

THE WORD MADE FLESH:
THE PRACTICE OF REFORMED WORSHIP
ROOTED IN WORD AND SACRAMENT

By

Brian Christopher Wyatt
B.A., Furman University, 1995
M.Div., Columbia Theological Seminary, 2000

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Brian Christopher Wyatt

Approved by:

First Reader

Date

Second Reader

Date

Accepted by:

Director of Advanced Studies

Date

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ABSTRACT

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According to a qualitative study conducted in one congregation, there is an awareness of the role that the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist play in relation to the Word proclaimed, and yet at the same time there is a resistance to their regular, weekly inclusion in worship. This research project explores possible reasons behind this discontinuity as well as potential avenues of greater sacramental awareness consistent with Reformed theology. A general overview of the history of sacramental liturgical theology is followed by an invitation to return to early ecclesial liturgical practices. Finally, hope for personal and corporate liturgical renewal is explored.

Introduction

“Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists” (Calvin, 1960:1023). Without a doubt, the Word of God is faithfully preached and heard at many Protestant churches throughout the world, just as Calvin would hope. Good preaching is, for many Protestant worshipers, in fact the very hallmark by which a church is judged. If we consider, however, that for Calvin there are not one, but two, true marks of a church of God--both the preaching of the Word *and* the administration of the sacraments--then it seems remarkable that for many churches in the Calvinist Reformed tradition, baptism and Communion are often little more than an occasional appendage to the regular worship of the congregation.

Baptism in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is, of course, received only once. By virtue of that fact, it is for many churches a rare and special occurrence. Despite the rare appearance of baptisms in worship, however, the *Directory for Worship* still recognizes that

there are many times in worship...when believers acknowledge the grace of God continually at work. As they participate in the celebration of another’s Baptism, as they experience the sustaining nurture of the Lord’s Supper, and as they reaffirm the commitments made at Baptism, they confess their ongoing need of God’s grace and pledge anew their obedience to God’s covenant in Christ. (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2007:W-2.3009)

Although baptism itself may only be an occasional event in the life of a congregation, the *Directory* recognizes the role of baptism in regular weekly worship. In a similar fashion, the *Directory* also acknowledges that the Lord’s Supper deserves a place in regular

worship, by encouraging that it be “celebrated regularly and frequently enough to be recognized as integral to the service for the Lord’s Day” (W-2.4009).

Clearly the constitutional documents and myriad denominational liturgical resources encourage the regular inclusion of appropriate baptismal elements and a weekly celebration of Communion. Casual observance of many Presbyterian churches, however, seems to suggest that this is not the case. Instead of the sacraments occupying a regular role in weekly worship alongside the Word proclaimed, the baptismal font often sits dry in an unused corner of the sanctuary, and the Eucharist appears as a monthly or even quarterly addition to an otherwise complete service of worship.

For many Presbyterian churches, despite a rich theological heritage that extols the sacraments as a means of grace with a rightful and regular place in worship, the liturgy practiced in many churches on a Sunday morning does not reflect the same sacramental theology expressed by Calvin and numerous other Reformed theologians throughout the history of the Presbyterian church. In fact, as liturgical scholar Ron Byars notes:

In the Reformed tradition, theology and liturgical practice seem capable of being walled off from each other, so that a sophisticated theological understanding of the sacraments, for example, doesn’t always require an equally subtle attention to its liturgical expression. It is as though the transmission of a theological vision functions independently, perhaps by classroom study or ecclesiastical action, while Lord’s Day worship may or may not represent that vision adequately. (2005:72)

This discontinuity between theology and liturgy may indeed be at the forefront of so many churches’ search for relevant and meaningful worship.¹ One study with a local congregation suggests that Byars’ observation is right on target. During the course of the study, for example, participants overwhelmingly spoke of the importance of the Eucharist

in their understanding of Christ and described the positive impact the eucharistic celebration had on their experience of worship. Yet at the same time over half the respondents, when asked about the appropriate frequency of Communion, indicated a bias against a weekly celebration.

How have we progressed from Calvin's understanding of the sacraments as one of the two central marks of the Church to a practice in which the sacraments rarely play a primary role? Despite Reformed theological claims about the importance of the sacraments, the practices of many congregations do not seem to suggest that Communion is "integral to the service of the Lord's Day." While there exist many and varied reasons for the absence of the Eucharist on a given Sunday morning, as Calvin suggests, such a practice may not be in accordance with a major impulse in our Reformed theological heritage.

These reasons, as well as encouragement for uniting practice with theology in the regular service of Word and sacrament, will be explored in this paper. For as the experience of one congregation suggests, a church grounded in both Word *and* sacrament can begin to find new ways of experiencing its identity as the body of Christ. Regular and frequent sacramental practice for the church is nothing less than the very embodiment of the Word which is proclaimed on Sunday morning. Through the Eucharist, the church is formed as a missional community, nourished by the living Word of Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be sent out into the world.

For a church to ground its identity in regular sacramental practices does not mean, however, that it loses the centrality of the Word proclaimed. Instead, such congregations

may come to see, as Calvin, liturgical history, and Scripture all suggest, that the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are the very real and tangible expressions of the one true and living Word, Jesus Christ. In the sacraments, the Church not only proclaims Christ, but is formed and reformed as the living body of that same Christ whom we encounter in the water, bread and wine.

Study Overview and Methodology

In a recent study, ten members of Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church in Greeneville, Tennessee, were invited to participate in an intentional group exploring worship and reflecting particularly on their personal experiences of the Eucharist in various worship services over the course of several months. Timber Ridge is an active congregation of approximately seventy-five adults and thirty children and youth. Worship at Timber Ridge is reflective of the ideals of the congregation in that it seeks to be both culturally sensitive while at the same time rooted in the historical principles of the Reformed tradition. This manifests itself in a worship service that is deeply resonant with the historical *ordo*² shared among many Christian churches as well as the *Book of Common Worship* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Following this pattern, worship services at Timber Ridge are structured around a fourfold movement of gathering, proclamation of the Word, response of thanksgiving (Eucharist), and sending.

The congregation celebrates the sacrament of the Eucharist approximately twenty times a year--on all feast days appearing on most ecumenical liturgical calendars, and

once a month during ordinary time, typically on the first Sunday. The bread and wine are received alternately by intinction and pew Communion, with the latter being the more familiar form for the congregation. During the three evening services of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Eve of the Nativity, the congregation comes forward in small groups to sit around tables set up on the chancel as the bread and wine are passed around the table ‘family style.’

The study group met weekly on Sunday evenings for a six-week period stretching from the middle of Easter through Trinity Sunday. During the course of the study, Communion was celebrated on three occasions, two of which were by intinction and the third served in the pews. Although the *verba*, or Words of Institution (1 Cor 11:23-26),³ were used as a part of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving at each of the Eucharist celebrations throughout the course of the study, the accompanying language in other portions of the prayer (the *preface*, the remainder of the *anamnesis*, and the *epiclesis*), as well as the invitation to the table, were intentionally varied to include allusions to other eucharistic events in Scripture. For example Jesus’ post-resurrection appearance at Emmaus (Luke 24:30-31) and the expansive image of the feast of God (Luke 13:29-30) were used respectively in the Easter season and on Pentecost Sunday.

The twelve members who participated in the study were representative of the various age groups active within the congregation, with participants ranging from thirteen to over eighty. They were all invited, in part, because of their regular involvement in the life of the church, primarily as faithful worshipers and occasionally as worship leaders. In most cases, however, participants were also active in a number of additional roles

including choir, Sunday school, youth activities and presbytery committees. The goal of the study was to facilitate an exploration of their personal awareness of the sacraments in relation to the Word proclaimed in regular Sunday worship.

