship of the Early Church as inspirational as the biblical text. In any case, the text is a liturgical text, the Bible is a liturgical book, and as such the text is as closely related to worship as possible. The invitation to read is exactly the space of the congregation at worship. We as theologians must not forget the standard-setting role of the Early Church expressed in the choice of particular sacred texts and a particular way of celebrating liturgy.

Tomáš Trusina: I always shudder at the sound of the word sacred. Not even the most pious and educated human association has the right to assign holiness to anything. In the 6th chapter of Isaiah sacred tradition is as if parallel to the text. The prophet unexpectedly experiences awe. “I saw the Lord.” This is not something generated by a sacred text but by his own realisation of what true sacredness is. This, I think, is very important nowadays. I’m talking from the point of view of a pastor serving a congregation. I often meet people with certain expectations and the situation today is that explicit religious expectations are becoming ever greater. I could easily hook people by saying: join us, we’ve got “sacredness.” That word is like a net to catch people in, or a sort of bait. I deliberately refuse to do that. In my opinion, it is necessary to be reserved and modest about this subject. We are not forbidden to anticipate and we do, of course, know about this dimension, but we shouldn’t emphasise the fact too much.

Ivana Noble: Why not?

Tomáš Trusina: So as not to give in to the temptation of thinking that

we have the Church in our command or that the library of sacred texts is somehow under our administration.

Tomáš Drobík: The answer to the question of sacred texts is of a different kind than: yes they exist and that's what I was afraid of. For me, liturgy is not a process of generating something. That is very important. I don't perceive the Church as being an association. That is another important fact. Fear of Holiness is essentially connected to anything holy. Religious Studies are aware of that. I am not going to pretend that nothing holy exists. Why the fear? Why the restraint? Why should I fear that it might be real? Well, liturgy is real. What I like and consider substantial and important for pastoral care in the history of the Church is talking about the fact that a sacrament communicated by a duly ordained servant of the Church is valid.

Ivana Noble: If I understand well, you have in mind an unequivocalness that you consider rude.

Tomáš Trusina: Yes. In connection with sacred tradition there are certain objective parts that in themselves bear God's presence.

Tomáš Drobík: In that case, talk about subjectivity.

Ivana Noble: Subjectivity or objectivity is meaningless in this discussion. Contemporary sacramental theology is working miracles.

Tomáš Trusina: I understand it to be a term out of the dictionary of systematic theology and pastoral care, but it has no place in liturgy. If we are to describe how we encounter sacredness, then, I think, it can be of no use.

Tomáš Drobík: The awe of holiness is nevertheless related to a longing for it.

Peter Morée: You are now both saying the same thing: that something holy exists. Compared to Tomáš Trusina your concept is broad-

der, but that means that we do have some sort of an agreement. We share the premise that there is such a thing as holiness. What I am interested in is how you decide what is and what is not holy. What does it mean when you say: a text is sacred? Hymns are also sacred in a way. They are not as old as other texts, they do, however, have a certain amount of authority. What, then, are the criteria for determining what is sacred and suitable to use.

Tomáš Trusina: I am not comfortable with the word sacred in this context. I would rather talk of interpretation and I would like to use a comparison in which every good scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven brings out what is new and what is old. This fits in with how I understand worship.

Ivana Noble: May I specify what you have said? The emphasis on interpretation is nice. The question is, what is being interpreted.

Tomáš Trusina: In this context, Scripture has a certain priority, though not automatically. It needs to be interpreted. Suppose I do maintain a narrower concept. I use the hymnal and I can make do with the general structure of the routine evangelical church service where the only genuine liturgy is the Lord's Prayer, to which I add, for example, a Genevan Psalm. I do not use the Agenda not because I don't want to but because whenever I tried to find something in it I never could. I am certainly occasionally grateful for an impulse from the liturgical tradition of the Church, nevertheless, I do not perceive a flow of texts that I could simply take and transplant into the church service and be convinced about the legitimacy of such an act.

Tomáš Drobík: Is that something you have experienced? I am not aware of anyone imagining that they could pick up a text, transpose it and act as if such conduct was the only right thing to do.

Tomáš Trusina: This has occasionally been my experience with the liturgical renewal. The order of the Mass is sometimes mentioned and attempts have been made to make use of it.

Tomáš Drobík: That is a different matter – the transposing of texts from one century to another, reflecting upon the meaning of such conduct, the various ways in which God’s presence was celebrated in the past. Well, what is sacredness, when Jesus Christ says: “I am praying for them, sanctify them in your truth, I am leaving them here” and he himself leaves and they are left to bear the burden. What separation is the question concerned with? I do not understand it in such a narrow sense. This is sacred now. I don’t understand the question you posed, or rather, the form in which you posed it. What do I use for orientation when preparing the service? That’s a relevant question. But to answer the question on what is sacred about liturgy – that, which has come, which has been renewed in Christ is sacred.

Authenticity

Ivana Noble: I would like to return to the main topic of the interview. Could you please tell us, then, what you concentrate on when preparing a sermon?

Tomáš Drobík: I don’t have any specific criteria. The important thing is to stress that it is the liturgy of the entire Church, the community of the entire Church. Also, to include elements that support and draw attention to the entirety. That is, to draw attention to the fact that it is not just us celebrating here, but that liturgy is celebrated all around the world. I consider this to be a very important element. For me personally, the community of the Church constitutes the Body of Christ more profoundly than the agreement to celebrate in a certain way. That’s to start with. Further more, there is the choice of texts. It is not a question of my subjective preference, a question of whether I like them or not, but a question of around 70 % of communities in the world following the Ecumenical Lectionary and me joining them. Because, apart from anything else, I experience the broadness of the community. Reading biblical texts during liturgy and allowing the texts to define a topic to be shared in worship is directly connected to all the other parts of the liturgy that mould the individual elements of communication. Certainly also the connection with the entirety means

that it is not me who, like a *deus ex machina* creates novelties. There is also certainly some sort of an anthropological determinant. From the point of view of a community with a given mode of communication, as well as from the point of view of each individual person sitting there. There is also such a thing as the dynamics of celebration and I try to adhere to that – the dynamics of celebration of an individual person and the dynamics of celebration in a community. I am sure everyone has at a church service experienced that unbelievably embarrassing prolongation of something that ended a long time ago.

Ivana Noble: I would like to return to the question we posed, namely, that in Evangelical courses, liturgy is sometimes spoken of as leading to ritualism. Would you agree with that?

Tomáš Trusina: I think that is slightly incorrect and shallow. I wouldn't say ritualism but rather ceremoniousness. The reason behind this is, I find, the fear of the loss of authenticity. Petr Oslzlý is a theorist of theatre and rituals and he applied his analyses to public worship. He compares the liturgy of the mass to the dramaturgy of a large stage theatre, whereas the evangelic liturgy is compared to alternative theatre, where the playwright and actor are one and the same person and where, more importantly, there is a maximum amount of authenticity. He considers this very important, especially in the last few decades. I like this dramatic analysis. It helped me to understand that many people simply take the unwillingness to work with traditional liturgy to be anti-Catholicism. But actually, the only reason behind it could be the fear of losing authenticity. It depends on how one perceives dialogue. To what extent it is determined by one person whether traditional dialogic forms used. When I talk to people about worship, we try to find out why they liked it from this stand point. They perceive dialogue. The difference between a big dramatic performance and authentic intimate form is the consequence of most evangelical congregations being small, with usually around 30–40 people at a service, 60 at the most. Evangelic Christians think that liturgy is something to be staged, like *Bartered Bride* or Richard Wagner, in some village town hall. As if it were inaptness, or a game of make believe. Dialogue takes place on an invisible level. I and

Thou does somehow work. Worship often reacts to particular crises, be it through prayer or sermon. People find themselves, they can say their yes internally or out loud. They can say amen out loud or join in with the responses.

Ivana Noble: If I understand what you are saying, the fear of loss of authenticity can lead in at least two directions. The first direction could result in one's relationship with the Lord, provided it is not founded on ad hoc – on what is important here and now, taking the long route. The other fear may be caused by the fact that rites can mislead one to something that sounds magical, something that would not require one's own personal response or change in life. Which of the two fears can you relate to, Tomáš?

Tomáš Trusina: Liturgy is starting to be a mechanical ritual, a sort of “auto-motion.” Something we hide behind. Nothing is fought for.

Tomáš Drobík: I have tried to formulate a methodology of worship reflection and I feel that adequacy could be the principle, taking into consideration the space, the topic of liturgy and the number of people in the congregation. With these conditions observed, Wagner cannot be played at a campfire, it would not be adequate. I am not talking about good or bad liturgy, but of adequate or inadequate liturgy. That is something we could agree on. The example of Mr Oslz-ly is and is not good. He represents a certain type of theatre. Namely, the alternative type, and even the methods and other things he teaches at the vicariate might be better if they were taught by a classical dramatist. Bearing automatism in mind, my keeping hidden away behind a screen, the question to what extent my presiding the liturgy is an act of an individual, and to what extent it is my mission, is left open.

Peter Morée: The key word then is authenticity. It suggests, at least in your interpretation, removing some items that could prevent us from experiencing authenticity. This is, however, precarious. Why should I always feel bound by tradition? If one tries to find freedom or authenticity in the texts, what happens? Why do you think my

freedom and authenticity is better guaranteed by the texts than if I were to remove them?

Tomáš Drobík: The texts in question are those that are closely connected with liturgy. It is because my own mood is of lesser importance. I am the one who leads our celebration. It is not my liturgy. People go to see Halík.² I don't like that expression. Celebrating liturgy is something the entire congregation takes part in. Of course, the celebration is led by me in the person of Tomáš Drobík, but, for the liturgy to be adequate, to enable dialogue, not everything should depend on my personal mood. What happens in the end is that some pastors lead a dialogue during liturgy, for example, with their superiors. I have seen that happen. They contemplate and ponder over something others cannot follow. They lead a dialogue of their own. There is also the question of what ritual is. Ritual is modelled on stereotype. It should enable, not disable passage through various events. Alternatively, it should make possible a new reality. I can't understand why some people think that ritual is something negative. It may be that there is no problem theologically. It would be more interesting to talk about cult. What is the essence of cult? These are fundamental issues worth discussing.

Ivana Noble: I was asking about ritualism.

Tomáš Drobík: That is another matter. Let's clarify terms. Ritual falls into the category of anthropology or religious studies. It is something we all have in common. We all have rituals, starting with the ordinary everyday ones, to the great *rites de passage*. Ritualism is something a church historian would have to classify because it is something Protestantism, unlike Catholicism, refused.

Ivana Noble: That is an absolute generalisation. Ceremonies are sometimes connected with negative experiences of those who might have experienced them in a negative form. I am sure each one of us

² Tomáš Halík is priest of the St. Salvator Church, which serves as the Roman Catholic student's parish in Prague. He is also professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague.

has experienced ceremonies in a negative form. The question is whether a ceremony can be misused by someone as a screen to hide behind – and then becomes an alibi for not attempting to find one's authenticity as a human being. That is how I understand the problem.

Tomáš Drobík: The more I try to make it authentic and unique for myself, the more adequate it will be...

Tomáš Trusina: I am not saying I am completely and utterly opposed to it. With evangelical Christians there is a psychological fixation, e.g. on songs. I would call it ceremoniousness.

Peter Morée: But is not the purpose of liturgy a renewal – that is, a renewal of old rituals we no longer use because they have been forgotten – in order to open new horizons for us even today, precisely because we want to avoid ritualism?

Renewal of Tradition

Tomáš Trusina: We keep coming back to the issue of liturgical renewal, to the question of whether liturgical renewal is possible within evangelical worship comprising of 5–6 hymns, bible readings, a sermon, and banns. Does this provide sufficient space? It does for me. I perceive such space as a liturgical potential. Provided the worship is well prepared and hymns are well used. For evangelical Christians, or a part of the congregation that is not insignificant, they play the role of a ritual. People have been singing these hymns since their childhood, and the hymns express piety. I tried to apply this while working with an almost traditionalist village congregation, where the ultimate argument would always be: 'But that's the way it always has been, or it has never been that way.' People had a repertoire of, let's say, 30 odd hymns, all without exception dating back to the period of the National Revival in the 19th century, and they would not sing anything else. They were firmly convinced that the text for the sermon should comprise of one verse only. I merely added the pericope character of readings, or prayers of supplication in order for the

concentration on the sermon to be spread throughout the entire service. A couple of years later the people themselves told me that they had been looking the hymns up ahead in anticipation of what role a particular hymn was to play in the service, or, conversely, they had been listening to the reading in expectation of what hymn was to be sung. Suddenly, we reached a level where there was no longer only passive acceptance, but where people helped to create something with their expectations.

Tomáš Drobík: I too perceive the given space as sufficient. I also perceive it as a space provided for a liturgical issue. The question is, what shall I structure the service on? There are several possibilities. I must take the dynamics of celebration into consideration. Liturgical structure makes sense. One can draw on tradition there. If it is meaningful for the history of salvation that first the story of the people of Israel is told, and only then comes that of Jesus and the New Testament, then it is also meaningful in liturgy. All worship reflects that, because it is the principal type of worship that frames all others, namely the Easter Vigil. It implies that in three readings we would not read John as the first one, John as the second one, John as the third one, but that we shall read the Old Testament, an Epistle, and a Gospel. This is important in tradition. The same applies to hymns. Christian worship evolved from a certain form and eventually developed into a certain form, and the Reformation built upon that and we can now make good use of the different parts of the service.

Ivana Noble: You are saying that tradition can help us to realise what belongs to worship and where it can lead us to. Do you think that the ancient Christian liturgical tradition can help evangelical worship in that some things that have been either ignored or left to a certain discretion of the congregation, or that the person leading the service will be given a wider platform, further opportunities?

Tomáš Drobík: Yes, worship will be more compatible with the worship of Christians as a whole. I have said this once already and I take a firm stand on the subject. Obstinacy, where the pastor is capricious and does as he likes, is then characterized as authenticity. That is

frightening. I think and feel that order makes something possible for me in the same way that all ritual behaviour makes things possible. A certain protocol allows me to embark on a conversation with a stranger of high rank. That is why I don't understand the main principle I feel behind what you are saying, Tomáš: never accept any order!

Tomáš Trusina: That may be your personal problem with certain types of communication. I certainly don't want to mistake obstinacy for authenticity. I don't, for example, preach according to the Ecumenical Lectionary, instead, I try to practice *lectio continua*. I now work with a community without a story of its own. It is made up of various groups of different people and it has no story. I feel that *lectio continua* helps to structure the year and enables the community to live their own story.