Before the participants met for the first time to discuss the study topics, each was asked to complete a survey (Appendix C). The survey was designed to gauge the attitudes toward and awareness of worship at Timber Ridge, with particular attention given to the sacraments. At the conclusion of the six week period, participants were given the same survey to complete. A comparative analysis was then done between the two studies to ascertain if there was any appreciable difference in the participants' awareness of and experience of the sacraments in worship. In addition to the survey, the comments of participants throughout the course of the study were recorded and annotated following each session.

Among a number of insightful observations from the study, two clear and notable themes emerged. The first was that *all* participants saw a clear and discernable connection between the Word proclaimed and the sacraments as they appeared in the service, and that connection had a positive impact on their experience of worship. As one participant noted, "the continuity of the service, the hymns, the Word proclaimed in all parts of the service, and all of it coming together in the Communion--it was a very inspiring and moving worship service."

The second theme, however, was that a clear discontinuity emerged, as previously noted, between the positive experience of sacramental worship and the bias against the regular inclusion of the sacraments in worship. The dissonance between these two

observations is quite amazing, but certainly in keeping with Byars' observation of the theological disjunction in Reformed worship. If worship services that included a celebration of the Eucharist had a positive impact on the participants' experience in that service, and if those eucharistic services aided in the hearing of the Word proclaimed, then why should there be a bias against a more frequent, or even weekly, celebration of the sacrament? The remainder of this study attempts to explore that very question from an historical and a congregational standpoint, and to suggest a basis for returning to a weekly practice of worship centered on both Word and sacrament.

This study is intentionally somewhat limited in scope. What follows is an examination through the lens of a particular Presbyterian congregation, of how an intentional exploration of the theology and liturgy of worship might open the door for increased sacramental practice and renewed unity of *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*. Also, although baptism is the foundational sacrament of our incorporation into the body of Christ, this study will focus primarily on the theological unity of Word and sacrament experienced through the Eucharist. This is not to suggest that one is more or less important than the other, but rather that the experience of the study group allowed for regular participation in the Eucharist and not in a baptismal service. Therefore, although both baptism and the Eucharist are the sacramental embodiment of the Word made flesh, and where possible, both sacraments are considered in the study, attention is primarily focused on the experience of the Eucharist.

Finally, while there are certainly numerous factors that might impact how and to what degree participants experience worship in Word and sacrament, this study will limit

its scope only to the presence of the Eucharist in the worship service. Other questions, such as the method by which the elements are received, will not be explored, although some participants noted a preference for pew Communion over intinction in the conversations. This study will also not explore the impact of varying nomenclatures for referencing the Eucharist, although language undoubtedly shapes our sacramental experience.⁴ Rather, the study will examine the responses of one particular group of participants and consider how their experiences might help to shape the worship of the church. Consideration will be given to liturgical history and scholarship as we explore how the sacraments might serve as a means of renewal for a local congregation.

The Divorce of Word and Sacrament

While the discontinuity between participants' positive experience of worship services of Word and sacrament and the bias against weekly Eucharist may seem puzzling, such feelings are not unexpected. The infrequent eucharistic practice at Timber Ridge, like many Presbyterian congregations, is rooted in a long history of quarterly Communion.⁵ The beginnings of such practice stretch back several centuries before the Reformation, as we shall see, but the resulting pattern of Word without sacrament in many Presbyterian churches has been the norm for so many centuries that Calvin's ideals are but a distant memory.

While a number of factors have led to infrequent Communion celebrations, chief among them is a narrowed eucharistic theology that views the meal primarily, if not

exclusively, within the context of Jesus' last supper with his disciples. When participants in the study were asked in the survey to select from among numerous choices the eucharistic image that most resonated with their own experience of the sacrament, almost everyone indicated a bias toward the Eucharist as a memorial of the Last Supper. While the Last Supper is undoubtedly a central, if not predominant, eucharistic image in the Scriptures, it is certainly not the only meaning of Communion!

Although there are numerous other accounts of Christ breaking bread around a table with his followers, these images are rarely at the forefront of our eucharistic celebrations. The almost exclusive association between the Eucharist and the Last Supper may be due in part to the significance imparted to the words of institution.⁶ Despite a variety of eucharistic prayers available in the Book of Common Worship, the *verba* (1 Cor 11:23-26) are always used in conjunction with the Communion celebration. While the inclusion of Paul's instruction to the Corinthians is certainly appropriate, either as a scriptural warrant and instruction for the community's continued celebration of the meal, or as part of the *anamnesis* in the Great Thanksgiving, what might perhaps be lost or obscured is a multitude of other images appropriate to the Communion meal as well.

When the image of Christ's Passover is the only or predominately consistent theme, the meal can easily become a somber reflection on Christ's passion. While at times throughout the liturgical year, such an emphasis is certainly appropriate, even to the exclusion of other images, at other times such an emphasis can be very much at odds with a joyful or liberating spirit in worship. Such a one-dimensional view of Communion has not always been the case. Indeed, early Christians "associated the Lord's Supper not only

with Jesus' last meal, but also with pleasant meals before his death, and with post-Resurrection encounters as well" (Byars, 2000:79). The dissonance created between the joyful proclamation of the Word and the ever-somber eucharistic celebration, however, continues to lead many people to eschew regular inclusion of the Eucharist in worship.

Although certainly not the only eucharistic image in Scripture, the Church has long emphasized Christ's passion and death as the central eucharistic theme in its theology and liturgy. As previously noted, the origins of this narrowed eucharistic theology and practice long preceded Zwingli and the Reformation. In fact, many centuries before the Reformation, the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist had become divorced from the communal aspect in both the theology and practice of the Roman church. Christ's sacrificial death, reenacted by the priest each Sunday, was the central liturgical aspect of the worship service. The congregation, who rarely received the consecrated elements, understandably lost the connection of eating and drinking together as a Christian community. Indeed, as Welker notes, in the Roman mass of the medieval and early-Reformation periods, "the celebration of the Supper is not necessarily dependent on the presence of the community" (31).

While Zwingli departed from the Roman eucharistic theology in several important ways, he nevertheless retained the somber, penitential tone of pre-Reformation Communion. Some five hundred years later, although the *Directory for Worship* notes at least five other signs for the eucharistic meal besides just that of the Last Supper, the vestiges of Zwinglian theology can still be found in many churches.⁷ Zwingli understood the Eucharist primarily as a memorial remembrance meal in which the faith of the

participants was strengthened by their somber reflection on Christ's sacrifice. Moreover, in departure from Roman eucharistic theology, for Zwingli the meal itself was an occasion for renewed faith, but was not in itself as a means of grace.⁸ With his desire to depart from Roman practice of the Mass, rather than seek to restore the weekly celebration to the people as Calvin did, Zwingli opted instead for a radically decreased presence of the meal in regular worship.

Zwingli's liturgical work can be summarized in this way. He found in Zurich a vernacular prone or preaching service followed by the Latin Mass. Believing in preaching as the means of grace, he preserved the prone as the regular form of Sunday worship. Recasting the Mass as a meal of remembrance and witness, he removed it from a weekly to a quarterly usage. (Hageman:22)

As Hageman observes, Zwingli's legacy still persists today, not only in the infrequency with which Communion is celebrated, but in the theology that accompanies the celebration as well.⁹

A dearth of eucharistic signs is not the only factor contributing to infrequent Communion in many churches, however. The impact of inertia should not be underestimated. A "fondness for the old ways" and a resistance to change collided with the grand visions of Calvin and other Reformers for a renewed devotion through the sacraments. Although Calvin argued strongly for weekly Communion, the practice of the Catholic church in his time, as previously noted, was that although the priest communed weekly, the congregation itself would commune only annually, at Easter.

In the apostolic church the eucharistic act of breaking bread together was seen as a regular feature of Christian fellowship, even a daily activity. Though frequent, usually weekly, communion predominated in the first centuries of the church, this pattern gradually yielded to greater infrequency. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the laity generally received communion only once a year—a pattern that found formal acceptance in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council. (Schmidt:184)

Calvin argued extensively for a change to this practice.¹⁰ At Calvin's insistence, the Geneva government finally compromised to allow for quarterly Communion, a fourfold increase over the previous practice (White:86). Calvin's vision was not widely received, even among the Reformed churches of his time and in the centuries that followed. In Scotland, for example, only a small number of churches was ever able to move beyond the medieval Catholic practice of annual Communion. Taking seriously Paul's caution that "whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27), the penitential preparations for Communion in the Scottish kirks made frequent celebration wholly impractical. In fact, quite to the contrary, in Glasgow following the Westminster Assembly, the entire city saw only eight Communion celebrations in forty-five years (Nichols:108).

The infrequent Communion celebration in Scotland, however, also gave rise to a unique practice of sacramental seasons, culminating in holy fairs, as Schmidt has noted. These fairs served to heighten the penitential burden for worshipers desiring to receive the sacrament, as several days and numerous sermons were part of the necessary preparations for Communion. This practice lent a heightened character to the role of preaching in repentance and conversion, and lay the groundwork for the revivals in the colonies. Although these amazing celebrations certainly went a long way in restoring the communal aspects of the meal, they did very little to encourage greater frequency of celebrations.

Consequently, the quarterly Communion celebrations that were a step along the

way for Calvin became instead the norm for many Reformed churches that followed. In fact, far from being Calvinist in liturgical practice, as Hageman notes, “in the average Reformed or Presbyterian congregation today, customary liturgical practice is that of Zwingli in Zurich, not that of Calvin in Strasbourg” (33). This practice of quarterly Communion can, in fact, still be found in the *Directory for Worship* as the minimum standard for Presbyterian churches today (W-2.4012). And as is often the case, the minimum has become, for many, the standard.

While historical factors such as these certainly play a part in the paltry frequency of Communion celebrations, as sometimes happens, history has become theology. Although never Calvin’s intention, the long history of infrequent eucharistic celebrations has reinforced occasional celebration as a perceived theological value. As one member of Timber Ridge remarked, “I don’t think we should do [Communion] every Sunday-- sometimes we can get into a ritual and not pay attention to what we are saying and what we are doing.” Decades, or even centuries, of the practice of quarterly Communion have established infrequent celebration as a value of habit, and theological justification has emerged over time to sustain the practice.

While several participants echoed the sentiment that weekly or too frequent Communion would become a rote exercise devoid of spiritual depth, one individual (who was not a study participant) even suggested that, “the whole point of the Reformation was to do away with all that nonsense of weekly Communion and meaningless liturgy.” Comments such as these can serve to illuminate the basis for infrequent Communion within many Presbyterian churches. With such a long history of the Eucharist as a solemn

memorial occasion during which the congregation is invited to remember the passion of Christ, it is no wonder that the joyful feast of the people of God is not practiced as an integral part of the Service of the Lord's Day. Theological misunderstandings, centuries of developed habits, and one-dimensional eucharistic theology all continue to reinforce a value of the Reformed tradition that Calvin never envisioned or desired.

There is good reason, however, to revisit the role of the sacraments in Protestant worship. Not only did Calvin envision a church in which Word and sacrament together formed the basis of Sunday worship, but such worship is also consistent with Scripture and the church catholic. And more importantly, as responses from the study group suggest, worship that employs both Word and sacrament in proclaiming the good news offers a rich and deeply meaningful experience for the people of God gathered on the Lord's Day.

A History of Sacramental Worship

Although the New Testament does not necessarily contain a liturgical blueprint, a number of texts provide informative clues as to what worship might have looked like in the first century. Among such texts, Acts 2 is perhaps the most enlightening. Acts 2:42 notes that the early Christian worshipers devoted themselves "to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Luke's inclusion of the phrase 'τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου' in describing the actions of the worshipers suggests a liturgical act linked to the same occasions in Luke's gospel in which Jesus took bread (ἄρτον), broke it

(κλάσας), and shared it with his followers.¹¹ In other words, a foundational feature of early Christian worship in Acts was not only the proclamation of the Word found in Scripture and teaching, but worship that also included weekly Eucharist, patterned after Jesus' own thanksgiving meals with his disciples.

The repetitive mention of 'breaking bread' in Luke-Acts suggests that this was an act that was practiced regularly by the worshiping community. Furthermore, when bread is broken by the community in Acts, it is done so with an eye toward Jesus' example among his followers in Luke. Indeed, breaking bread was a central act of worship, alongside prayers, fellowship, and teaching. As Stookey notes, "what is crucial is that every Christian community in the New Testament seems to have practiced and found deep meaning in a meal centered on Jesus' habit of eating and drinking with his followers" (35). In fact, these basic elements formed the pattern for a worship service that would persist beyond the early church of the first century and become a pattern for established worship for the church that followed.

Throughout the first hundred years of the Church, the Christian community had already established a pattern of worship that depended upon the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of bread, prayer and fellowship, of which baptism was a sign and seal. The description of worship found in Acts, then, becomes for the early church a foundational *ordo*. Even as the liturgy began to take on a more defined form, these same primary and constitutive elements became the pillars of the worship of the people of God. Of these elements, the Eucharist played a central role in the worship of the early church. "Despite the lack of evidence about how it was celebrated, there is no doubt that the Eucharist was

at the heart of the life of the Church. It was celebrated weekly on the Lord's Day" (Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold and Bradshaw:210).

By the time of the late first or early second century, eucharistic liturgies had developed, along with instructions for the worshipers, as a part of the assembly. Various second century documents, such as the *Didache* and the *First Apology of Justin Martyr*, presuppose an assembly in which breaking bread is a regular action. While the *Didache* does not yet offer an order of worship or specific instructions for a liturgy of the Word, it does provide directives for the liturgy of the table,¹² and instruction that "on the Lord's own day, when you gather together, break bread (κλάσατε ἄρτον) and give thanks (εὐχαριστήσατε)" (Ehrman:439). Even by this time, the Eucharist is tied to the worship and liturgical life of the assembly. "Let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving meal unless they have been baptized in the name of the Lord" (Ehrman:431). Thus, even as early as the end of the first century, a developed eucharistic pattern has already emerged that is more than a casual meal, but rather an integral part of the worshipping community's identity.

By the time of Justin Martyr, a more developed eucharistic pattern had arisen. As Thompson notes, "the liturgy of the Word had already claimed its place before the Eucharist in the regular Sunday service" (4). This communal meal, while not yet tied inextricably to the liturgy of the Word, was clearly not to be separated from it either. "We call this food the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except he is convinced of the truth of our teaching and has received the washing for the forgiveness of his sins" (Thompson:8). Not only is the Eucharist tied to a liturgical life evidenced through

baptism at this point, but it is also a natural progression that follows from the “truth of our teaching,” as Justin writes. Thus, Justin’s writings give evidence of a liturgy that had evolved to include readings and a sermon, common prayer, and a formulaic celebration of the Eucharist that included the bringing of the elements to the celebrant, a developed eucharistic prayer, and the distribution of the elements (Jones, et al.:212).¹³

As liturgies continued to develop in the ensuing centuries, more standardized forms began to appear. While there are variants between these standardized liturgies from community to community, a common *ordo* persisted among them in that Scripture was read and expounded upon in a sermon, and was then followed by a eucharistic celebration in the assembly. Well into the seventh century, the essential elements of first-century Christian worship continued to form the basis for the *ordo* of the Lord’s Day, an order in which the people were gathered in fellowship (κοινωνία) around Word and sacrament to offer prayers.