Essentials

Ivana Noble: My next question is based precisely on individual experience – the stories of peoples lives. What is essential to the church service? I am not interested in the individual parts of liturgy but in the inner experience of people. You spoke of continuity and stories.

Tomáš Trusina: I was actually thinking more in terms of congregation and communion. The moment that ties us to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as to the God of Jesus Christ, should certainly never be omitted. The moment when we realise that we belong to this story and that it is our personal story as well as the story of our community. Recognising God's actions as creating basic possibilities for us should also never be absent. Neither should we be deprived of a communion moment when people share their experiences, nor the consciousness of belonging to a host of witnesses. In such a context, worship is a manifestation in which a particular communion celebrates the work of God. This aspect of worship was well reminded by David. It is precisely the Psalms that can open a community.

Tomáš Drobík: For me, being taken by the hand the instant I come to

the service is something that must always be present. The fact that I've lived through a particular week has to be adequately reflected. To be taken by the hand and lead through the experiences of the week that I bring with me in order to be able to concentrate on the two important things in the service, and to be adequately dismissed at the end of the service is indispensable.

Ivana Noble: What are the important things?

Tomáš Drobík: Partaking on the Passion of Christ, the passage from death to life, and on Christ's presence amid the community. For me, those are the fundamental parts of the service. Church service must also never deprive me of knowing that I am accepted, that I may celebrate, and it should always lead me back to my life. Reading the Bible, the Eucharist, time for myself, all this must be well intertwined.

Ivana Noble: Were Tomáš to lead a service in the exact way as he has described here, and were you to take part in it, perhaps you would feel there is something missing. One could be in danger of going through a certain ceremony without inner transformation.

Tomáš Trusina: Time and place for meeting ... we're obviously speaking two different languages. From what Tomáš said, I gathered that the Lord's Supper is a vital part of the service, which I feel is not so. Any meeting taking place before He comes, meeting the resurrected Christ can be a liberating, encouraging, and transforming experience, but such a meeting may also happen through revelation, through a certain biblical motif, through people singing together. It does not necessarily have to be expressed materially.

Ivana Noble: Experience creates a certain mode that repeatedly influences the service. We are comparing structure. We can approach the problem as one of rubrics or of personal experience. We have opted for personal experience.

Tomáš Drobík: I can't imagine how the elements Tomáš has in mind

could be put into practice. The fact that the Psalms are an integral part of liturgy and that they constitute continuity is not an issue. What I felt was missing was an effort to prepare the individual person attending for the service.

Tomáš Trusina: I see a difference between the structure of the Catholic Mass, where, as has been nicely described, “we take our coats off in the hall, then we pass through the various chambers, we are finally served dinner, and then we leave,” and the structure of the evangelical church service. In our congregations there is a distinct “cut.” In two of my congregations, people sit and talk until the moment I walk in, when then they turn silent. This “cut” is the beginning of the service. I understand the danger of this, I know the risk I am taking. People have to find themselves again. The problem is, hardly anyone reads the Sunday text. Then nobody understands that the service is refined and interconnected from the very beginning. Sometimes I react *ex post* and try to help the participants of the service, on the other hand, according to their reactions, I feel that they have been shown the way.

Aims of liturgical renewal

Peter Morée: What should be the aims of liturgical renewal and how should they be achieved?

What do you expect from yourselves and from the church authorities, e.g., the Synod? What do you need in order to achieve what you would like to?

Tomáš Trusina: There is one more thing that I consider important – to avoid liturgical moralisation. As Tomáš said, it is a stratagem. In the congregations, it is referred to as unavoidable or the only right thing to do and people believe it. I try to respond to that, I try to involve people in the preparation of the service, rather unsuccessfully, though the main problem there is that people don’t have time. I find this important. One must provide impulses to which they can react. So they can know what made a difference, what was enriching, how to

further cultivate, structure and enrich the service. This must be a process that happens to the entire congregation. It is, of course, a slow process, slower than some would like it to be. But the results thus achieved are of a permanent character and they don't disappear once the pastor is no longer with the congregation.

Tomáš Drobík: I would be satisfied if the Church took on the role of mediator of events that take place not only in our congregation, but other ones too. The aim is the full participation of everyone on the church service based on the principal of subsidence, where everyone would do what he or she is supposed to in the community. Ideally, the service could take place even if the pastor was not present. That is the aim of my efforts. People wouldn't have a nervous breakdown if and when such a situation occurred. As for the church authorities: if liturgy is the first word of theology, then it could also be the first opportunity, or at least one of the opportunities on the way to the unity of the Church, in that uniformity could be encouraged. Overt congregationalist tendencies within the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren could be avoided by creating a new Agenda. The new Agenda would play the same role as it does in Germany. It would postulate a common aim and it would contain both compulsory and optional sections. The optional sections would be alternatives that cannot as yet be put into practice in some places. There will be enough material for this. We already have the opportunity to share our material and preparatory texts. I would like to mention the web pages of Coena (www.) that offer material for each Sunday. The idea behind this is to enable preparation for the Sunday texts.

Ivana Noble: How would you avoid the risks described by Tomáš?

Tomáš Drobík: The risks of moralisation? Probably by studying liturgy more thoroughly. We give easy answers to important questions and we often slip to heresies of the old church. This also applies to liturgy. I don't think it is the only path to follow. Fertilisation and trimming are fundamental in horticulture, enabling many things to grow. We want them to grow and bear fruit. It depends on what point of view I analyse the whole situation from. I realise that my stand

point limits the scope of my answers. One of the criteria must be the emphasis of reciprocity in worship. Another criterion is the study of the individual contents that are important in worship. At least we will be able to prevent situations that lead nowhere. Further more, we can inspire ourselves by examining the practice of full dialogic worship in other European countries. The important thing is to work not only on liturgy, but also on the spirituality that liturgy will lead to and, in turn, flourish from.

Ivana Noble: Tomáš, what would you like to conclude with?

Tomáš Trusina: Perhaps I shall say a little bit more about the renewal of evangelical spirituality. I don't think it necessary to renew spirituality completely, as though it didn't exist or was completely barren. It sometimes seems to me that the critics of evangelical spirituality are full of prejudices which distort their opinion. Our spirituality is, without doubt, emotionally modest, plain, rational yet not dry, concentrated on words yet not talkative, sensitive to politics yet not fundamentalist. We need to realise that, as our colleague Štěpán Hájek used to say, we still have a certain pietistic amalgam. Even the struggle for interpretation, already present in early pietistic hymns, is a reaction to that. Bible oriented worship is today almost considered fundamentalist. I think it is important that the Old Testament is appreciated – which is something specific that I would like to hold on to and work with.

Ivana Noble: Thank you. Tomáš, is there anything you would like to add?

Tomáš Drobík: I think it is important to stress that there is no reason to fear that all this will lead to manipulation, or generate something automatically. One need not be afraid of Mystery. Mystery belongs to liturgy. I would like us to give it a chance and to believe those who have experienced it and been enriched by it. Evidently, people are inspired by worship, they have had a certain experience and they would like us to help them in experiencing something similarly nice. To conclude with, I would like to say that all this defence

against everything imaginable is so abundant that it is almost superfluous.

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READING THE WORD OF GOD TOGETHER: THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY AND THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS

David R. Holeton, Prague

The Second Vatican Council left two lasting liturgical gifts as its legacy to the churches: the Lectionary for the Mass (OLM)¹ and the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).² Both have become invaluable resources for the churches and important instruments for Christian unity. The OLM, revised and adapted, has become the *Revised Common Lectionary* (RCL) which is used by dozens of churches around the world for the weekly proclamation of the word. The RCIA has been adapted by a wide range of churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian among others) and is proving to be an important means for communities preparing those who are coming to faith, baptism and incorporation into the life of the Church.

Background and Development

Lectionary Discontent

During the post-World War II period, there was increasing discontent with their existing eucharistic lectionaries among the churches which used an official lectionary for Sunday worship. Roman Catholics, Old Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans all used similar versions of the Western mediaeval system of pericopes. These pericopes, of ancient historical use, had remained remarkably stable from the sixteenth century until the present era but represented a vestigial form of older lectionaries.³

¹ *Ordo Lectionum Missae – Editio Typica*, Vatican, 1969.

² *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum – Editio Typica*, Vatican, 1972.

³ Over time, many pericopes had been abbreviated and some epistles and gospels had become detached from one another losing their theologically driven pairings. Most important of all, the Old Testament reading and its accompanying Psalm, where they had been used, had disappeared from eucharistic use.

At that time, there was widespread agreement that the pericopes were, in general, too short and that they were drawn from far too little of the Bible. With the rarest of exceptions, the Old Testament was never read at the Eucharist and some important New Testament passages (for example the Annunciation) were never heard by the average Christian who attended the liturgy on Sundays but not on weekdays. A number of Anglican and Protestant churches (both in Europe and America as well as the newly-formed Church of South India) had begun to work on new lectionary projects as had the Roman Catholic churches in Germany and France. Often the first step had been to provide a cycle of readings from the Old Testament (sometimes with a related Psalm) to supplement the mediaeval pericopes which were drawn almost exclusively from the epistles and gospels.

Vatican II and the OLM

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) specified that "in sacred celebrations there is to be more reading from holy Scripture and it is to be more varied and apposite" (no. 35.1) and, at the Eucharist, the "[t]he treasures of the Bible are to be opened more lavishly, so that a richer share in God's word may be provided for the faithful. In this way a more representative portion of holy Scripture will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years" (no. 51). This mandate for a radical renewal of the use of the Bible in the Roman Liturgy, and particularly at the Eucharist, inaugurated a lengthy process of lectionary reform. Working Group (*Coetus*) XI was established to work on new lectionaries and began its work early in 1964.⁴ The group's "relator," Fr. Godfrey Diekmann, a Benedictine of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota who had long been involved in the Liturgical Movement, presented some basic principles for lectionary reform at the second general meeting of the Consilium in April 1964.

⁴ The history of the OLM can be found in Archbishop Annibale Bugnini's lengthy account of the liturgical reforms leading up to and following Vatican II, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975* trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, Collegeville 1990, particularly in Ch. 26 "The Lectionary of the Roman Missal," pp. 406-425. I am heavily dependent on Bugnini for this part of my article.

The basic principal on which any lectionary reform was to be based was that “the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation must be presented in the readings. Therefore, the new system of readings must contain the whole nucleus of the apostolic preaching of Jesus as Lord and Christ who fulfilled the Scriptures by his life, his preaching, and, above all, his paschal mystery and who gives life to the church until his glorious return.” Diekmann went on to outline that the new lectionary must make clear:

- that the Church is today living out the mystery of salvation in its entirety – the mystery that is found complete in Christ and must be completed in us;
- the mysteries of faith and principles governing the Christian life, which are then to be explained in the homily;
- that the entire Old Testament is presupposed in the Lord’s preaching, his actions, and his passion;
- that attention to the central theme, the Lord’s Pasch, must not lead to forgetfulness of other themes, for example, the coming of God’s reign;
- finally, that the liturgical year provides the ideal setting for proclaiming the message of salvation to the faithful in an organised way.⁵

The working group was much aided by the work of Fr. Gaston Fontaine, a leading figure in the liturgical renewal movement in French-speaking Canada, who produced an analytical survey of *all* known lectionaries throughout the ages and who acted as a *peritus* for the group. Fr. Fontaine produced fifty lectionary tables covering lectionary use over eighteen centuries and included lectionaries of the various Latin churches (Roman, Gallican, Ambrosian etc.), the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions, Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Europe and North America, as well as lectionaries of the Anglican and Old Catholic Churches. Thus, the working group was very well informed not only about how the Bible *had been read* in the eucharistic liturgy but also about how it *was being read*

⁵ Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy* 410-11.

and how various churches working on lectionary reform were proposing how it *would be read* in the future.

In 1965 thirty-one biblical scholars were given the task of selecting from the entire corpus of scripture the passages that they thought most appropriate for liturgical use, to suggest when particular pericopes ought to be read during the course of the liturgical year and, finally, to divide the pericopes on the basis of modern biblical scholarship (particularly *Redaktionsgeschichte*). The pericopes were to be understandable by the faithful and were to inculcate a sense of salvation history. These pericopes, once selected, were sent to about one hundred catechetical experts and pastors who were asked to comment on the appropriateness of each pericope. This produced approximately 2,500 individual comments on the passages in terms of the appropriateness of their selection, the division of the pericopes themselves and when they ought to be used during the liturgical year.

This work done, a number of scholars were asked to prepare detailed studies of a number of historic lectionaries and the ways in which the Bible had been read in the various seasons of the liturgical year. That work in hand, scholars were asked to prepare schema for each of the liturgical seasons.

By 1966 the working group was prepared to make some final decisions about the shape a new lectionary would assume. These were based on a number of issues that had been raised over the previous two years. Perhaps the most difficult was the question of the number of readings. Would there be two (as in the recent past) or three? After considerable debate, it was decided that there would be three readings and not two with those who argued that Roman Catholics must rediscover the whole Bible playing a principal role in coming to that decision.

A second thorny issue had been whether to retain the historic cycle of mediaeval pericopes as one of the annual cycles. This was not only a question of preserving a long-standing tradition of the Roman Church but also arose from a concern for remaining in solidarity with the other churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Old Catholic) which were still using the historic pericopes as their eucharistic lectionaries. Correspondence with the liturgical commissions of the various churches quickly revealed the deep-seated dissatisfaction with the historic pe-

ricopes and that the Roman work need not retain the historic cycle for the sake of these churches who were, themselves, already working on new lectionaries to replace the mediaeval cycle.⁶ At a meeting with the ecumenical observers in October 1964, the observers read a statement asking the Roman Church not to draw back from working towards a new lectionary for ecumenical reasons. At the same time the observers asked that any new lectionary be used experimentally for a six-to-nine year period so that it could be examined and tested by other churches before it was put into definitive use. The lectionary proposals had clearly caught the imagination of the ecumenical observers.

The final question to be resolved in 1966 was the number of years that would be in the cycle. Over the course of the group's work there had been a number of proposals. Initial proposals of a two-year cycle had been resisted by the *periti* as being insufficient to bear the number of pericopes that needed to be included. Other recent lectionary revisions and proposals had been based on either three-year or four-year cycles. It was the distribution of the gospel pericopes that played the major role in coming to a decision. A three-year cycle could follow the Synoptics with additional pericopes from the Fourth Gospel being used during particular seasons (Lent, Paschaltide) where it had strong historic precedence while, it was argued, a four-year cycle would produce either very short pericopes or the seemingly repetitious use of synoptic parallels. While there were several members of the working group who strongly advocated a four-year cycle, the decision was made in October 1966 to adopt a three-year cycle.⁷

By November 1966 the working group could make a report to Paul VI on the decisions made and the direction lectionary reform would take. Most important among these were 1) that there would be

⁶ The only churches which expressed the wish to retain the mediaeval cycle were the German Lutherans. Lutherans in Scandinavia and North America had already adopted alternative lectionaries or were in the course of preparing them.

⁷ Fr. Pierre Journel, a member of the working group, stated in one of his lectures during my studies at the Institut Catholique in Paris, that this decision was made on the personal intervention of Paul VI. Bugnini refrains throughout his work to mention the role played by any of the known interventions of Paul VI in the decision-making process in the conciliar liturgical reforms.

three readings for Sundays and major feasts and all three readings would be obligatory; 2) the lectionary for Sundays and feasts would follow a three-year cycle; 3) the historic tradition of giving particular prominence to certain books during particular liturgical seasons (e.g. John during the latter part of Lent and Paschaltide, the Acts of the Apostles during Paschaltide) would be respected; 4) there would be a semi-continuous reading of one of the Synoptics during the Sundays of “ordinary time” (i.e. after Epiphany and before Lent and after Pentecost) in each of the three years; and 5) important parts of John not read during the course of the liturgical seasons will be read during the year during which Mark is read as there would be “free space” as Mark is the shortest of the gospels.

It was on these principles that lectionary reform proceeded and the first draft proposal (*Ordo lectionum pro dominicis, feriis et festis sanctorum*) was published in July 1967. This draft was circulated to episcopal conferences, the first post-Vatican synod of bishops, and sent for comment to about eight hundred biblical scholars, liturgists, catechists, and pastoral theologians appointed by the episcopal conferences. Based on the responses received (which numbered over 6,500 comments on individual pericopes) the draft was radically revised and a final proposal was ready by the spring of 1969. Given papal approval, the new lectionary was promulgated for the entire Roman Catholic Church on Pentecost 1969 and published as *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (OLM) with implementation for general use appointed to begin on Advent Sunday 1969.

Bugnini concludes his chapter on lectionary reform by quoting Paul VI, a quotation equally apt for this paper. The pope wrote that he expected that the lectionary would

arouse among the faithful a greater hunger for the word of God. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this hunger will seem, so to speak, to impel the people of the New Covenant toward the perfect unity of the Church. We are fully confident that under this arrangement both priest and faithful will prepare their minds and hearts more devoutly for the Lord’s Supper and that, meditating on the Scriptures, they will be nourished more each day by the words of the Lord. In accord with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, all will thus regard sacred Scripture

as the abiding source of spiritual life, the foundation for Christian instruction, and the core of all theological study.⁸

Reception of OLM among the Churches

From the outset, the ecumenical observers were greatly taken with the lectionary project and had high hopes for the role that such a lectionary could play in the *oecumene*. Massey Shepherd, an Episcopal priest and Professor of Liturgy at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California, and one of the observers, remarked that no other church could muster the human resources (biblical scholars, liturgists, catechists and pastoral theologians) as could the Roman Church in its preparatory work.⁹ Clearly, what was developing caught the imagination of many who saw the new lectionary not as just serving the post-conciliar needs of the Roman Church alone but the “lectionary churches” as a whole. Here was a lectionary that could satisfy the needs of those churches that had become dissatisfied with the system of mediaeval pericopes they had inherited at the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation. The observers’ request that the lectionary be published for “experimental use” for six-to-nine years so that it could be examined and tested by other churches was a clear call that, together with the Roman Church, the churches work together to produce a common lectionary.

I can find no official response to this request of the ecumenical observers which seems to have gone unheard. When the OLM was published in 1969, there was nothing “experimental” about it and it was clearly prepared and published for long-term use. That, however, did not dissuade the interest of other churches in “examining and testing” the fruits of the Roman lectionary reform in the least. Churches simply began to adopt the OLM for liturgical use in their own churches.

First among these was *The Worshipbook*, a service book and hym-

⁸ Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* in Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy* 425.

⁹ Part of his introductory remarks at the meeting called by the Consultation on Common Texts to discuss ecumenical cooperation on the lectionary in Washington, D.C., 29 March 1978.

nal produced conjointly by three Presbyterian churches in the United States.¹⁰ Soon to follow were the Episcopal (Anglican) Church in the United States and the American Lutheran Churches working towards the publication of the joint-Lutheran *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW). This resulted in OLM's inclusion in the 1976 Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* and the 1978 LBW. The United Methodist Church made an edition of the OLM available to its congregations in 1976 as did the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ. The Consultation on Church Union (which represented nine American churches working towards church unity) produced a consensus edition of the OLM in 1974 which considerably re-enforced the growing use of OLM. Towards the end of the decade, The United Church of Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada (who together represent the majority of non-Roman Catholics in Canada) made the OLM available for use in their churches. Thus OLM was available and in use (either required or optional depending on the liturgical polity of the various churches) in the majority of the "liturgical" churches in North America.

This proliferation of publications of edited versions of OLM was, at first sight, ecumenically cheering, but soon proved to be a source of considerable dismay. A serious problem in the process emerged. As each church published the OLM for use by its denomination, minor changes had been made. These sometimes involved the substitution of a reading, the lengthening or shortening of a pericope and, perhaps most serious of all, various opinions on how the Sundays after Pentecost were to be calculated to begin the cycle of post-Pentecost semi-continuous readings from the epistles and gospels with the result that the readings were read on different Sundays. Groups of local pastors which had begun to meet to discuss their homiletical preparations for the following Sunday based on their new "common" lectionaries as well as inter-church lay study groups using the weekly lections for Bible study were thrown into disarray. Use of the grow-

¹⁰ The lectionary appeared in a 1970 draft of what became *The Worshipbook: Services and Hymns*, Philadelphia 1972, produced by the Joint Committee on Worship for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

ing corpus of lectionary resources became complicated. In one denomination, a clerical error separated the cycle of second readings from the appointed gospel by a week. What had been welcomed as an important instrument for Christian unity had become a source of division. Voices were raised for a resolution to what was fast becoming a serious ecumenical problem.

The Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), the ecumenical liturgical organisation which then represented over a dozen churches in Canada and the United States,¹¹ took the initiative and convened a meeting in Washington, D.C., from 29-31 March 1978. Attending were the representatives of thirteen North American churches along with Fr. Gaston Fontaine who had played such an important role in the development of the OLM. Under the chairmanship of Professor Massey Shepherd, the meeting looked for a way forward out of the present confused situation with which the churches were confronted. There was general agreement on the excellence of the OLM but also a strong feeling that it could still be improved. For example, concern was expressed over the use of the First (Old Testament) Reading where a number of those present felt that the choice of readings was not sufficiently broad and that the pericopes were often chosen too narrowly in light of the gospel pericope – either as prophecies or typologies. Various churches had addressed this concern by making their own emendations to OLM which, in part, created the problem the meeting was called to resolve. A consensus emerged that time had come for the churches to address these concerns together and to work towards a lectionary that would be truly common.

In the light of the overwhelmingly positive support for a common revision of the OLM, the CCT set up a working group – the North American Committee on Calendar and Lectionary (NACCL) – under the chairmanship of the Reverend Dr. Louis Brinner (a Presbyterian

¹¹ The CCT had played a major role, along with the (Roman Catholic) International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and the British ecumenical Joint Liturgical Group (JLG) in convening the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), the body which produced the common English translations of the major liturgical texts (e.g. Gloria, Creed, Lord's Prayer, Sanctus, Magnificat, Te Deum etc.) which are used by all the English speaking churches. The CCT now represents about twenty-five churches in North America.

who had been responsible for the introduction of the OLM in *The Worshipbook*). The group included biblical scholars, liturgists and pastors from the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran and United Methodist Churches.

A fundamental principle of the task set before the working group was that the basic calendar and structure of OLM were to be assumed and that the project was to *adapt* the OLM in the light of the comments and criticisms that had emerged from actual use in the churches. The working group's mandate was *not* to create a new lectionary.

In the context of the OLM as a whole most of the revisions made by NAACL were relatively minor. The Gospel pericopes were left largely untouched except to extend them for the sake of churches that read from the Bible rather than a lectionary.¹² The second (New Testament) readings were also left largely untouched except for some lengthening of pericopes and redistribution of texts in the light of the criticism that the OLM sometimes avoided "thorny" theological issues.

As was foreseen at the Washington meeting, it was the Old Testament readings in the OLM that underwent the most radical revision. These had been subject to serious criticism from biblical scholars and pastors (both Roman Catholic and other) ever since the OLM had been put into use. There had been a widespread appeal for a broader use of Old Testament material and a consequent abandonment of the narrow typological use of the OT along with the overuse of prophecies "fulfilled" in the Gospel pericope of the day. In response to these calls for revision, NACCL abandoned the narrow typological use of the Old Testament and created a schema in which there continued to be a typological relationship between the OT readings and the Gospel, but in a much broader sense. This allowed for a new cycle of semi-continuous readings of a number of significant Old Testament narratives. Thus, in Matthew's year (A) a number of Sundays are devoted to the Patriarchal and Mosaic narratives; in Mark's year (B)

¹² This somewhat undid the work of the biblical scholars who had often reduced the pericopes to their "original" form, omitting what they considered to be later redactional additions. This meant omitting verses from the pericope which often made reading the text directly from the Bible somewhat difficult.

a number of Sundays are devoted to the Davidic narrative; and in Luke's year (C) a number of Sundays are devoted to the Elijah-Elisha narrative and to selections from the minor prophets.

Once NACCL's work was completed, it was published by the CCT in 1983 as the *Common Lectionary* (CL). It was then given widespread use and testing by the member churches of CCT for two cycles (i.e. six years). From the outset, it was made clear that CL was for experimental use and that suggestions and criticisms were invited. The book itself included an evaluation form for that purpose. After the second cycle was complete evaluation was begun in earnest with the creation of the CCT Lectionary Task Force. This group was to evaluate the hundreds of comments from individuals and dozens of churches that had been received over the course of six years as well as more general reactions to the CL project as a whole. The Task Force was then to make all necessary adjustments to the CL and ready it for long-term use by the churches.

Broader Ecumenical Involvement

The publication of CL attracted considerable interest in other parts of the world. The Joint Liturgical Group in Great Britain (JLG) had published a two-year lectionary¹³ which was being widely used by the various churches in Great Britain and Ireland as well as in other parts of the British Commonwealth. They were also working on a four-year lectionary scheme. The two-year lectionary was thematic with the three readings chosen to conform to the "theme" that had been assigned to a given Sunday or feast.¹⁴ This elicited much criticism on the grounds that the texts were being made to conform to the pre-conceived theme rather than letting the scriptures speak for themselves. When exported, the themes themselves were found to be highly culturally limited and not easily adaptable to countries like

¹³ The Joint Liturgical Group, *The Calendar and Lectionary*, ed. Ronald C. Jasper, London 1967.

¹⁴ A table of these Sunday themes can be found in the *Alternative Service Book 1980* of the Church of England pp. 1092-3. Included were themes such as "The Word of God in the Old Testament" (Advent II), "The King and the Kingdom: Conflict" (Lent II) and "Those in Authority" (Pentecost XIX).

South Africa or Australia where the lectionary was also being used. Enthusiasm for pursuing the four-year scheme waned in light of the widespread success of the CL.¹⁵

The CL project took on a new, international dimension in 1983 with the formation of the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) as successor to ICET. The consultation brought together six ecumenical liturgical consultations in Great Britain, Ireland, North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.¹⁶ Their new mandate was no longer the creation of common liturgical texts alone but also to work towards a common ecumenical lectionary. In 1985, the member organisations of ELLC were asked to invite their member churches to participate in the evaluation of CL and to submit the results to the CCT whose own Lectionary Task Force would, in turn, include the evaluations of ELLC members along with those received from CCT member churches. From 1987, Dr. Donald Gray, a Canon of Westminster Abbey and Chair of the JLG regularly attended the biannual meetings of the Lectionary Task Force in New York as a representative of ELLC. At the same time ELLC entered into correspondence with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship to place the work underway in the widest ecumenical context possible.

From Common Lectionary to Revised Common Lectionary

Once the Lectionary Task Force began to work, it was faced with at least six broad areas that needed to be addressed.

1) There were conflicting suggestions on the length of particular pericopes. Churches accustomed to lengthy biblical readings at the liturgy often requested that pericopes be lengthened. Other churches, particularly those accustomed to the relatively short mediaeval eucharistic pericopes, found that three readings and a Psalm constituted a very rich weekly diet.

¹⁵ Out of a sense of loyalty to its instigator, the Methodist liturgist Dr. Raymond George, the JLG brought the project to completion and published it as *A Four Year Lectionary*, Norwich 1990.

¹⁶ Full information about ELLC and its member organisations can be found on its web page <http://www.englishtexts.org>

2) With the heightened awareness of the role of women in the church, there were criticisms that only a relatively small number of pericopes involved women – a bias inherited from OLM. Curiously, some pericopes had omitted verses with references to women on the grounds that biblical scholars had argued that these verses had been inserted during a later redaction of the gospel. Thus, the Task Force was somewhat drawn between the opinion of biblical exegetes who had reduced the pericopes to their “original” form and women whose suspicions were aroused by the omission of these passages from the lectionary pericopes.

3) An unexpected reaction to the new scheme of first readings came from a significant group of Lutheran professors of liturgy who insisted that, at the Eucharist, the Old Testament could *only* be read typologically! This group wanted CL to abandon the broader typological use of the OT and return to a closer link between the OT reading and the Gospel.

4) Related to this was the reaction of some to having three readings apparently running independently and unrelated during the Sundays after Pentecost. These came largely from those who had been accustomed to seeing the Collect, Epistle and Gospel of the mediaeval cycle as being closely related thematically. (This relationship, while widely accepted by pastors and preachers, was more pious wishful thinking than exegetical reality!)

5) Many voices were raised asking for a richer use of the Psalter suggesting that its use in OLM and CL was somewhat restricted and monochromatic.

6) Finally, questions were raised about the appropriateness of reading some passages of scripture which had historically taken out of their original context and misused. These concerned primarily passages that have been used (and still risk being used by some) as a basis for anti-Semitism and to justify the subordination of women.

While some of the criticisms could be easily met, it was clear that all of them could not easily be accommodated as some were mutually exclusive. Consultations were held with groups concerned about giving pericopes involving women a greater place in the lectionary as well as with those who were concerned about the use of the Psalter.

Women's concerns were met, at least in part, when passages involving the stories of women which had been omitted on the basis of *Redaktionsgeschichte* were included in the appointed pericope. A Psalms scholar was added to the Task Force so that the Psalm appointed for each set of readings could be reviewed and, in so doing, the number of Psalms used was considerably increased.