From the seventh through the eleventh centuries, however, the experience of the laity in Sunday worship began to change. While the *ordo* for the Eucharist remained the same, reception of the elements by the laity became much less frequent (Jones, et al.:257). As weekly participation in the Eucharist diminished, a loss of the liturgy of the Word was not far behind. By the eleventh century, not only did the congregation not enjoy weekly Communion, the amount of Scripture reading that took place in the Lord’s Day services was on the decline as well (259). The Gallic and Latin liturgies that had evolved around Word and sacrament now showed little evidence of either from the standpoint of the laity.

Astoundingly, a church that had begun in the first century as one of fellowship, Word, sacrament, and prayers had devolved in a millennium to include very little of any of those things.

From the beginning of the eleventh century various changes of far-reaching consequence had begun to take place in the Roman liturgy. The very way in which the liturgy had been celebrated, with its emphasis on community celebration--singers, readers, congregation, and celebrant with their respective parts, the celebration taking place around a simple table and the celebrant facing the people: this familiar pattern was soon to disappear. (Jones, et al.:281)

By this time, the pattern of Sunday worship at its most basic level bore little resemblance to the church at the time of the apostles. For the first five hundred years or more, liturgies developed, orthodoxies were hammered out, and an ecclesiastical structure evolved. Yet despite the many and varied growing pains, the church still gathered around Word and sacrament in concert with one another. But with a famished Sunday assembly that now lacked both Word and sacrament on which it was founded, it is no wonder that by the dawn of the sixteenth century a reformation was in order.

Although Zwingli's liturgical practices, as noted, did little to reverse the trends of the medieval church or to reclaim the foundational pillars of Word *and* sacrament from the first century, many other reformers took a much different route.¹⁴ In fact, as Maxwell remarks, "that worship is incomplete without both Word and Sacrament was acknowledged by every major reformed except Zwingli" (384). Luther's *Deutsche Messe* and *Formula Missae*, for instance, presume that the service for the laity will include both Word, read and proclaimed in a sermon, and sacrament. Luther addresses the question of eucharistic frequency in his Larger Catechism when he writes that, "indeed, the very words 'as often as you do it' imply that we should do it often...frequently, whenever and

wherever you will” (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (Germany) and Tappert:452). In the same manner, however, neither did Luther perceive of a worship service that was devoid of Scripture and sermon. Such preaching, unlike the practice of the medieval church, was to be a central part of the liturgy as well. “A Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God’s Word and prayer,” he writes (White:85).

Luther was, of course, not alone in his desire to see a return to worship centered on Word and sacrament. Calvin, as previously noted, also sought to reclaim a church of Word *and* sacrament. Although, sadly, Calvin’s desires never found a foothold in most Reformed churches, the unity of Word and sacrament in the Reformed tradition was not lost. Almost three centuries later on another continent, Calvin perhaps found one of the greatest champions of his eucharistic theology in John Williamson Nevin.

Nevin believed strongly that liturgy should reflect and proceed from theology. For Nevin, this meant attention in the *ordo* to the magnificent mystery of the Incarnation, a gift which found expression in the church and in the sacraments. As Nevin writes,

‘The last ground of all true Christian worship is the mystical presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist; all the parts of public worship are inwardly bound together by their having a common relation to the idea of a Christian altar.’ The basic theology [of Nevin] could not, of course, determine the sequence of events in an order of service. But it did set a fundamental pattern. A liturgy must not be a ‘pulpit liturgy,’ as Nevin called it...It must be what Nevin called an ‘altar liturgy.’ By that phrase he meant a liturgy which would be the expression of that mystical union which takes place between Christ and his people in every act of Christian worship. (Hageman:95)

What Nevin sought to reclaim as an integral part of the liturgy was a unity of Word and sacrament, a fellowship of believer with Christ, in essence nothing less than a devotion to “the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts

2:42).

The challenge for Nevin, as for many Reformed theologians that followed, was not imagining a liturgy that faithfully interpreted Calvin's eucharistic theology. Such liturgies were available, but not widely accepted. For although Calvin's himself may have welcomed the weekly liturgy of Word and sacrament, in practice, very few churches in the Calvinist tradition reflected such worship. As Maxwell rightly observes, "the Reformed Eucharistic doctrine...is basically Calvinistic...yet the Reformed liturgical tradition has witnessed to a theology more nearly Zwinglian than Calvinistic" (381). This disjunction between theological tradition and liturgical tradition, between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*, while troublesome to Nevin and others that followed, ultimately set the stage for a renewed exploration of worship practices in the church.

Modern Liturgical Movements

As the Presbyterian church moved into the twentieth century, new efforts at liturgical renewal began to emerge. By 1961 the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in cooperation with the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern), published its new *Directory for Worship*. The influence of a renewed liturgical awareness was immediately evident, as Melton notes:

Indicative of how greatly Presbyterians had been influenced by research into liturgics and Reformed history was the new Directory's emphasis on the unity of Word and Sacrament. The sacraments, it insisted, were integral to the full ordering of Christ worship and not occasional appendages. (141)

Confirming an awareness that the regular and frequent celebration of both Word and

sacrament was integral to Christian worship, the 1961 *Directory* lay the essential groundwork for the liturgical prayer books that followed.

By the time the next incarnation of the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship was published in 1970, another important move forward had been made. For the first time in centuries, a service of Word *and* sacrament was suggested as normative. As Daniels observes,

The [1961] Directory thus opened the door for the book of services to provide a service of Word *and* Sacrament as normative for Lord's Day worship. Reflecting the Directory, the committee chose to include only one order of worship for every Sunday, an order that included both Word and the Lord's Supper. This action, clearly linking worship on the Lord's Day with preaching of the Word and celebration of the Lord's Supper, was a bold step forward in the face of prevailing practice. (42-43)

As Daniels notes, of course, practice did not yet follow the recommendations set forth in the *Directory for Worship* and *The Worshipbook*, but an important stride had been made in that direction. The pattern of biblical worship centered on fellowship, prayers, Word and sacrament was finally reflected fully in the denominational liturgical texts for Sunday worship.

Deeply entrenched practices, however, are neither readily nor quickly altered to conform to such recommendations. Several decades after the first statement in the 1961 *Directory* and the subsequent prayers book were published, the prevailing practice for many Presbyterian churches is still a weekly service of the Word, punctuated with monthly or quarterly Communion. Instead of an introspective examination of local liturgical patterns, the practice of many clergy and congregations is rather to seek theological justifications for our current practices. From such efforts arise many of the

congregational objections to frequent, or weekly, Eucharist.

As We Pray, So We Believe

The ancient maxim ‘*lex orandi, lex credendi*,’ or ‘as we pray, so we believe,’ has long served to express the union between the theological and liturgical practices of the church.¹⁵ Although a divorce of theology and liturgy may be the historical reality in many congregations, it need not remain so. As the responses of many participants in the study group suggest, the ground may be fertile for a renewed consensus between our Reformed theological heritage and our present liturgical life. Indeed, as Small suggests, although *lex orandi, lex credendi* is usually taken to mean that “what is prayed shapes what may and must be believed...it is possible to reverse its force, making belief the norm for worship: *what is believed shapes what may and must be prayed*” (317).

In fact, as Wainwright notes, although “Roman Catholicism characteristically appeals to existing liturgical practice for proof of matters in doctrine...[Protestants] would most easily take the dogmatic norm of belief as setting a rule for prayer, so that what must be believed governs what may and should be prayed” (251). Regardless of whether *lex orandi* or *lex credendi* is given the primary role in decisions of doctrine and liturgy, it is clear that the two must always remain in conversation with one another. When the liturgy fails to exemplify primary theological tenets, or when theological claims are at odds with the worship of the community, the Church must seek to explore and rectify the discord between the two. When the sacramental practices of a church are

at odds with its own sacramental doctrine, as is the case in many Presbyterian churches, bringing the two into harmony with one another should be a matter of primary concern.