Many of the pericopes from the epistles and some from the gospels were lengthened and general permission was noted that passages could be shortened or lengthened with discretion, with suggested lengthenings often being noted in parenthesis. For readings from the epistles, this sometimes resulted in a redistribution of the pericopes over the course of a number of Sundays. In its discussions on the length of pericopes, the Task Force was conscious of the different uses to which the CL was being put. The OLM is a Sunday *eucharistic* lectionary and was created to be used in liturgies where there would always be a balance between word and sacrament. CL was being used by many churches where Sunday worship was not necessarily eucharistic and where the biblical readings and sermon bore the principal weight of worship. Awareness of this reality can be seen, to an extent, in the lengthened pericopes from the epistles as well as the semi-continuous readings from the Old Testament on the Sundays after Pentecost. Here, the widespread custom found in some Protestant churches to preach extensively on Old Testament narratives can be accommodated.

There was a general reluctance in the Task Force to "suppress" passages of the Bible because they have been misused in the past. Care was taken to put the passages in a larger biblical context rather than omit the offending passages themselves. It was clear, however, that some controversial passages need to be addressed by the preacher and not left to stand without comment.

The greatest (and most unexpected) challenge to CL was the call for a return to the typological reading of the Old Testament. In the Task Force, there was a general unwillingness to give up the semi-continuous cycle of Old Testament readings which had been widely greeted as a definite improvement on OLM. After considerable debate, it was agreed that a new, alternative cycle of Old Testament readings would be prepared that closely linked the OT and Gospel

pericopes but on a basis that was considered less slavishly typological than that in OLM. While this satisfied the demands of those churches that wished a close, weekly association between the Old Testament and Gospel pericopes, its negative consequence is the loss of communality in the project as a whole as various churches/communities choose between the two cycles of Old Testament readings during the Sundays after Pentecost.¹⁷

It became clear in the revision process that there were some questions that could not be resolved. The opposing demands that pericopes be lengthened or shortened made the committee aware of the wide variety of biblical cultures that characterise the lives of the churches. Given the courage of the Roman working group in resisting pressure to make one of the first two readings optional (and that in a church quite unaccustomed to lengthy biblical pericopes) the Task Force did not concede to demands for shorter readings. Similarly, requests that the three readings during the Sundays after Pentecost be more closely related were also resisted. There was strong conviction that the semi-continuous readings gave opportunity to preachers to respect the integrity of each book of Scripture by preaching on it over a series of weeks.

The Use of the RCL

Its work complete, the fruits of six years of testing and evaluation of CL and four years work by the Lectionary Task Force *The Revised Common Lectionary* (RCL) was published in 1992.¹⁸ While neither the CCT nor ELLC has yet provided an electronic version of the RCL it is easily available from a number of denominational and academic internet sites.¹⁹

¹⁷ As churches publish the RCL in their denominational liturgical texts, some make no mention of this second cycle of readings and offer the semi-continuous cycle alone. Others offer a choice between the two cycles but make it clear, as does the OLM, that a community must choose which cycle of OT readings it will use and must *not* alternate between the two.

¹⁸ The RCL was published simultaneously in Canada, England and the United States.

¹⁹ See, for example, the pages of the United Methodist Church: <http://www.gbod.org/worship/lectionary/> and those of Vanderbilt University Divinity Library: <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/>

Since its publication, the use of RCL has spread around the world and is being used in at least fifty churches covering the whole spectrum of “western”²⁰ Christianity from Anglican to Baptist.²¹ ELLC has undertaken responsibility for the international promotion of RCL and has produced short brochures introducing the RCL in various languages. Presently, these are available in French, German and Spanish in addition to English. Italian and Portuguese translations are in preparation.²² While CL began as a North American, anglophone project, it appears to have caught the imagination of a significant number of churches around the world. As the RCL is a schedule of readings and not a full-text lectionary, it is in no way bound to any particular language.

The use of the RCL is monitored by ELLC who are also responsible for gathering comments and criticisms for any possible revision in the future. At its most recent meeting, held in Prague in August 2005, ELLC adopted “a schedule of alternative readings from the Hebrew Scriptures for Paschaltide for possible use for an initial three-year period.”²³ These were prepared in light of requests from a number of member churches that there be alternative provision for the readings from the Acts of the Apostles which are read as the first reading in Paschaltide in both OLM and RCL.

What is the relationship between the RCL and Christian Unity?

Any search of the internet will quickly produce dozens of resources which have been produced to assist in the use of the RCL. These come from a wide spectrum of Christian traditions and range from the highly exegetical to the clearly pastoral. Some are designed to aid preachers in sermon preparation and others to be resources to Bible study groups.

²⁰ While there have been a number of overtures to the Orthodox churches to participate in the development of the RCL, the invitations have always been declined as these churches do not see themselves free to change their present system of lections.

²¹ A list of these can be found on the ELLC web pages: <http://www.englishtexts.org/world.html>

²² All are available by clicking the appropriate language in the left-hand column on the ELLC home page: <http://www.englishtexts.org/index.html>

²³ “Minutes of the English Language Liturgical Consultation,” Prague 2005, No. 16.3.

Such a wealth of biblical resources for one system of reading Scripture has never been available to so many before. This, coupled with the large quantity of printed material available, probably makes the RCL the best-resourced lectionary in the life of the Church. Significantly, much of the material is produced with an ecumenical readership in mind rather than for a particular confessional audience.

One effect of the RCL is that it has helped the churches to reclaim the Scriptures as a common possession and to understand their systematic proclamation and study is the common work of the whole Church. The appearance of the RCL has engaged a commitment from many churches around the world to proclaim the same Scriptures on a regular basis each Lord's Day. This solidarity in the proclamation of the word is not an insignificant matter and is a source of tangible unity among churches.

There are immediate and very practical consequences. In many communities, pastors from various churches regularly meet during the week to discuss the RCL pericopes for the following Sunday. Reports from pastors/preachers are that this exercise has clearly benefited their own preaching. Similarly, in many communities lay people gather to study the Bible together. This is increasingly taking place on an ecumenical (rather than denominational/confessional) basis. The RCL pericopes are often used as the weekly study texts. For many, the Bible is being re-discovered as a source of Christian unity rather than division. When the texts are those of the previous Sunday, Bible study groups are often surprised by what is common (rather than what is denominationally idiosyncratic) in the way in which the texts have been preached by the clergy from very different ecclesial traditions.

A general broadening of the canon of Scripture read in the liturgy is seen as a significant benefit of the RCL in both churches that have historically used a lectionary as well as those which have not. The addition of a reading from the Old Testament and its accompanying Psalm was generally new to those churches which used the mediaeval pericopes.²⁴ A frequently reported experience of those who came

²⁴ When I was young, the Old Testament was read on only one Sunday (The Sunday Next Before Advent) at the Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Canada. To hear it,

from non-lectionary churches but who have started to use the RCL is that the variety of scripture read has also increased and broadened considerably. Where it was often the custom for the preacher to choose the biblical reading(s) in light of the topic of the sermon, the choice of texts was often very limited. Preachers tended to avoid difficult or uncomfortable passages of Scripture. Moving to the RCL has vastly widened the canon of Scripture read and has also had the effect of changing preaching style to the extent that the sermon now emerges from the readings rather than having the reading(s) chosen in light of the sermon. This has had a singular effect both on how sermons are prepared and preached.

Since CL and, then, RCL have been available, there has been a remarkable move in non-lectionary churches to a voluntary use of RCL. At the semi-annual meetings of the Consultation on Common Texts the reports of the representatives of non-lectionary churches on the voluntary use of the RCL has shown astonishing growth. Often beginning with rates not exceeding 10–15 % at the time of RL’s publication (as opposed to virtually 100 % in the “lectionary” churches where RL was officially promoted by church headquarters or used as the official lectionary) voluntary use of RCL in a number of “non-lectionary” churches is reported often to exceed 80 %. When asked why, the general response is that the RCL has “sold itself” that is, it provides a better system of reading through the Scriptures than any other system available and it is generally acknowledged to be better than the “preacher’s choice” system in which the congregation is subject to the whims of the preacher.

Hope for the Future?

That leaves, perhaps, one question: what is the future of the RCL and the relationship with the OLM? Is there hope for a truly “common” lectionary? At the moment, any initiative for this lies in Rome. From

one had to attend either Morning or Evening Prayer. The latter had disappeared from most parishes with the advent of television. Morning Prayer (Matins) was generally eclipsed by an increasingly eucharistic-oriented piety. It was only in the late 1960s that the Church of England produced a lectionary containing an Old Testament reading and Psalm to supplement the Prayer Book pericopes.

the time of the Washington meeting in 1978, Roman Catholics have been fully involved in the creation of the CL and RCL. Both the American and Canadian Roman Catholic bishops' conferences send representatives to the semi-annual meetings of the CCT. The (Roman Catholic) International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) was also a member association of CCT and was faithfully represented at its meetings. Requests for permissive use of the CL and RCL were sent to Rome from both Canada and the United States. These requests either went unanswered or were denied. In the early 1990s, the CCT wrote an official request to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments that Rome assume a leadership role in helping the churches work toward a truly common lectionary. In 1994 the co-chairmen of ELLC, Horace Allen, a Presbyterian from the United States, and John Fitzsimmons, a Roman Catholic from Scotland, led the executive committee of the English Language Liturgical Consultation to Rome to appeal to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to request that the dicastery grant faculties to Roman Catholic bodies such as religious houses, dioceses or theological schools to use the RCL. As to this date there has been no formal response and one can only assume that the answer is no.

In recent years, the ecumenical climate has suffered a frosty season - if not a glacial chill - and hopes for ecumenical cooperation with Rome do not seem to be very hopeful. The publication of the instruction *Liturgicam Authenticam* in May 2001 virtually repudiated everything that has been done liturgically since cooperation on creating liturgical texts began with the founding of the CCT and JLG in the mid-1960s. The instruction forbids "mixed commissions" (i.e. ICEL for the English-speaking world) to work with other (ecumenical) bodies on the composition of new liturgical texts. As a result, ICEL was forced to withdraw from ELLC and the other national ecumenical groups such as the CCT of which it had been a partner and for which it had supplied the Secretariat for many years.²⁵ This

²⁵ *Liturgicam Authenticam* does not prevent national bishops' conferences from participating in national ecumenical liturgical consultations so the Roman Catholic Church is actively represented on all the member bodies of ELLC whose present chairman is Monsignor Kevin McGinnell, a Roman Catholic.

news was truly the ecumenical nadir for many liturgists who had worked ecumenically for years.²⁶

Dialogue between ELLC and Rome, however, continues and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity receives ELLC's minutes and has been asked to send an observer to its next Consultation. At its Consultation in August 2005, ELLC wrote to the presidents of the English-speaking bishops' conferences, the Episcopal Chair of ICEL and Cardinals Arinze (Divine Worship) and Kasper (Christian Unity) asking whether the time had perhaps come to "initiate a new project for the further development of the common texts" – a project that could possibly open the question of lectionary as well as common English liturgical texts.

If usage can be taken as a sign of success, the RCL is a significant success. Week by week it is used by hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of Christians around the world. In the Czech Republic, for example, it unites traditions as diverse as the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church²⁷ and the Old Catholic Church. Additionally, what members of those churches hear proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word would be virtually the same as what Roman Catholics would also hear on most Sundays (the major exception being the first reading on Sundays between Pentecost and the beginning of Advent). Standing in solidarity under the common proclamation of the Scriptures heard by the vast majority of Christians on a weekly basis in this country, alongside millions of other Christians around the world, is a significant (and often palpable) ecumenical achievement. The experience of those whose ministry is to proclaim the Word as well as of those who hear it is that the RCL helps them in their task better than any lectionary system they had used in the past. This reaction comes from both the "liturgical" traditions that used the mediaeval system of lections and the "free" traditions where the choice of readings was the prerogative of the preacher. In that light, one can only long for the day when the next step in

²⁶ See, for example, Horace T. Allen, "Viewpoint," under the headline "Ecumenist calls Rome's translation norms unrealistic, authoritarian" in *National Catholic Reporter* 29 June 2001 http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/062901/062901r.htm (accessed 17 December 2006).

ecumenical cooperation takes place and the proclamation of the Word becomes truly common.

²⁷ The CĀSH has published a version of RCL with their own emendations, imitating the North American churches which modified the OLM before beginning to work together towards a common lectionary.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE

On the Nature of Medieval Christianity

Burcht Pranger, Amsterdam

In this article I propose to discuss the following problem. How is it that, generally speaking, medieval sources, both written and visual, which, at first sight, fit within, and are replete with, religion, Christian religion, that is, more often than not can be read and interpreted as basically non-religious? Or, if we want to avoid the binary and anachronistic opposition between religious and non-religious, one could rephrase this question and ask why the religious element often manifests itself as intrinsically indifferent?¹ Not only does this ‘indifference’ apply to the more obvious cases of logic and semantics – and more generally to scholastic sources. It also underlies texts that are thoroughly devout. Whether we deal with the logic of Abelard, Ockham or Buridan, or with Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitatio Christi*, both types of source-material are somehow shot through with what I would like to coin as ‘religious indifference.’

Before trying my hand at an effort exactly to explain what I mean by ‘religious indifference’ I want to trace the complicated, more recent pre-history of this concept which, in my view, at once echoes that which in the Middle Ages was, roughly speaking, considered religion and at the same time prevents us from grasping it in its historical shape.

¹ I intend to use ‘indifferent’ in a heuristic way. For that reason I refrain from setting out with a clear definition. Although in English the primary meaning of ‘indifference’ would seem to be ‘a lack of commitment, *parti pris* or interest,’ I try to shift the emphasis from the subjective aspect to a phenomenological one. In that respect my explorations can be seen as a mirror image of Hent de Vries’ analysis in his *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, Baltimore 1999, which combines the survival of religious figures and tropes in modern thought with negative theology. While tracing various shades and meanings of religious indifference, I ultimately aim at laying bare its negative, elusive dimension, representing a zero point both in the ‘religious’ subject and object.

Schleiermacherian religion

Recent research has emphasised that what we use to call ‘medieval’ more often than not proves itself to be nothing but a nineteenth-century phenomenon. From Romanticism to the Neo-gothic movement, from *Genie du christianisme* to *Aeterni Patris* the image of medieval Christendom was characterised as universal and comprehensive. Meanwhile many studies have been devoted to unmasking the universal idea of the Middle Ages as a basically nineteenth-century concept.² However, as I see it, unmasking anachronisms, although part of the historical trade, is not all there is to it. With regard to religion we should ask whether, even if it is deprived of its more universal characteristics and reduced to the plurality of historical phenomena, we have the means to reconstruct it, for instance, with the help of anthropology and sociology. Such efforts are in my view quite legitimate and there is no reason to fear that religion proper will be resolved into disparate elements of *Diesseitigkeit*, such as, man, society, (pagan) rites and practices. There is cause for concern, however, in view of the fact that too many problems with regard to the roots of the nineteenth-century medievalism remain as yet unsolved. This holds particularly true for the status of a universal concept of religion whose more recent origins tend to distort the picture of medieval religion to the extent that such a universalism is applied to the source-material in a timeless and anachronistic manner. Conversely, traces of medieval (and Baroque) religion continue to be present in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century discussions about its presence and shape, as, for instance, in French and Belgian anti-clericalism and the Catholic defence against it.³ In that respect academic trends tend to move faster and in a more radical albeit more isolated context,

² Cf. Peter Raedts, *Toerisme in de tijd. Over het nut van middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, Nijmegen 1995, idem, ‘De katholieken en de middeleeuwen: Prosper Guéranger OSB (1805–1875) en de eenheid van de Liturgie’ in R. E. Stuip en C. Vellekoop (eds.), *De middeleeuwen in de negentiende eeuw*, Hilversum 1998, 87–109. Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst in Nederland 1570–1990*, Amsterdam 1996.

³ Cf. my review of Ludo J. R. Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men: Monasticism and its Meaning to Medieval Society*, Woodbridge 1992, in: *Millennium. Tijdschrift voor Middeleeuwse Studies*, 11, 1997, 2, p. 169–70.

than history and culture as such. To give one example, the explosive growth of the study of medieval logic and semantics in the second half of the last century was often initiated by scholars with a clerical background and for some of them the secular study of, for instance, scholasticism which proved to be capable of banishing or isolate religion proper, was dialectically related to their own religious past. However, possible conflicts and tensions between the religious and the secular ceased to be a problem for their students most of whom were free, as far as religion was concerned, from (nineteenth-century) historical contagion, and, consequently from any *parti pris* in this matter. If such indifference contributes to academic progress, *tant mieux*. But that should not blind us to the developments around us in the ‘real’ world which witness a return of the particular in religious ideology.⁴ For the way we as western academics tend to look at religion tends to be of a universal and, it should be added, of a reflective nature. As a consequence, to the extent that manifestations of particular religion in its fundamentalist guise, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, lack reflection (of any kind whatever) they seem alien to us since, even in their most intolerant manifestations in the past, we are used to associate those religions with some degree of reflectivity.

To get a better grip on those different ways we experience religion I want to bring up a number of possible and tentative suggestions. The first reason why we still tend to think of religion as a universal phenomenon is, in my view, the still all pervasive influence of Schleiermacher’s who successfully defended religion ‘against its cultured despisers.’ Criticizing Kant’s reduction of religion to a phenomenon ‘within the limits of reason alone/*innerhalb den Grenzen*

⁴ Of course, political Islam comes to mind here but also American fundamentalism. In this respect interesting questions could be raised with regard to the reflective or non-reflective nature of Judaism, Christianity and Islam respectively. Would the general, more liberal assumption that Christianity has in one way or another always be linked to high culture hold in the view of historical scrutiny? What about Islam? As for the medieval aspects of this problem Marcia Colish, in her *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition 400–1400*, Yale 1997, has raised the question as to the sudden rise of Islam and its subsequent failure to modernise from within in the way medieval Christendom had succeeded in doing. See also Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle-Eastern Response*, London 2002.

der blossen Vernunft Schleiermacher claimed a separate and independent status for religion: the province of *Gefühl*/feeling next to the theoretical and practical reason. Up to the present day religion's respectability, Christianity, that is, is primarily based on its emotional power which has manifested itself through the ages.⁵ This focus on affect and emotion runs from the *Dies irae* and the *Stabat Mater* right through the St Matthew's Passion. That Schleiermacher's concept of religion as *Gefühl* had been nothing but a stroke of genius does not only become evident from its tenacious survival in modern notions of religion. It has also solved two issues that were offensive to the modern mind: the self-identification of the church as an institute with its claims of authority over morality, politics etc., and the doctrinal claims to truth on the part of separate, confessional denominations and religions. And even though Christianity, in particular in its Platonic guise, had long been familiar with tensions between word, image and an ideal essence, Schleiermacher outdid his predecessors in furnishing the world behind the screen of appearances with a powerful anthropological foundation just as never before the relativising of both the distance and the proximity between the language and the experience of faith had so successfully turned out in favour of the latter.

In addition to Schleiermacher's successful proclamation of religion as *Gefühl*, another, more controversial mode of religious civilisation should be mentioned with an enormous radiance both backward and forward, and that is late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scho-

⁵ Of course, this is a distortion of history since, as we know, the Middle Ages abound with different dimensions of religion, whether intellectual or affective. That being true, so far no successful synthesis had been established doing equally justice to intellect and emotion. In reaction to its overwhelming influence on, and presence in, church doctrine recent scholarship had dealt intensively with medieval devotion and mysticism. Yet it does not prove to be easy to categorise mysticism over and against scholasticism. Pioneering work has been done by Bernard McGinn in his comprehensive history of western mysticism: *The Presence of God, A History of Christian Mysticism*, New York 1992–2005. In it the author discusses much material which hitherto would have been categorised as history of theology (cf. the German *Dogmenschichte*), as a systematic expression of religious experience. On the one hand, this approach deserves admiration because of the author's erudition and overview. On the other hand, there is a looming danger of the emergence of a new kind of scholasticism which attempts to systematize texts that resist such formalisation.

lasticism. Admittedly, unlike Schleiermacher's reformulation of religion this particularly learned form of religion has failed to convince 'its cultured despisers/*die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*.'⁶ However, it did succeed in shaping the view those *Gebildeten* had of religion apart from its apparent, emotional and imaginative aspects. To be frank, in spite of all efforts at modernisation since Vatican II, it still is the image many an intellectual has of Roman-Catholicism as a religion that is not only concerned with piety and morality, but is all-pervasively present in each and every domain of the human existence underpinned by a theoretical foundation and a continuous explication of doctrine. And, even though the 'cultured' outsider is entirely indifferent to such a religion, he often hardly realises to what extent his rejection of that religion follows the model of an anachronistic, scholastic procedure. For, if the unbeliever takes any trouble at all to articulate his unbelief, it is highly probable that he will do so in terms of a more or less scholastic debate, for instance, by saying that he does not believe the proposition 'God exists' to be true. The very fact that such an isolated statement about the existence or non-existence of God can be made at all, derives from the scholastic method and echoes the *utrum deus sit* as well as its methodological contradiction *videtur quod non*. The rapid decline of the neo-scholastic movement in the second half of the twentieth century should not blind us to its historical importance and to the fact that, in more than one respect, some of its elements, like Schleiermacher's *Gefühlsreligion*, still survive in our general, western discourse on God and religion.⁷ This being so, it raises the question to what degree we have to, or are able to, rid ourselves from those pre-set ideas about religion that shape our vision of the past in order to get a grip on what is characteristic for, and different from, medieval religion. Or, to put things more

⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Richard Crouteri, Cambridge 1988.

⁷ In my view the intellectual energy spent in the development of neoscholasticism in the period between Vatican I and the fifties of the twentieth century has hitherto insufficiently be appreciated. Part of the reason for this is the fact that it has so far been an exclusively inner-Catholic affair. A re-evaluation based on a more detached and less partisan approach in the context of the history of ideas and cultural history at large should be able to mend this historiographical gap.

cautiously, how we can purge our historical gaze so as to distinguish between historical authenticity and anachronisms?⁸

Religion as civilisation

One aspect of the problems discussed so far seems to be undisputed, and that is the civilised nature of western religion. By that I mean that, without denying the primitive and pagan undercurrents throughout the ages, Christianity as it has manifested itself in historical documents, has been a highly artificial construct.⁹ In that respect both Schleiermacher and the neoscholastic theologians and philosophers have only confirmed a dimension of Christianity that had been inherent to it right from its early origins. If we have a closer look at late-medieval scholasticism and devotion on the one hand and the nineteenth century on the other, we may conclude that, in spite of all problems concerning the poor schooling of the clergy, in particular in the countryside, it was not only priests and ministers (including the most orthodox ones) that were well educated. From the *Heidelberg Catechism* to the François de Sales' *Introduction à la vie dévote* it was also lay people that participated in this civilisation process. This may have little bearing on the Middle Ages proper apart from the fact that we are faced here with a historical development that is somehow rooted in the Middle Ages. A little patience may be needed here in order to make our detours meaningful and gain proper access to the Middle Ages. If we cannot ignore the nineteenth century without impunity when trying to coin a historical concept of religion, this obtains even more conclusively for the preceding period. If we next wonder what, if anything, connects both Schleiermacher and neoscholasticism with that preceding period, it might be the fact that both periods have tended at once to create an absolute religion and flatten it. With regard to the *Gefühlsreligion* this would seem to be little problematic since up to the present day we are used to look at

⁸ For a recent overview of the status quaestionis with regard to Scholasticism proper, see: Willemien Otten, 'Medieval Scholasticism: Past, Present, and Future' in *Dutch Review of Church History*, 81, 3, 2001, p. 275-89.

⁹ I have been discussing this problem in more detail in my *The Artificiality of Christianity. Essays on the Poetics of Monasticism*, Stanford 2003.

pietistic devotion as transformed and modernised by Schleiermacher as well as at the preceding late medieval devotion through the lens of that selfsame Schleiermacherian *Gefühlsreligion*. As for neoscholasticism, things would seem to be different since historical scholarship has taught us meanwhile that religion is not by necessity an intrinsic, or, to put it less radically, a dominant part of it. For, unlike neoscholasticism – and, it should be added – the Controversy Theology of the Contra-reformation and Protestant scholasticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries its medieval predecessor could not be characterised as exclusively religious nor was it expected to produce exclusively religious results. This lack of religious pressure resulted into a more relaxed and varied way of reasoning which enabled, for instance, logic and semantics to flourish freely without suffering from affective or religious pressure. Conversely, neoscholasticism has always been shot through with ulterior, religious motives in the service of religious homogeneity. Even the great Etienne Gilson still felt compelled to reassure his readers that possible disagreements between Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure were based on their *accord fondamental*; a harmony, in other words, that automatically ironed out any possible discursive tensions and inequalities that might have existed between the two saintly scholars.¹⁰

Two examples

Before turning to the Middle Ages proper, I would like to make one or two preliminary remarks about the period 1500–1800, a period that is utterly intriguing because the nineteenth-century ‘restoration’ of religion as outlined above can be seen both as a continuing that period and ignoring it. To illustrate this point I shall give two brief examples that, although the way we perceive them tends to be created after the Schleiermacherian and neoscholastic image, show clear signs of non-medieval characteristics on the one hand and can help us to bring out quintessentially medieval aspects on the other that shed light on the gap that separates us from the Middle Ages.

¹⁰ Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure*, third edition, Paris 1953, p. 396.

First I want to reflect on two famous statements by Pascal: 'Jesus will be in agony till the end of times; during that period one should not sleep.'¹¹ And the next one: 'A king needs an entire crowd of busy-bodies for no other reason than stopping himself from having to think about himself.'¹² Both statements can be found in one and the same work, the *Pensées*, that, although unfinished, aimed at giving an integral defence of the Christian faith. Now the problem is that in my view we are not capable of taking in those two statements in one and the same breath and appreciate them within one, homogeneous framework. As for the first statement about Jesus' agony, inevitably reading it through the lens of Schleiermacherian and existential philosophy and theology, we will be struck by its deeply religious tone. As for the second statement about the king, we will primarily admire Pascal's literary talent and brilliance and acknowledge his position in the great tradition of French moralists such as Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, and De la Bruyère.¹³ But who would have the courage to state loudly and clearly that the scene of Jesus' agony has been written down with as light and French a touch as the scene of the king's boredom? Yet the latter is no less a *bon mot* than the former. And, before medieval scholars proudly point out that the blend of deep religious feelings and 'moralist' insights into the *condition humaine* can be seen as a quintessentially medieval phenomenon and that, furthermore, such religious-secular witticisms could have been produced effortlessly by great medieval authors such as Gregory the Great, Bede, Abelard, the Archpoet, Bernard of Clairvaux and many others, we should realise that Pascal's Jesus in agony is more 'humanistic' and his king more 'religious' than any of the medieval

¹¹ Pascal, *Pensées*, 553: 'Jésus sera en agonie jusqu' à la fin du monde: il ne faut pas dormir pendant ce temps-là,' (édition Brunschvig), Ch. -M. des Granges (red.) *Pensées de Pascal*, Paris 1961, p. 210.

¹² Pascal, *Pensées* 142: 'Aussi on évite cela soigneusement, et il ne manque jamais d'y avoir auprès des personnes des rois un grand nombre des gens qui veillent à faire succéder le divertissement à leurs affaires, et qui observent tout le temps de leur loisir pour leur fournir des plaisirs et des yeux de prendre garde que le roi ne soit seul et en état de penser à soi, sachant bien qu'il sera misérable, tout roi qu'il est, s'il y pense,' *Pensées de Pascal*, p. 114-5.

¹³ For a general discussion of the literary and religious context of Pascal's thought see Philippe Sellier, *Pascal et saint Augustin*, Paris 1970. Reprinted in paperback: Paris 1995.

precedents would or could have been. The fact, then, that those two statements, caught, as it were, in an iron embrace, tell one and the same story deprives the reader of both religious and secular support. The king's desire for entertainment cannot be separated from the agonising Jesus; the one, the entertainment, is in a sense a caricature of the other, the agony, and vice versa. Both are two sides of the same coin. Our inability to grasp the unity of those two scenes can once more be attributed to our 'modern' tendency to associate religion primarily with emotion and affect while banishing the entertainment dimension from it. It is the very special and impalpable integrity of Pascal's 'thoughts' that turns him into the fathomless thinker he is and lends his *Pensées* a kind of indifference that only reinforces its solitary and inaccessible nature.

My second example is taken from Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Discussing the appropriate moment of taking a right decision Ignatius prescribes the following mental attitude:

It is necessary to keep as my objective the end for which I was created, viz. to praise God Our Lord and save my soul, and at the same time to be in an attitude of indifference, free from any disordered attachment, so that I am not more inclined or attracted to accepting what is put before me than to refusing it. Rather I should be as though at the centre of a pair of scales, ready to follow in any direction that I sense to be more to the glory and praise of God Our Lord and the salvation of my soul.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, the indifference as presented in this passage had, rightly or wrongly, led many to belief that it offered ways out of moral dilemma's that seemed rather arbitrary. In religious terms, this meant that still during his lifetime Ignatius could be suspected of illuminism, associating him with the Alumbrados or even the Protestants.¹⁵ Conversely, his followers can be seen to have toned down possible radical implications of this indifference by surrounding it

¹⁴ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, 179, point 2; *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, Joseph. A. Munitiz en Philip Endean (red.), Harmondsworth 1996, p. 318.