Indeed, despite a few comments voicing opposition to weekly Communion, there are many reasons, from historical to theological, that may prompt reconsideration of infrequent sacramental practice. To begin with, as noted above, the practice of weekly Eucharist is consistent with the practice of the early church. However, far from simply being a nostalgic activity, the recovery of weekly eucharistic practice serves to more closely align the Church's liturgy with its doctrine. Reformed eucharistic theology holds that the eucharistic meal is also a very real, physical act by which the Church is bound to Christ and to Christians "from every time and place who forever sing to the glory of [God's] name" (*Book of Common Worship*:126). In fact, the communal character of worship is lifted up by the *Directory for Worship* as being of primary importance to the Sunday assembly (W-1.1005).

Furthermore, the practice of Eucharist is formative for and integral to the Christian community. As Nevin notes,

the question of the Eucharist is one of the most important belonging to the history of religion. It may be regarded indeed as in some sense central to the whole Christian system. For Christianity is grounded in the living union of the believer with the person of Christ; and this great fact is emphatically concentrated in the mystery of the Lord's Supper. (47)

If, as Nevin suggests, the question of the Eucharist is so crucially important to the life of the Church,¹⁶ then how might it look for the Church to worship as Calvin, Nevin and other reformers envisioned? To begin with, a church of Word and sacrament must find *both* practices at the core of its identity. Such a church will grow to understand that the

true Word of God is not Scripture or preaching, but the eternal *logos* of God. And that eternal Word of God, made flesh in Jesus Christ, is encountered in the church through the reading of Scripture, the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of bread, fellowship, and prayers.

When any of these essentials is missing, or relegated to an extraneous and infrequent practice, the others are subsequently diminished as well. Perhaps it is difficult, and rightly so, to imagine a church without prayer. Just as troublesome is the notion of a church without fellowship, or without the reading and proclamation of Scripture. How then does the same church envision scriptural worship without the breaking of the bread? A return to worship as envisioned in Acts requires first, however, that the church recognize the lack of weekly Eucharist as problematic. It requires of the church an awareness that the missing sacramental celebration impacts the other elements of worship as well. As Moltmann suggests, “without common feasts of this kind the messianic history of Christ cannot be actualized properly and appropriately. A community without the table loses, by default, its messianic spirit and its eschatological meaning” (249).

The movement toward such a recognition, however, requires a reshaping of the *theologia prima* of the congregation to bring the worship practices into closer alignment with the sacramental theology of the congregation. Such restructuring of the worship liturgy does not, however, only take place on Sundays during which the sacraments are celebrated. On the majority of Sundays, in which the liturgy of the Word is *the* central act, reminders of and allusions to the Word sealed in sacraments are rightly present.

In the congregation of study, for example, the chalice, flagon, and paten are

always present on the Communion table. During Sundays on which the Eucharist is not celebrated, wheat and grapes are also present on the table as a visible reminder of the sacrament. Every Sunday the baptismal font is kept out front and filled with water as well. Portions of the Sunday liturgy, as appropriate, are led from both table and font.

Simple practices such as these keep the presence and role of the sacraments in the forefront and serve as continual reminders of the depth of sacramental meaning as confirmation of the Word proclaimed. As the PCUSA sacraments study guide notes, “we are convinced that a rediscovery of the gift and the call of our baptism can transform the church for ministry in the 21st century” (2006:5). Toward that end, the authors of the guide even commend five simple sacramental practices, similar to those noted above, for inclusion in every church. The study clearly evidences an awakening to the importance of the regular sacramental practices of the church for ministry in an ever-changing context.

The benefit of such simple practices can be seen, for example, in the responses of the study group regarding the baptismal font. In the recent experience of this congregation, baptismal celebrations are rare. When they do occur they are, almost without exception, infant baptisms. Especially considering the rarity of adult baptismal celebrations, one can easily understand how a community can begin to lose sense of the full breadth and depth of the sacrament. When a congregation’s experience of baptism is limited to an occasional rite for infants, then baptism can easily become solely about celebrating the life of a child and ritually welcoming that child into the community.¹⁷

Although many churches, including Timber Ridge, certainly take seriously their baptismal pledges to welcome one of God’s children into the family of God and to

instruct that child in the faith, the sacrament of baptism is not limited to a means of recruiting nursery workers and youth church school teachers. While welcoming a child into God's family, and all the responsibilities that entails, is certainly an important baptismal image, it is by no means an exhaustive one.

In addition to a welcome into the community, baptism is also a sign of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and new life. Consequently, the prayer of confession and assurance of pardon are offered from the font each Sunday, incorporating the water with the reassurance of being cleansed from sin and raised to new life. In similar fashion, the water is used in funeral services along with the words from Romans 6:3-5 as a reassurance of hope in the resurrection. These continual reminders that baptism is a fundamental part of the whole of Christian life, from birth to death, serve to keep the sacrament present in worship on the vast majority of Sundays throughout the year when baptisms are not celebrated. Such small and simple gestures, however, can begin to foster a deeper yearning for and awareness of the sacraments in worship. As one member of the study remarked, "when the declaration of forgiveness is given at the font, and even if I can't see, but can only hear, the water splash, I know that the Holy Spirit embraces me and forgives me."

In similar fashion, worship strives to incorporate eucharistic elements every Sunday, even when the sacrament itself is not celebrated. On Communion Sundays, the bread and wine are brought forward along with the offerings of the people in an effort to underscore that the bread and wine are also gifts of thanks offered to God. On all other Sundays, however, the offerings are still brought to the Communion table, and the prayer

of thanksgiving is offered from that location. The prayer itself also follows similar form to the Great Thanksgiving, beginning with the *sursum corda* and a preface of thanksgiving for God's mighty acts, and often concluding with words of *oblation* similar to those found in the eucharistic *epiclesis*.

Such reminders of the sacraments each Sunday throughout the year are important inclusions in worship. They are the first steps in returning to a church in which Word and sacrament are celebrated regularly and faithfully. While such liturgical elements are valuable sacramental practices within the liturgy, however, they are no substitute for the regular inclusion of the sacraments in the weekly life of the church. Indeed, as von Allmen pointedly suggests, "we have no right to remain attached to a mode of worship which precludes the people of the baptized from assembling to obey the command: 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' We have no right to continue to celebrate our worship without re-integrating the Lord's Supper into it, or it into the Lord's Supper" (287).

While wheat and grapes, chalice, paten and flagon reside on the table, and thanksgiving prayers are offered each Sunday from the same table, those actions do not themselves convey the fullness and richness of the eucharistic feast. As one parishioner in the study remarked, "Nothing connects you to the Word and Eucharist like ingesting the bread and wine." Therein lies one of the foundational reasons for reclaiming the practice of weekly Eucharist. It is, as the study group member noted, the act of ingesting the elements, of touching and tasting the bread and wine, that connects the gathered assembly to the person and work of Christ in the world. It is the meal around that table that serves as a real, tangible means of grace by which the community is joined together in receiving

and responding to the Word of God proclaimed in Scripture and sermon. Indeed, as Schmemmann notes, the eucharistic celebration is constitutive of the very identity of the church:

The Eucharist is *the* Sacrament of the Church, i.e. her eternal actualization as the Body of Christ, united in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Eucharist is not only the “most important” of all the offices, it is also source and goal of the entire liturgical life of the Church. Any liturgical theology not having the Eucharist as the foundation of its whole structure is basically defective. (24)

The eucharistic meal forms the church into its identity as the Body of Christ, which is, as Schmemmann notes, the goal of the liturgical assembly. At the meal, then, the Church finds not only a liturgy, but a source of life. The assembly gathers around the table not only to learn about Christ, but also to learn who the Church is called to be in the world, and to be strengthened for that task. In as much as the eucharistic meal proclaims the eternal Word of God, it seals that same Word into the hearts of believers, nourishing the community for the work of Christ. As Calvin has suggested, “the Supper is a matter of nourishing, sustaining, and increasing a communion with Christ to which the word and Baptism have initiated the children of God” (Gerrish:134).