¹⁵ Cf. Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados*, Cambridge 1992, p. 92-7.

with a *cordon sanitaire* in the shape of a mix of mysticism, doctrine and scholasticism, elements, that is, which kept Ignatius' indifference firmly embedded in the ecclesiastical structures. What remains, however, is the potential of radical indifference (in spite of the caveat, added by Ignatius, that the making of a choice could only be directed at things which were either morally indifferent or good in themselves or not contradicting church doctrine). This indifference is, in turn, no less enigmatic than Pascal's religious indeterminacy. *Les extrêmes se touchent*. The Jansenist-Augustinian determination of Pascal reflects in a sense the basic indifference of Ignatius. In the guise of Jesus' vigilant agony and the intensity of indifference concerning decision making both Ignatius and Pascal can be said to focus on vigilance. But, if we may have found ourselves incapable of pinning down the religious, Christian or, for that matter, non-religious, human side of Pascal, in Ignatius' case things look even more complicated since, their determinacy notwithstanding, it is ultimately unclear what Ignatius is up to with his *Exercices*, or, to put it differently, exactly what is so Christian or religious about them.

Link between 'Christian' and 'religion'

All this suggests that, looking for ways of access to medieval religion, we face some serious aporias. Without them it would be so easy. For how tempting it looks to trace both Ignatius and Pascal back to medieval and early-Christian sources, as, for instance by identifying Jesus' agony as part of the omnipresent Augustinian motive of religious affection and by characterising the bulk of medieval, religious literature from the early days of monasticism to the flourishing devotion of the Franciscans and the imitation of Christ in the Modern Devotion as one gigantic spiritual exercise! As for the notion of exercise, we could link it to the ideas of Pierre Hadot who, in his *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (= *Exercices spirituels*) argues that a major part of ancient philosophy is to be considered a spiritual exercise starting a line of thought and mentality with a long aftermath in Christianity.¹⁶ In Hadot's view the heritage of ancient Stoic and Epicurean

¹⁶ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Oxford 1995.

philosophy has exercised a greater influence on Ignatius than later-medieval devotion and mysticism. Regardless of the way in which specialists covering different periods in the field of medieval studies approach their sources we would have here a common denominator which could serve as an explanatory model of the technical structure of medieval religiosity, from penance to exegesis, from visual art to meditation. Even scholasticism could in a way be appreciated as part of this general phenomenon of spiritual exercise, starting from the Augustinian *exercitatio mentis* to Abelard's *Sic et non* right through the methodological doubt which keeps being part of the scholastic *videtur quod non*. But to what degree is all this still to be called specifically religious or Christian?

To find an answer to those questions, the first pitfall we should avoid is in my opinion the temptation to reduce philosophical elements as much as possible to the category of pagan influences on Christianity. Such an approach would, in my view, fail to do justice to the precise nature of the integral phenomenon of Christian religion as it has manifested itself in a great number of medieval sources.

If, for practical purposes, we maintain the link between 'Christian' and 'religious,' it is crystal clear that religion has been an all pervasive presence in medieval culture. To put it in the words of Louis Dumont:

...medieval religion was a great cloak – I am thinking of the Mantle of Our Lady of Mercy. Once it became an individual affair, it lost its all-embracing capacity and became one among other apparently equal considerations, of which the political was the first born. Each individual may, of course, and perhaps even will, recognise religion (or philosophy), as the same all-embracing consideration as it used to be *socially*. Yet on the level of social consensus or ideology, the same person will switch to a different configuration of values in which autonomous values (religious, political, etc.) are seemingly juxtaposed, much as individuals are juxtaposed in society.¹⁷

¹⁷ As quoted by Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore 1993, p. 28. The quotation is taken from: Louis Dumont, 'Religion, Politics, and Society in the Individualistic Universe' in *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute for 1970*, p. 32.

It is the anthropologist Talal Asad who, in his *Genealogies of Religion*, has made a perceptive comment on this passage and laid bare its flaws and anachronistic presuppositions:

According to this view, medieval religion, pervading or encompassing other categories, is nevertheless *analytically* identifiable. It is this fact that makes it possible to say that religion has the same essence today as it had in the Middle Ages, although its social extension and function were different in the two epochs. Yet the insistence that religion has an autonomous essence-not to be confused with the essence of science, or of politics, or of common sense-invites us to define religion (like any essence) as a transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon. It may be a happy accident that this effort of defining religion converges with the liberal demand in our time that it be kept quite separate from politics, law, and science – spaces in which varieties of power and reason articulate our distinctly modern life. This definition is at once part of a strategy (for secular liberals) of the confinement, and (for liberal Christians) of the defense of religion.¹⁸

Asad's criticism of Dumont stems from his difference of opinion with Clifford Geertz on the issue of the status of religion. While Geertz defines religion as a closed system ('a system of meanings embodied in symbols') which subsequently, in a separate move, can or cannot be related to 'social-structural and psychological processes,' Asad considers those two dimensions to be one and the same. For him the anthropologist and the historian do not find religion pure and simple on their path but, rather, a dynamic process consisting of heterogeneous and ever moving and changing elements:

For the entire phenomenon is to be seen in large measure in the context of Christian attempts to achieve a coherence in doctrine and practices, rules and regulations, even if that was a state never fully attained. My argument is that there cannot be a uni-

¹⁸ Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, p. 28.

versal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes.¹⁹

Referring to Peter Brown's classic *Augustine*, Asad illustrates his thesis with the example of Augustine's attitude toward the Donatists.²⁰ Discipline is the keyword here comprising religious, political and anthropological aspects. Geertz formula would be too simple here, Tasad argues, in order 'to accommodate the force of this [Donatist] religious symbolism...ranging all the way from laws (imperial and ecclesiastical) and other sanctions (hellfire, death, salvation, good repute, peace) to the disciplinary activities of social institutions (family, school, city, church) and of human bodies (fasting, prayer, obedience, penance ...' 'Even Augustine held that although religious truth was eternal, the means for securing human access to it were not.'²¹ The use of the words 'even Augustine' here does not betray a deep understanding of the Church Father who can be held responsible for providing Pascal with the concept of intrinsic temporality as evoked in the scenes of Jesus' agony and the king's boredom. Consequently, if I have a criticism to make of Asad, it will not concern his refusal to consider symbols, rites and texts to be programmes which can automatically be deciphered. As for Asad's criticism of Geertz, one can only agree. When Asad, in a subtle chapter 'on discipline and humility in medieval Christian monasticism,' establishes a clear link between monastic rites such as the keeping of the Rule as a law and precept and 'the formation of a virtuous will,' he is right to point out that 'reading [the Rule and Scripture] is the product of varying disciplined performers who discourse with one another in historically determinate ways.'²² If Asad is to be criticised, it is because he lends his historicizing vision still too great a measure of eternity making the 'historically determinate ways' a bit too determinate. Paradoxically,

¹⁹ Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, p. 29.

²⁰ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: a Biography*, London 1967, p. 236-38.

²¹ Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, p. 35.

²² Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, p. 131.

this element of over-determination is not to be found in the text, the rite or the symbol proper but, rather, in the underlying discipline which is used as a tool to bring out those texts, rites and symbols as historical phenomena. However, as we have seen with Ignatius, that discipline itself is faceless, indifferent; it contains an indeterminacy which, ultimately, freezes history as it were.

Indifference

I shall try to illustrate this paradox, or, rather, this enigma of historicity, temporality and their underlying ‘indifference,’ mental, linguistic, rhetorical, religious or otherwise, with the help of the conflict between Bernard and Abelard. In his famous diatribe against Abelard in his *Epistola 190* Bernard appeals to the authority of the Fathers and their fixed concept of the form and content of the *catholica fides* against the despicable efforts of the ‘new theologian who, since his childhood, has been playing with logic and now, having entered upon the study of Holy Scripture, has gone mad and transgressed the old boundaries set by the Fathers... Where all say *sic*, he says *non sic*.’ ‘I,’ Bernard says, listen to the Prophets and the Apostles, I obey the Gospel, not the Gospel according to Peter. Do you reveal to us a new Gospel? The Church has never accepted a fifth Gospel...’²³

The example is famous indeed and so is the religious conflict it has come to represent: Bernard’s love of the affect and the orthodoxy of church doctrine and Abelard’s fondness of logic and argumentation. But, apart from the fact the Abelard has been as innovative in the field of affect and devotion as Bernard, we must conclude that the way the two men have been represented over time has become asymmetrical. Whilst it is easy to position Abelard within the culture of the liberal arts, Bernard, on the other hand, is often seen as representing, not only an anti-rational, but also an anti-cultural stance.²⁴ As a result, many an interpreter has overlooked the fact that Bernard, for

²³ Bernard van Clairvaux, *Epistola 190*, V, 12; J. Leclercq en H. Rochais (red.), *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. 8, Rome 1977, p. 27.

²⁴ See, for instance, Erwin Panofsky’s comment on Bernard’s so called negative attitude towards art and culture in *Abbot Suger on the Abbey of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, second edition, Princeton 1979, p. 1-37.

his part, despite his intense use of Scripture and of the Church Fathers, has felt as 'free' (in the sense of free in the use of the 'liberal' arts) in his use rhetoric when reading and commenting the Bible as Abelard did in his use of logic. In that respect he can be said to be as much or, for that matter, as little on the side of religion, tradition and authority as his opponent. In other words, 'the boundaries (*termini*) set by the Fathers' prove to be much more fluid and flexible and, it should be added, much more a product of exercise and imagination than rhetorically suggested by Bernard and, subsequently, believed by both his critics and his followers. The fact that, as pointed out by Asad, issues such as power politics, social institutions and the likes have also played their role in this process, only complicates the picture making it more diffuse and, thereby, more historical.

All this is not to say that there has been no doctrinal continuity in the Middle Ages, no *depositum fidei*, to which appeals could be made. However, so seemingly fixed a doctrinal body was always of an intrinsically historical nature and as such subject to reading, exercise, meditation, recitation. And even if the last and most literal one, (liturgical) recitation would seem to boil down to sheer repetition keeping a historical body such as liturgy intact by performing it, as much as possible, always and everywhere in the same manner, to believe this claim to sempiternity would be a distortion of history, or, rather, wishful thinking about what history should have looked like. For, if anything has been subject to change in the Middle Ages, it has been the 'fixed' body of liturgy: transsubstantiation, *realis praesentia*, how else are they to be characterised but as *Fremdkörper*, as a civilised erosion from within?²⁵

Conclusion

My conclusion can be no other than that religion as a generic concept is of little help in interpreting medieval culture. On the one hand, such

²⁵ See, for instance, the development of the Eucharistic devotion as analysed by Charles Caspers, *De eucharistische vroomheid en het feest van Sacramentsdag in de Nederlanden*, Leuven 1992 and M.B. Pranger, 'L'eucharistie et la prolifération de l'imaginaire aux XIe et XIIe siècles,' in: A. Haquin (ed.) *Fête-Dieu (1246-1996)*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1999, p. 97-117.

a concept smells too much of a Schleiermacherian universal, religious experience and on the other hand the influence of neoscholastic is still too strong in that experiential concepts of religion go hand in hand with descriptive ones. Precisely the descriptive concept of faith tends to evoke its experience (as, for instance, in Pietism) while at the same time shutting it out in a semi-detached form.

What does this mean for the status of religion in the Middle Ages? Of course, it would be quite an exaggeration to deny the religious and Christian nature of the Middle Ages altogether, although, in view of the many anachronisms discussed above, we often do not have a clue – and certainly do not have the analytical tools – as to exactly what notions such as ‘Christian’ and ‘religion’ did in fact mean.

As I have been trying to point out, the problem lies in the fact that so far we have not been capable of articulating the precise nature of the ‘indifference’ as well as the exercise-outlook of medieval religion. This impotence is partly due to the overpowering influence of Scholasticism, even though it is perhaps in Scholasticism that the status of religion is least problematic. The pre-scholastic period is even harder to characterize in religious terms, however, since we do not dispose of the categories that would furnish pre-scholastic Christianity with the performative components that would show it in its historical appearance which we could ‘read’ in its totality.²⁶ Of course, there is Talal Asad with his notions of discipline in a historical context, and, in a wider sense, cultural anthropology with a historical focus, but in my view even those modern disciplines cannot do sufficient justice to the wealth of the source material. To put it, once more, in anachronistic terms, seen from the enlarged perspective of the *après*-Middle Ages, we should admit that we do not know how the Ignatian indifference (which, in one way or another, is rooted in each and every practice of medieval devotion) can be squared with the intensity of Pascal’s Jesus (who, in his turn, cannot be detached from the king in search of entertainment).

To cut a long story short, the fact that medieval religion as we know it is first and foremost to be seen as an expression of civilisa-

²⁶ For a recent attempt to offer an integral view of twelfth-century thought, including both philosophy and religion, see Willemien Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm. A Study of Twelfth-Century Humanism*, Leiden 2004.

tion considerably hampers our understanding it properly. On the one hand, Christianity as a monotheistic religion of the book can take on any shape any reader lends it. On the other hand, historically speaking, things might in fact have developed along slightly less arbitrary lines. In that case it has been precisely the filling in of the 'free' space between God and his book *and* the practising reader that offered the latter the opportunity to shape him or herself in a process of continuous exercise. Whether that should be called religion, depends on how broadly or how strictly one wants to define this concept. It is no doubt to be called 'Christian' if only because of its subject-matter, even though that being so does not tell us much about the underlying reading and imagination techniques.

In conclusion, I want call upon Bernard's rhetorical imagination in order to get some grip on the problems discussed so far. When, in his sermon *In assumptione beatae Mariae*,²⁷ Bernard brings up one of his favourite themes, the resurrection of Lazarus, he does so in a repetitive, enchanting, exorcising and almost liturgical manner by repeating the *Lazarus, veni foras*.²⁸ While, with the voice of Jesus, still urging dead Lazarus to leave behind his desperate state of bodily decomposition, putrefaction and stench by coming out, he repeats the call *Lazarus, veni foras*, in a dramatic version: '*Abyssus vocat abyssum*,²⁹ the abyss calls upon the abyss, the abyss of light and grace upon the abyss of misery and darkness.' Here the ingredients of discipline, rule and performance converge into the *hodie* of ritual preaching: one familiar voice (*Lazarus, veni foras*) mixing with another one (*Abyssus vocat abyssum*), the two of them transforming into one, single new voice. Somehow this splendid rhetorical move is reminiscent of the *bons mots* of Pascal.³⁰ However, exactly what is so Chris-

²⁷ Bernard van Clairvaux, *Sermo in assumptione beatae Mariae*, 4, 3; J. Leclercq en H. Rochais (eds.), *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. 5, Rome 1968, p. 246.