In the Eucharist, the community is nourished and sustained for its mission, and grows in communion with Christ. This growth should not be supposed as merely an exercise in increasing personal piety. Although many worshipers find that the primary emphasis of the meal is on that which is done *in remembrance of* Christ, the Church has historically understood that in some manner, Christ is not only remembered, but is present with worshipers in the meal. Although the responses of the study group suggest that ‘remembrance of the last supper’ is the most recognized eucharistic image, for the

early church, the experience of table fellowship with Christ was not only remembered, but experienced anew each time the community gathered.

The experience of table fellowship helped to bring the Word proclaimed beyond the singular act of Christ on the cross, and instead makes real the body of Christ alive and active in the world. The meal is not only oriented toward the past as a recollection of salvation history, it is oriented toward the present ministry of the church and the future fulfillment of the kingdom. Thus, Christ is found present in the meal not only in a past act, but in ongoing ministry. As the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* document from the World Council of Churches suggests, the “Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ really present to us in the eucharistic meal, fulfilling the promise contained in the words of institution” (13).

The celebration of the Eucharist is not only consistent with that which is proclaimed in worship, it is an integral part of such worship. The community between believers and Christ that is proclaimed in Scripture and sermon is embodied and experienced at the table. As one participant noted, “It doesn’t matter so much what elements we use--there are cultural differences and it’s all just food and drink anyway...Food and drink are how we socialize with one another, and how we socialize with the Lord. What really matters is that whatever we eat and drink at the table, the important thing is that we are eating and drinking with Christ.” As the Scriptures and sermon proclaim Christ present in the hearts of believers, that presence is certainly experienced at the table.

In the Lord’s Supper, through the ingestion of the bread and wine, by the power

of the Holy Spirit, the Church is thereby joined to the life of Christ, who is present at the table. It has long been held, both by the early church, and by Calvin, Nevin and others, that Christ is, in some manner, truly present at the feast to the benefit of the community. Such an insistence on Christ's presence can be seen even as early as Paul, as for instance in 1 Corinthians 10:16. The broken bread and the shared cup are identified by Paul not as a means to memorialize Christ's sacrifice, but as an actual sharing in the body and blood of Christ.¹⁸

Despite Calvin's rejection of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the Reformed tradition still affirmed that Christ was truly and objectively present in the celebration of the sacrament as well. As Nevin has suggested,

Calvin was not a man to play with words on such a point; and it is not difficult to see what he is concerned here to save and secure. It is the real objective power of the sacrament, as the real presence of Christ's life by the Holy Ghost...as something different from the subjective working of this faith...There is much more here, for the Reformed doctrine, than any mere relation of the believer's mind to the general truth of the gospel...Right or wrong, Calvin held and taught all his life, that we have in the Lord's supper something far beyond a mere occasion for the exercise of our faith; that it carries in itself, by the Holy Ghost, an objective mystical force, by which directly we are made to participate in the mediatorial life of the blessed Redeemer. (1850:437)

Thus, for the Church, participation in the sacrament is nothing less than participation with Christ in his ongoing ministry of reconciliation. Through the bread and wine, the community is bound to Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, joined with Christ in the very ministry to which the Church is commissioned.

That community is not only vertically oriented, however, as a means of personal communion with Christ. It is also the meal in which the community of believers is drawn together with one another. Justin Martyr emphasizes the communal aspect of the

sacrament in his *First Apology*. As Thompson writes, the sacrament for Justin was “a Communion-fellowship that united all of the baptized, even those who were absent, through the common participation in the ‘flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus’” (7). In Communion, community is formed, reformed, and nurtured. Indeed the Scriptures proclaim a God whose very existence is found in community, both in the Trinitarian Godhead and in communion with the created order. In the eucharistic meal, that community is embodied and experienced by believers.

The community does not end, however, with those gathered around the table. Nor does it even end with those present or absent who are drawn together by their common participation in the meal. Rather, the table prompts believers to extend the Christian community out into the world, just as Christ has done. As one study participant noted, “there is a link between the Body of Christ and the gathered community eating the bread. We are one body that meets together but then like the bread, we are broken up so we can be sent out to do what God wants us to do.”

Indeed, the table orients believers not only toward Christ, but toward the world. The table is a place of reconciliation among believers, and between believers and the world. As a study participant observed, “the Bible tells us that before we can come to the table to get right with God, we need to first get right with our neighbors.” Such reconciliation is at the heart of the Eucharist, just as it is at the heart of worship. Indeed as the *Directory for Worship* notes, worship serves to equip God’s people for God’s service in the world--a service of reconciliation. At the table, sinners are reconciled to God and sent out to continue that ministry of reconciliation.¹⁹ This act of reconciliation begins

with Christ's act of eating and drinking with sinners at the table, around the bread and wine. But from the table, the church is sent out into a broken and sinful world in the name of Christ to be Christ's agents of reconciliation.

The role of the Eucharist in the active ministry of the Church is reflected, for instance, in the various Great Thanksgivings offered in the 1993 *Book of Common Worship*. All nine prayers, with the arguable exception of Prayer F, modeled after the Alexandrine Liturgy of St. Basil, include an extended epiclesis petitioning the Holy Spirit to be at work, through the sacrament, in and among the church to fulfill Christ's ministry of reconciliation in the world.²⁰ The relationship between the eucharistic meal and the ministry of the Church through the Holy Spirit is perhaps most clearly and poetically captured in Augustine's charge to the congregation:

If *you*, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying 'Amen' to what you are, your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith. When you hear 'The body of Christ,' you reply 'Amen.' *Be* a member of Christ's body, then, so that your 'Amen' may ring true! (1247)

The Church, united to and nourished by that same body of Christ in the bread and wine, is sent out to be the body of Christ in the world. The eucharistic act on Sunday morning, the Word proclaimed and sealed in the bread and wine, is thus far more important to the life of the Church than as merely an occasional meditative act on the suffering of Christ. It is rather the embodiment of the Church's very identity. It is that through which the Church comes not only to understand the Word proclaimed, but how that same eternal Word is present in the world. As Lathrop remarks, "Is the Sunday meeting--the liturgy, the mass, the worship service--simply the survival of a collection of

quaint customs from a more secure and simple time? Or do its symbolic interactions propose to us a realistic pattern for interpreting our world?" (1).

Research in one particular congregation suggests that the juxtaposition of Word and sacrament in the liturgy does indeed not only inform the hearing of the Word proclaimed, but provides a means through which to interpret the ministry of the Church in the world. Indeed, the survey results from the study group even suggest that the Eucharist is perhaps one of the most important elements in the worship service, rivaled only by prayer.²¹ For a liturgical tradition that has long understood the importance of the Word proclaimed in Scripture and sermon, but often overlooked the importance of the Word sealed in the weekly sacrament of the Eucharist, this is a remarkable assertion by the study group.

Such recognition of the importance of the Eucharist, however, is *not* a rejection of the equally important liturgy of the Word. Instead, it points to a growing awareness that the Eucharist is at once the same Word proclaimed and now embodied in bread and wine.

The *Directory for Worship* begins,

Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world. (W-1.1001)

The Scriptures and the sermon have historically been understood as vehicles through which the worshipping community is drawn to acknowledge "God present in the world and in their lives." The sermon not only proclaims the good news of Christ, but often and faithfully prompts believers to respond to that good news by recognizing themselves in

covenant community with other Christians and with Christ, and in engaging in Christ-like service to the world around them.

As the various responses of members of the study group suggest, the Eucharist rightfully belongs as a central and vital part of the liturgy of the Lord's Day. The psalmist's injunction to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8) may well serve as a vivid reminder to the community about the importance of the communal meal. In the bread and the wine, the promises of God are made tangible, and are reaffirmed each time the meal is celebrated. The meal itself doesn't just confirm the promises of the Word, it is a proclamation of that very same Word.²² In the Communion meal, the Word is sealed and internalized by believers, awakening a sense of awe and gratitude. "In Communion, we experience God with all our senses. As we digest the bread, we digest God's word. The wine is Christ in us," one participant remarked.²³

Hope for Theological and Liturgical Unity

As the exploration of New Testament practices, early church worship, Reformed theology, and the experiences of one particular congregation suggest, reclaiming the centrality of Word and sacrament together in the worship life of the Church can be a timely means of both personal and corporate renewal. Although the documented experiences presented here are those of a few members in a select congregation, the articulated awareness of the importance of the sacraments in the liturgical life of the Church suggests possibilities for other communities to explore their sacramental heritage

as a means of renewal. The formative and transformative aspects of baptism and the Eucharist in the life of one Reformed congregation may provide hope for more widespread congregational practices.

Liturgical renewal in congregations can and does take many forms, ranging from a contemporary seeker service punctuated with multimedia imagery to a return to ancient traditions in all their mystery. While some congregational leaders give thoughtful attention to the form and structure of changes in worship, others discover them through trial and error, incorporating some practices and discarding others. In some cases the liturgy of a church is the most faithful expression of its theology; in others, a theology might emerge to justify a liturgical action, or the liturgy and theology may find themselves divorced from one another, with the liturgy occupying the ecclesiological realm and theology the academic arena.

The Reformed tradition has a long and rich theological and confessional history. In many ways, that history informs our worship. But in other ways, such as our sacramental practice, we have lost the vital connection. The divorce between the expressed desires of a number of study participants against weekly Eucharist and the overwhelming acknowledgment of the importance and benefit of the Eucharist to the experience of worship is certainly one such example.

As the comments and data from the study group show, however, there is at least a growing awareness of this chasm. Perhaps as the congregation of Timber Ridge, like many others, continues to give thought to its ministry to a new generation, we would do well to encourage an awareness of our rich theological and liturgical history. Planning

worship with an intentional awareness of Reformed sacramental history, and sharing conversations around that worship, as this study has sought to do, may be an important first step in fostering liturgical worship that is sacramental, theological, and Reformed.

One participant noted in the concluding session of the study that she had learned more about why and how we worship in these few weeks than in her last forty years in the church. How might worship look if all of us gathered on a Sunday morning sought a deeper understanding of our place in the rich history of Christian worship? Is it possible that our practices might begin to change in accordance with our theological understanding? If the experiences of the study group are suggestive in any way, they may serve as a summons to a deeper awareness of the underpinnings of our corporate worship.

As theology and liturgy find more common ground, we may also find that our experience of mystery and awe at the divine presence flourishes. Baptism and the Eucharist may become such places where the living Word of God is tasted, touched, seen and heard, and our lives are changed. As Augustine's sermon reminds us, at the table and in the bread, it is our own mystery that is joined with the mystery of Christ. Be then what you receive, that your faith may be affirmed and your 'Amen' may ring true!

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Anamnesis – Remembrance, memory or memorial. This refers often to the second portion of the Great Thanksgiving recalling and celebrating the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. The anamnesis may also include the Words of Institution if they appear within the prayer itself.

Epiclesis – Invocation of the Holy Spirit. This typically refers to the third and final portion of the Great Thanksgiving prayer in which the celebrant prays for the presence of the Holy Spirit, not only upon the gifts of bread and wine, but upon the community, that it may be the Body of Christ.

Lex orandi, lex credendi – Literally, ‘the law of prayer is the law of belief.’ This phrase is often used as a reminder of the close connection between the order of worship and the theological underpinnings of the church.

Manual Acts – The actual breaking of the bread, and pouring of the wine into the cup by the celebrant. This may also include the elevation of the elements.

Oblation – An offering of self sacrifice, typically found at the conclusion of the epiclesis.

Ordo – Refers to the order or structure of the liturgy.

(Proper) Preface – Typically found in the first portion of the Great Thanksgiving, following the *sursum corda* and preceding the *sanctus*, this is a brief prayer, usually appropriate to the particular occasion in the church calendar, and often celebrating the creative acts of God.

Sanctus – The refrain often recited or sung by the congregation between the first and second portions of the Great Thanksgiving. The words are drawn from Isaiah 6:3 and Psalm 118:26.

Sursum Corda – Latin for “lift up your heart.” Refers to the portion of the opening dialogue of the Great Thanksgiving between the celebrant and congregation that includes this phrase, with the congregational response, “we lift them up to the Lord.”

Theologia Prima – Primary Liturgical Theology. A term used by Lathrop and others to refer to the church’s liturgies and liturgical texts, suggesting that the primary expression of our theology is to be found in our worship.

Verba – Literally ‘words,’ refers to the Words of Institution found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Appendix B: Study Group Outline

What follows is an outline of the six week study group session, along with related questions and Scripture readings. All six meetings took place in the normal place of worship of the congregation, with normal symbols of worship in place (such as water in the baptismal font.)

Week 1: Worship as Liturgy (The Work of the People)

This session begins by asking one volunteer to go stand where the minister(s) stand. Another volunteer is asked to stand where the choir stands, another for the acolyte, another for the congregation, organist, etc., until only one participant remains. That person is asked to go stand where God is during worship. Once people are spread out across the sanctuary, everyone is asked to share why they chose to stand where they did. Then everyone is invited to come stand in the chancel area except the person representing God, who is invited to stay in the congregation. Then the following excerpt introducing Kierkegaard's idea of the 'Theater of Worship' is shared:

Alas, in regard to things spiritual, the foolishness of many is this, that they in the secular sense look upon the speaker as an actor, and the listeners as theatergoers who are to pass judgment upon the artist. But the speaker is not the actor—not in the remotest sense. No, the speaker is the prompter. There are no mere theatergoers present, for each listener will be looking into his own heart... The prompter whispers to the actor what he is to say, but the actor's repetition of it is the main concern... If the speaker has the responsibility for what he whispers, then the listener has an equally great responsibility not to fall short in his task. In the theater, the play is staged before an audience who are called theatergoers; but at the devotional address, God himself is present. In the most earnest sense, God is the critical theatergoer, who looks on to see how the lines are spoken and how they are listened to... The listener, if I may say so, is the actor, who in all truth acts before God... If this were not done, then the listeners would be presuming to share God's task with him. (180-181)

The following questions then formed the basis for discussion:

1. How does Kierkegaard's 'Theater of Worship' idea challenge your thinking about worship?
2. What factors should be considered in planning a worship service?
 - a. Role of Scripture
 - b. Role of the Holy Spirit
 - c. Role of the Pastor
 - d. Role of the Congregation
3. When you have been a part of different worship experiences, perhaps in years

- past, or at another church, or at another place like camp, what elements are different from one service to another?
4. What elements are the same?
 5. What elements seem to be important at this church?
 - a. Based on our order of worship?
 - b. Based on our architecture and furnishings?
 6. Look together at Acts 2:38-47
 - a. The passage falls within the context of the church's first Pentecost, the very beginning of Christian worship following Jesus' ascension.
 - b. What can we learn about Christian worship from this early picture?
 - i. It begins with baptism
 - ii. The Holy Spirit is at work
 - iii. Worship includes teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers

Week 2: A Church of Word and Sacrament

The following quote from John Calvin, introduced at the beginning of this dissertation, is shared with the congregation: "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists" (1960:1023).