²⁸ St. John 11:43

²⁹ Psalm 41:8.

³⁰ If this amalgam of voices as they surface in Bernard's text is to called a *bon mot*, then surely Walter Map's parody of Bernard's use of the text from St. John should be labelled a *witticism*: 'Walter, count of Nevers, died in the Chartreuse and was buried there. At once Bernard speeded to the grave...and exclaimed with a loud voice: 'Walter, come out (*veni foras*). But, because Walter did not hear the voice of Jesus, he did not have the ears of Lazarus, and he did not come out.' Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, M. J. James (ed.), Oxford 1983, p. 80.

tian or religious about this, we shall only know if we are able to comprehend the indifference underlying the making and performing of those *bons mots*. If there is a utopian aspect to the understanding of medieval religion, it is to be found in this enigmatic blend of focus, intensity and indifference.

Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue

Bruce T. Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue*, Collegeville 2000.

Bruce T. Morrill, Joanna E. Ziegler, and Susan Rodgers (eds.), *Practicing Catholic: Ritual, Body, and Contestation in Catholic Faith*, New York 2006.

This review article deals with two works, first on a study of J. B. Metz's political theology and Alexander Schmemmann's liturgical theology, which Bruce T. Morrill offers in his book *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*; second on a collective work *Practicing Catholic: Ritual, Body, and Contestation in Catholic Faith*, with a particular focus on Morrill's contributions in Part III: Contemporary Ritual Practices of Healing.

Bruce T. Morrill, S.J. is an assistant professor of liturgical theology at Boston College, and *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory* originated as his doctoral dissertation at Emory University. It is his first monograph, preceded by two collective works, which he co-edited and edited: *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God* (1998) and *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice* (1999). In *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory* Morrill explores, "how liturgical theology and political theology, as disciplines making normative theological claims in relation to concrete Christian practices, can benefit from each other." (xii) Metz and Schmemmann have several features in common: both take the practical roots of theology seriously, both engage in theological reflection from a standpoint of emergency, insisting that the Christianity of late modernity is in a state of deep crisis because it has lost access to its foundational memory; and both search for the recovery of such memory, even if they do it with different methods and slightly different aims in mind.

In the "Introduction" Morrill sketches what sort of dialogue he expects from the chosen partners, and explains how he is going to ensure it methodologically. Metz's political theology will not be deprived of its double characteristics, as a definition and promotion of "a practice of faith in mystical and political imitation"¹ (xiv). Morrill emphasizes that the mystical side, often ignored in Metz, is where he

¹ J. B. Metz, *Faith, History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, New York 1980, 77.

opens for a dialog or even for an assistance form liturgical theology. On the other hand, Metz's insistence on the inherent unity of the mystical and the political practices of faith represents a challenge for liturgical theologies like that of Schmemmann, where the political practice of faith is downplayed. Towards the end of the Introduction Morrill expresses his regret that he did not manage to open his book with some form of his own "participant-observation analysis" of contemporary liturgy and parochial life in the United States. But this is a theme he returns to later in his contributions to *Practicing Catholic: Ritual, Body, and Contestation in Catholic Faith* (2006).

The first chapter, "The Promise and Challenges in the Renewal of the Eucharistic Liturgy," is perhaps the only part of the book that bears traces of the exaggerated care with which doctoral projects must locate their theme in the wider area of scholarship, making sure that the terrain is known, and that the new contribution fits into that terrain well. The end of the chapter more or less repeats the methodological steps noted in the Introduction. Then a very interesting study of two major theologians of 20th century follows, inviting us to German Catholicism struggling with the heritage of war and of the euro-centric middle-class culture, the other opening for us the world of Russian Orthodoxy in emigration eager to rediscover its long forgotten roots.

In the second chapter, "Johan Baptist Metz's Political Theology of the Subject," Morrill analyses the steps by which Metz wants to regain credibility and attraction for Christianity - which in his language equates to establishing "Christian faith as a praxis of mysticism and politics" (21). Metz's theological critique of middle-class privatised religion and its evolutionary worldview uncovers a loss of historical memory of catastrophes and consolation, leading to religion as progress in satisfying the needs of the lucky ones. Hence the after-affects, an interest in pure myth and practices of faithless ritual, religious forms of the cultural industry criticized by the Frankfurt School. Social and political consciousness, however, needs history, it grows from "the remembrance of those who have suffered and died as victims of human efforts to dominate over nature and/or human beings," says Morrill, interpreting Metz. Such remembrance, or to use Metz's concepts, such "dangerous memory," *memoria passionis* founded in *memoria Jesu Christi*, provides disruption of the oppres-

sive systems, of the ideological power, including the religious ideologies. It is also a memory of freedom, and the solidarity it inspires is dangerous and disruptive.² Against privatised religion, Morrill says, Metz recovers “the scandalousness and the irreducibility of belief in the universally salvific death of Christ” (32), and Christian tradition’s “authentic claim” (33) to people’s lives. It is two-fold. Morrill summarizes: “*memoria passionis* grounds a promise in which believers understand their freedom as related to the future freedom for all, ...and their belief in that promise fashions a life of solidarity with those now threatened by deadly oppression.” (33)

In this light, Morrill continues, Metz interprets resurrection faith, not as an object of contemplating an individual’s salvation, but as “practical knowledge” enabling the imitation of Christ’s *kenosis*, “standing close” to the oppressed in a “practical way” (38) with the hope that comes with *memoria passionis* being also the *memoria resurrectionis*, as Metz, though more rarely, also says. Morrill, then, explains Metz’s often overlooked mysticism in three ways: first, in terms of the apocalyptic eschatological character of the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ when taken seriously, second in grounding this dangerous anticipatory memory “outside the evolutionary stream of progress” (50), in the life of prayer, in hope coming from the future; and finally in terms of symbols and sacramental rituals.

This point, Morrill highlights, is most problematic for Metz, as he does not have much sympathy for a middle-class “purely cultic spirituality” (57). Morrill shows that Metz’s positive relation to symbols and sacramental rituals appears when he returns to encounters with the poor in the Third World, where he could see the power of the narrative but also of assimilating their social conflicts and suffering into their liturgies. Another rare occasion where he has some sympathy for ritual is when he sketchily criticises the split taking part at the time of the Reformation, with biblical narratives on one part and sacramental ritual on the other. According to him, Morrill says, it is possible to proceed from narrative to sacrament, it is possible to accept that we live not only by faith but also by religion. Morrill choses an interesting quotation to illustrate this:

² Metz, *Faith, History and Society*, 111-112.

“If Protestantism could ever trust itself to be a religion, how powerful a religion it would be! It is, in fact, surely the only religion in the world which, through the voice of its theologians, proclaims that it in no way wishes to be a religion, that it is ‘faith alone,’ ‘grace alone’ – as if visible religion, festive religion, religion with liturgies based on contact and accompanied by the delight in symbols and myths did not comprise an essential, though always threatened, praise of grace present within the senses.”³

Morrill comments that this rare defence of “robust liturgical practice” does not really defend that, but rather the fact that “God’s gift of freedom in Christ is offered for the salvation of all aspects of human life.” (59) Morrill agrees that Metz’s theology suffers from undervaluing precisely this aspect of Christian life, that his memory lacks the liturgical foundations it needs, and that the emphasis on suffering seem to make God at times “wholly *Deus Absconditus*” (72).

In the third chapter, “Alexander Schmemmann’s Liturgical Theology: Joyous, Thankful Remembrance of the Kingdom of God,” Morrill complements precisely this lack in Metz’s political theology with sound liturgical and eucharistic foundations that do not introduce the dualism between the world and God, and at the same time, between the natural and super-natural. Schmemmann’s attempt to recover the early Greek Father’s heritage fills the empty space. But as Morrill recognises, not fully. Tracing the steps of Schmemmann’s liturgical theology Morrill finds that, unlike Metz, Schmemmann considers “the Church’s liturgy to be the key to the Church’s self-understanding and its mission in the world” (78–79), that it “entails an integral relationship of word and sacrament” (81), of the world “which was created to be means of communion or participation in life” and “God the Logos, Jesus the Christ” (89) as the “fulfilment of the world’s essential ‘sacramentality’⁴” (91).

Yet Schmemmann outweighs the theology from above. He might be right, according to Morrill, when he calls to leave the Western captivity, symbolised both by scholastic theology and by the modern reduc-

³ J. B. Metz, *The Emergent Church: The Future of Christianity in a Post-Bourgeois World*. Crossroad, New York, 1987, 52–53.

⁴ See Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. St. Vladimir’s Theological Press, New York, 1998, 122.

tion of people to individualism and to activism. But his alternative undervalues history, human suffering as well as a Christian engagement to limit it, to stand on the side of the poor. Morrill concludes that it seems as if for Schmemmann only a cultic action could be truly transformative. In agreement with Metz's critique of a privatised religion, as Morrill points out, Schmemmann nevertheless offers a different remedy: "Christians must enter into the 'entire mystery' of Christ, his incarnation, redemptive mission and glorious ascension, and thereby receive the '*theoria*,' the knowledge and communion with God, which transforms their experience of the world." (107)⁵

Remembrance of the Kingdom of God aims to be holistic in Schmemmann as in Metz, both oppose religion being reduced to "sacred practices" (111), and yet, as Morrill points out, there is a difference that while for Metz this remembrance, this dangerous memory, is carried out in the open horizon of history, for Schmemmann it is in liturgy, which "draws together disparate moments in history" (114), it "already *has been accomplished*, already *given*." ... [T]he anamnestic ascension to the eucharistic table is the most real of experiences amidst this world, a joyous gratitude that transforms believers for the life of the world." (115) Morrill shows that we encounter here a Christian notion of joy, of feast, so lacking in Metz. It comes from not marking sin as the first and the most foundational of our experiences. Yet, as Morrill, praising this aspect of Schmemmann, also points out, there is an unclear continuation towards the mission in the world. We could say that the mission consists more in who we are than in what we do, but as Morrill points out, there are blind spots in this "Christian vision of the world at the service of God" (124).⁷

Morrill concludes that while Metz's political theology needs to be complemented by a sound liturgical theology, by stronger emphasis

⁵ See A. Schmemmann, "Symbols and Symbolism in the Byzantine Liturgy: Liturgical Symbols and Their Theological Interpretation," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*. Ed. T. Fisch, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990, 123.

⁶ A. Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. St Vladimir's Theology Press, Crestwood, 1987, 221.

⁷ See A. Schmemmann, "Sacrifice and Worship," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*. Ed. T. Fisch, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990, 135.

on God's activity, on the feast and joy, and fullness present in it, Schmemmann's liturgical theology needs to be more open for taking more into account the weight of human suffering, of the oppressive conditions experienced by many people in the world, and for space for a Christian ministry of social justice. His theology from above, *theologia gloriae*, undervalues history as well as contextuality. All this seems to be irrelevant to Schmemmann, given that we are included into the all-embracing vision of life in liturgy. But is it all embracing, Morrill asks, if some aspects are excluded?

The fourth chapter, "Christian Memory: Anamnesis of Jesus Christ" constructs a dialogue between Metz and Schmemmann. Morrill concludes that the Church's ritual action of remembering our salvation in Christ, vital for a Christian life, is not an end in itself, rather it inspires and requires action in the world, the subversion of oppressive structures, the feeding of the hungry, the liberation of the victims. Both the emphasis of the political and the liturgical theology are needed. The complementarity is helped by Metz's recognition of the mystical dimensions of the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ, and by Schmemmann's non-dualist theology of the world. Yet there is a further need to interpret their positions more generously towards the other, to weaken their defense-mechanisms against the positions of the other, Metz's too quick readiness to purify history from mythology, or to speak of faithless ritualism, Schmemmann's allergic reaction to Liberation theology, to inculturations of liturgy or later even to ecumenism. It is a pity that we do not hear more about the type of ecumenism Schmemmann rejects, and whether in fact there are not political reasons behind his refusal. We know that most of the church representatives from the communist block heavily collaborated with the governments, often also with the secret services, and participated if not directly in the oppression, then at least in the covering that up on the international scene. Is this the type of ecumenism Schmemmann refuses? Or is there another vision available to him, that he has no time for in his later years? This discussion is missing.

Instead Morrill moves away from Schmemmann's notion of anamnesis, largely reduced to the liturgical act, to the narrative memory of the early Christians, where "people's daily decision for action" (148) had a pervasive function. Similarly, in the Jewish tradition, Morrill

points out, “Israel’s memory of God, of God’s deeds and commandments, is of fundamental importance to their religious practice” (149). He expands the Metz-Schememann discussion for an examination of Nils Alstrup Dahl and Brevard Childs that help him to move beyond downplaying either the ritual or the action in the world. With the help of David Gregg and Xavier Léon-Dufour Morrill then shows how the cultic and the prophetic character of symbolic actions, such as the eucharist, complement each other. Morrill wants to overcome the conflict present in Metz’s emphasis on suffering humanity and Schememann’s emphasis on following in Christ’s ascent to the Father meet here. As a way of doing it, he offers the following complementary reading: “The liturgy is the manifestation and proclamation of God’s faithfulness and love to the kenotic servant Jesus, whom God has now raised up in glory. The kenotic life of the faithful is a praxis requiring struggle. Resources for the struggle are required. The fundamental resource is a gift, the experiential knowledge of God which comes in the practice of Christian mysticism, of which the eucharistic celebration is central. The performance of narrative and gesture, in the power of the Spirit of the crucified and risen Lord, creates the life-giving memory of God in the community of faithful, who carry out the grace of that covenant in the world.” (186)

This synthesis is further elaborated in the fifth chapter, “Conclusion.” Morrill divides it as follows: (i) Practical knowledge borne by an anticipatory memory; (ii) Anamnesis and eschatology; (iii) Theological implications in liturgical practice.

As Morrill said already in the Introduction, this book proposes basic rules of dialogue between liturgical and political theology that are not yet linked to his own context, Roman Catholic parochial life in the United States at the turn of the 20th and 21 century.⁸ His own “participant-observation analysis” (xv) appears in the second book mentioned in this review, *Practicing Catholic: Ritual, Body, and Contestation in Catholic Faith*, which he edited together with Susan Rodgers, Professor of Anthropology in the College of the Holy Cross, and Joanna E. Ziegler, Professor at the Department of Visual Arts in the College of the Holy Cross. This book came out this year, as the

⁸ See Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, xv-xvi.

result of a Holy Cross Conference on Catholicism, and it fills the gap Morrill recognizes in *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*.

Practicing Catholic: Ritual, Body, and Contestation in Catholic Faith is divided into six parts, and a careful reader can recognize the influence of Morrill's earlier and more theoretical study behind its structuring: (i) Performance, Liturgy and Ritual Practice; (ii) Catholic Ritual: Practice in History; (iii) Contemporary Ritual: Practices of Healing; (iv) Catholic Ritual as Political Practice; (v) Contemporary Mass Media as a Domain for Catholic Ritual Practice; and (vi) Conclusion: Between Theory and Practice.

Morrill's own contribution comes in Part Three: Contemporary Ritual Practices of Healing, where he offers an engaged point of view complementary to his earlier book *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*. His two chapters, "Practicing the Pastoral Care of the Sick: The Sacramental Body in Liturgical Motion" and "Christ the Healer: An Investigation of Contemporary Liturgical, Pastoral, and Biblical Approaches," address a different aspect of human suffering. This one is not caused by political oppression or by a systematic social and economical injustice, but by illness. Yet there is a similarity. When illness is affecting human body, to use Metz's language from political theology, it also a kind of *kenosis*, encountering and following the kenotic Christ. The Church's ritual action of remembering salvation in Christ, then, is not simply the opposite, offering a perspective from above, a kind of *theologia gloriae*, for the sick person and for the church body to which he or she belongs. As in the previous book, going back to the roots we discover the ministry of teaching and healing entwined in Jesus as well as in the community of his followers, witnesses of the resurrection empowered by the Spirit to continue in his mission. Morrill interprets the pastoral care of the sick in this light. The Church continues to glorify God through witnessing and celebrating the saving mysteries revealed in the life-stories of human brokenness and healing. In it the church as a body is called to manifest and proclaim God's love and faithfulness in the limit situations of suffering, and to share resources for the struggle with fear, pain and despair.

Both of Morrill's works can be very warmly recommended to readers from different confessions. They bring a fresh insight into the

traditional theological theme of seeking and finding God in all things, including human suffering. He avoids committing the theological violence of stripping human pain of its right to be real, and of its cry for help here and now. As a liturgical theologian he opens up a space for dialogue with other disciplines, with others forms of passing on and interpreting human experience and the life-giving memory of God's actions.

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Utraquism between Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism

Zdeněk David, *Finding the Middle Way, The Utraquist Challenge to Rome and Luther*, Washington 2003

The teaching about virtue as the middle way between two extremes was not upheld only by Aristotle, scholasticism, or Jan Rokycana who was educated in this school of thought, and who's invocation "Dej, Bože, vprostřed uhoditi" is all that many people would associate with his name. On the contrary, such a definition is strongly imbedded in our own mentality, whether we speak of "the golden middle path" or about the donkey that starved to death. The teaching about the "via media" has also found its way into the latest publication of Zdeněk V. David, a book entitled "Finding the Middle Way," where the search for the middle way is the key to interpreting the history of the Bohemian Utraquist Church from 1436 to 1620.

The author elaborates on the topic in twelve chapters. The first chapter, as its title, "*The Travails of the Via Media: Historiography*," suggests, is a survey of the perception of Utraquism in historiography. David deals with predominant condemnations of the Utraquist Church. He notices disproportions in the traditional views of the contemporaneous Utraquist Church and the Unity of the Brethren based on diverse attitudes to historical sources. He also summarises an ongoing dialog concerning the various denotations by which the Utraquist Church has been referred to in the past. Chapter Two, "*A Prolegomenon: The First Century of Utraquism, 1415–1517*," is an account of the history of Utraquism before 1517, starting with the requirement of Milíč of Kroměříž and Matěj of Janov of frequently administered lay communion, followed by the Hussite revolution and the founding of the Unity of the Brethren, and ending with Utraquism in the times of Luther. The third part, entitled "*Utraquism's Curious Encounter with Luther*," considers the response to Luther within Bohemian Utraquism, the reception of his work and ideas as well as the official rejection of Luther by the Utraquist Church. In the Fourth chapter, "*Bohuslav Bilejovský and the Geography of Utraquist Ecclesiology*," based on Bilejovský's "*Kroniky církevní*," the author shows the particular Utraquist status of the "middle way." In the following chapter, "*Pavel Bydžovský and Utraquism's Second Confrontation with Luther*," he delves deeper into and paints a more accurate pic-

ture of the traditional Utraquist opposition to Czech Lutheranism in the 1530s and 1540s, as presented in the extensive work of the priest Pavel Bydžovský. The sixth chapter, “*The Utraquist Consistory, the Archbishop of Prague, and a Brief Honeymoon,*” introduces the reader to the Utraquist Church’s problem with the lack of their own ordained priests, the background of the problem being on the one hand the tempting call of Lutheranism asking the Bohemian Utraquists to elect their own bishop, and on the other hand the newly established Archbishopric of Prague which, together with the arrival of the Jesuits in Bohemia, was aiming to restore the Roman model of Christianity in a denominationally divided country. The seventh section, “*The Plebeianization of Utraquism: the Controversy over the Bohemian Confession of 1575,*” describes events leading to the publication of the Bohemian Confession resulting de facto in the unification of doctrine of the Bohemian Utraquists, Brethren, and supporters of the world reformation against the Roman Church, as well as the politicization of church affairs influenced by Czech and Moravian nobility. Chapter Eight, “*Orthodoxy and Toleration: the Utraquists and Lutherans, 1575–1609,*” opposes the generally accepted opinion that with the Bohemian Confession, the Utraquist Church stepped back from its traditional positions and accepted Lutheran teaching. The author provides evidence for the viability of the Utraquist Church after the Bohemian Confession, namely liturgical texts and specific Utraquist characteristics that survived in other texts of the period in question. He also refers to the disproportion between the position of Utraquism in the towns and in the countryside. In the ninth part, “*The Utraquists versus the Curia: Liberal or Authoritarian Church, 1575–1609,*” the author presents the resistance of the Utraquist Church to the Tridentine model of the Roman Church and the independence of the Utraquist clergy from the Archbishopric of Prague in this period. The tenth chapter, “*The Curia Tightens the Noose: The Advance of Confessionalization, 1575–1609,*” unlike the previous chapter which follows official liaisons between Rome and the Utraquists, deals with theological polemics of both of the two sides. The penultimate chapter, “*A Cohabitation of Convenience: The Utraquists and Lutherans under the Letter of Majesty, 1609–1620,*” stresses that even Rudolph’s letter of Majesty did not put an end to

the autonomy of the Utraquist Church, nor did it result in the loss of its specific characteristics. At the same time, mention is also made of the so-called New Consistory that was henceforth to administer the three main Utraquist Churches. The Plebeian character of Utraquism is also considered. Finally, the last chapter, called "*White Mountain, 1620: The Transfiguration and the Protestant Legacy of Utraquism*," describes the difficult position of the Utraquist Church during the Counter-Reformation, when Utraquism, due to its national and plebeian character, could not be transposed to emigration. Its principles, however, survived even in the times of post-White Mountain Re-Catholicization, Josephine enlightenment, and the period of romantic nationalism known as the National Revival. This is considered further in the epilogue "*The Meaning of the Bohemian Reformation*," where Zdeněk V. David characterises four key principles of Bohemian Utraquism outlined in his book: to him Utraquism bears heritage to Patristic Christianity, maintains the status of the middle way, adumbrates Liberal Catholicism, and is the bearer of religious tolerance.

Zdeněk V. David's book about Bohemian Utraquism may be appreciated from two different yet not mutually exclusive points of view.

Firstly, the book fills the apparent gap in the sporadic historiography of European Church History in general and particularly in the Church History of Bohemia. Unlike the Hussite revolution, the post Compactata history of Utraquism has not been of interest to historians or theologians, and with the exception of Zikmund Winter, Ferdinand Hrejsa, Kamil Krofta, Winfried Eberhard, and Josef Macek, the only critical monograph and source literature available is the unpublished habilitation thesis of Noemi Rejchrtová, dealing with Utraquism in the Jagiellon era.

Secondly, the use of historical sources, of which many are listed in the appendix attached, are a valuable asset to the book. Many of the sources, to which readers are offered a brief insight, have been interpreted by the author for the first time.

Thirdly, one has to appreciate Zdeněk V. David's courage to stand up to the generally accepted image of Utraquism still prevalent in historiography, seen often through and formed on the basis of Co-

menius' and Palacký's "bohemianbrethrenism," and apparent in the evolutionary historical line: Hus – Blahoslav – Komenský – Masaryk.

Finally, the reader has the opportunity to encounter an unusual method of interpretation, in which Utraquism is juxtaposed with the Church of England and its wider European religious context is shown in the light of this comparison.

On the other hand, it is regrettable that the author has not tried to present a comprehensive history of the Utraquist Church, although the absence of such a compendium is compensated mainly by the works of Macek and Rejchrtová, which are not, however, available in translation and are therefore not accessible to readers with no knowledge of the Czech language. The history of Utraquism prior to 1571 in Z. V. David's book is therefore inevitably rather contracted.

It is also quite apparent that the book is based on a series of previous preparatory studies (a fact which the author, to his merit, does not try to conceal), and hence the reader may have the impression of a collection of individual essays bound together by the theme of Bohemian Utraquism and a chronological approach, rather than a complex and, within its own limits, interpretive study of the general course of events in the Utraquist Church.

It is also possible to criticize the author's concentration on the polemics of the Utraquist priests, whilst the key role, with regard to previous history, was played by homiletic Utraquist literature, as preserved in postilla in manuscripts as well as in printed form. In this context it could also be mentioned that a number of texts written against the Utraquists, either by Roman Catholic priests or the Brethren, have been omitted in the book.

Finally, leaving aside the constant comparison of the Utraquists with the Church of England, to which the author is nevertheless entitled, as well as other problematic parts of David's book, including the highlighting of tolerance within the Utraquist Church, which, however, disappears as soon as one takes a closer look at Utraquist polemics with the Unity of Brethren, then the overall impression the book creates is that of Utraquism being a homogeneous religious group that maintained a continuity of its teaching and church practice, and, having overcome all wiles set by Rome and the Reformation, passed practically unchanged through two centuries only to re-

emerge after its extinction and result in the Czech National Revival in the 19th century.

However, the history of the Utraquist Church cannot be viewed in such a simplified manner. First and foremost, David's model contradicts the social evolution that takes place in every human society, including religious societies. New trends in a society are either more or less accepted, or the society has to isolate itself from them, or stand firm in its positions and fight the new influence. Since neither offensive nor isolation can be seen in the case of the Utraquist Church, granted very few exceptions, it follows that Utraquism dealt with the new trends, in particular with the reformation, by accepting them. Expression of such acceptance may be found in the polemics not analyzed in David's book, namely the polemics of the Brethren. It is in those that we may see how many Utraquists recede from their positions and accept the influence of the Reformation, although, on the other hand, we may see that these tendencies were not accepted fully, as they were stopped by barriers formed by the Hussite traditions, especially those of Prague University provenance. Yet conformity with certain Reformation stimuli is not the only problem one is confronted with when studying the history of the Utraquist Church in the 16th and 17th centuries. Another important issue is "the return" of lay Utraquists to the Roman Catholic Church, whose priests acted as supplies for the lacking ordained Utraquist priests in certain areas, and who benevolently condoned some Utraquist customs and rites, such as the Holy Communion under both kinds. Conversions between denominations were also tolerated and were quite frequent. Finally, it might be worthwhile considering the Utraquist clergy of the pre-White Mountain period on the basis of town books and other sources and determine whether their positions really reflect traditional Utraquism, as suggested by David, or rather Neo-Utraquism, that is Utraquists so removed from their origins and so inclined to the Reformation that it would be more appropriate to talk of Lutherans and the Reformed than of Utraquists.

To conclude with, I would like to add some corrections and comments on the following parts of the book:

On p. XIII: the term "the Unity of Bohemian (or Moravian) Brethren" denotes two different religious groups of different time and

place, although the terminology has not yet been clearly defined in the English language and the Unity of Brethren of the 15th–17th centuries is often confused with the Herrnhut Renewed Brotherhood or Moravian Brethren founded in the 18th century.

On p. 12 David mentions certain Utraquists that are considered by some researchers to have a more profound connection with the Unity of Brethren, namely Daniel Adam z Veleslavína. A theory of Milan Kopecký, not mentioned by David despite being published, attempts to prove Veleslavín's "brethrenism" on the basis of the dedications in his writings. On the same page, in wrong chronological order though in the right alphabetical one, the name of Martin Lupáč appears, whose attitude toward the newly established Unity of Brethren was supposedly positive. This cannot, under any circumstances, be regarded as possible.

On p. 227: The book entitled "Knihy o zarmouceních církvi české" were not "probably," but quite definitely written by Jan Příbram, as can be proved by older manuscripts of the work.

On pp. 237, 243: As Lenka Veselá-Prudková recently demonstrated, the script "Historia židovská" is not the work of Josephus Flavius, but an original treatise concerning Jewish history by Václav Plácel z Elbingu, though influenced by Josephus.

On p. 385–386: According to the author, the major martyrs of the Bohemian Reformation are Jan Hus, Jeroným Pražský, Jan Locika z Domažlic, and Vavřínek Hanzburský z Kopečku. He is certainly fully entitled to such an opinion, however, his oversimplification on this point is far too great. Were one to adopt a thorough critical stance towards the martyrology of the Bohemian Reformation, then martyred Brethren would also have to be taken into consideration. Even if the author's intention was to mention Utraquist martyrs only, then the name of Míchal Polák, an Utraquist priest, should not have been omitted.

On p. 535: Manuscript XVII C 3 belonging to the National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague "Poznamenání a spolu shromáždění některých věcí" was originally thought to have been written by Matěj Červenka, but for over a hundred years the author has justifiably been considered to be Jan Černý.

On p. 545: Kocín's translation Of Eusebius' "Historia Ecclesiastica" was published in 1855 by Jan Ev. Krbec in Prague.

Zdeněk V. Davids book “Finding the Middle Way” is, despite all reservations, a valuable contribution to the understanding of Czech Church History in the 16th and 17th centuries, and hopefully also a challenge to other researchers, whether from abroad, whose observations, insights, and views from a certain distance must be respected by the Czech side, or local, whose work would be subject to a sharper critique than the work of a “foreigner” Zdeněk V. David. Anyone intending to study the history of the Utraquist Church will have to refer to this book since it represents the present state of research in this field of study. We shall have to remain hopeful that a similar summarization of the history of the Roman Catholic Church, the story of which, in this period, is still greatly unknown, will soon appear, and that Bohemian Utraquism will not be ignored.

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