The following questions then formed the basis for discussion:

1. According to Calvin, what seem to be the most important factors in determining whether or not a gathering can truly be called a "church of God"?
2. What does it mean to say that the "Word of God [is] purely preached *and heard*"? How do you see this evident in this congregation?
3. Calvin also writes that "the sacraments [should be] administered according to Christ's institution." What are the sacraments to which Calvin refers?
 - a. How many sacraments are recognized in our church?
 - b. Why are baptism and the Eucharist called 'sacraments' and not other things we do? Why do we not refer to other ordinances such as marriage, confirmation, penance, or ordination with the term 'sacraments'?
4. What does it mean to be a church of Word and sacrament? How is this church a place of Word and sacrament?
5. What do we mean when we talk about the Word of God? What do you suppose Calvin had in mind as he wrote this?
6. Look together at John 1:1-14
 - a. Is the Word of God Scripture?
 - b. Is the Word of God the sermon?
 - c. Is the Word of God Jesus Christ?
 - d. How is the Word of God all three of these things? What reminders do you find in our Order of Worship that these are all the Word of God?

Week 3: Baptism--Our Welcome into the Body of Christ

The group is invited to gather at the front of the sanctuary around the baptismal font, filled with water. The following questions formed the basis for group discussion:

1. What is necessary to celebrate Baptism?
2. Why do we celebrate Baptism?
3. Does the person being baptized receive any real benefit from it?
 - a. Does the rest of the congregation?
4. What is the meaning of Baptism? Look at the following Scripture texts to explore this question:
 - a. Acts 2:38-39
 - b. Acts 22:16
 - c. Romans 6:3-4
 - d. Colossians 2:12
 - e. Mark 10:38
 - f. 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - g. Ephesians 2:19
 - h. Matthew 3:16
 - i. John 3:5
 - j. Titus 3:5
 - k. 1 Corinthians 6:11
 - l. Romans 8:23
 - m. Acts 16:33
5. Considering the above Scripture texts, what role ought baptism take in the regular weekly worship of the Church?
6. How does baptism inform what we do on Sunday mornings?

Week 4: Eucharist--Our Sharing in the Body of Christ

The group is invited to gather around the Communion table at the front of the sanctuary. The following questions formed the basis for group discussion:

1. What is necessary to celebrate the Eucharist?
2. Why do we celebrate the Eucharist?
3. Do we receive any real benefit from the Eucharist when we partake?
4. What is the meaning of the Eucharist? Look at the following Scripture texts to explore this question:
 - a. Mark 2:15
 - b. Luke 15:1-2
 - c. Mark 6:41-42
 - d. Deuteronomy 8:3
 - e. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

- f. Hebrews 13:15
 - g. Romans 12:1
 - h. Luke 22:30
 - i. 1 Corinthians 11:26
5. Considering the above Scripture texts, what role ought the Eucharist to take in the regular weekly worship of the church?
 6. Consider the following excerpt from our Directory for Worship. “The Lord’s Supper is to be observed on the Lord’s Day, in the regular place of worship, and in a manner suitable to the particular occasion and local congregation. It is appropriate to celebrate the Lord’s Supper as often as each Lord’s Day. It is to be celebrated regularly and frequently enough to be recognized as integral to the Service for the Lord’s Day” (W-2.4009).
 - a. Do you think we celebrate regularly and frequently enough to recognize the Lord’s Supper as integral to the Service for the Lord’s Day?
 - b. How does the Eucharist inform what we do on Sunday mornings?

Week 5: Word and Sacrament Juxtaposed in Scripture

The study group is divided into three small groups, and each group is assigned one of the following Scripture texts to explore, using the following questions to guide their conversation. After 20-30 minutes, everyone is invited back into the large group to share findings about how Word and sacrament appear together and inform one another in each text.

Scripture Texts: **Acts 8:25-40**
 Mark 6:34-44
 Luke 24:13-32

Discussion Questions:

1. Who are the actors / characters in this text?
2. What evidence do you see in this text of the Word (in teaching or proclamation)?
3. What evidence do you see in this text of a sacrament?
4. How do Word and sacrament seem to be related in this text?
5. What conclusions, if any, can you draw about the relationship of Word and sacrament in worship from this text?

Week 6: Word and Sacrament Juxtaposed in Worship

The final study group met on Pentecost Sunday. The Eucharist was celebrated during morning worship that day. That afternoon, the study group was asked to reflect on

the conversations of the previous six weeks, as well as on this morning's worship service. The following questions then formed the basis for the group discussion.

1. In which areas of the worship service did you hear the Word proclaimed?
2. In which areas of the worship service did you observe elements of or allusions to baptism?
3. In what ways, if any, did those baptismal elements illuminate or enhance your hearing of the Word proclaimed?
4. In which areas of the worship service did you observe elements of or allusions to the Eucharist?
5. In what ways, if any, did those eucharistic elements illuminate or enhance your hearing of the Word proclaimed?
6. What elements of the worship service, if any, did you *personally* find most illuminating to *your* worship experience this morning? What was it about those particular elements that spoke to you in this way?
7. It has been noted that the three primary and foundational elements of Christian worship are book (or story), bath and meal.²⁴ When phrased in this language, these three things are also often foundational to our lives outside of church. Please reflect with the group on how, if at all, the Word, Baptism, and Eucharist illuminate or speak to your life outside of Sunday morning worship.

Appendix C: Study Group Survey

The following survey was given to all study group participants prior to the first meeting, and again at the conclusion of the last meeting to help gauge and quantify attitudes toward and awareness of various elements of the worship service.

1. How many sacraments are recognized (practiced) by Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church? _____

Please write a number on *each* line for *each* question.

2. On how many Sundays throughout the year is Communion included with worship at Timber Ridge? _____
3. How many services do you remember attending in the last year that included a baptism at Timber Ridge? _____
4. How many services do you remember attending in the last year that included Communion at Timber Ridge? _____
5. How many weddings do you remember attending at Timber Ridge in the last year? _____
6. How many funerals do you remember attending at Timber Ridge in the last year?

Scale: Optional 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Indispensable

7. Please pick a number from the scale to show how essential *each* of these factors is *to you* for a worship service.
 - a. Baptism _____
 - b. Choir _____
 - c. Confession / Pardon _____
 - d. Eucharist (Communion) _____
 - e. Hymns _____
 - f. Minister _____
 - g. Music _____
 - h. New Testament Reading _____
 - i. Old Testament Reading _____
 - j. Prayer _____
 - k. Psalm _____
 - l. Sermon _____
 - m. Silence _____

Scale: Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Much

8. Please pick a number from the scale to indicate how well each of these phrases describes your understanding of the Eucharist.
- a. Memorial of the Last Supper
 - b. Fellowship with other Christians
 - c. Solemn Occasion
 - d. High Church
 - e. Fellowship with Christ
 - f. Heritage from Catholicism
 - g. Foretaste of the heavenly banquet
 - h. Thanksgiving to God
 - i. Sacrifice of Christ for us
 - j. Extraneous Ritual
 - k. Our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
9. Please pick a number from the scale to indicate how well each of these phrases describes your understanding of Baptism.
- a. Incorporation into the Church
 - b. Necessary rite
 - c. Dying and rising with Christ
 - d. Reception of the Holy Spirit
 - e. Forgiveness of sins
 - f. Solemn occasion
 - g. Extraneous Ritual
 - h. Washing / Being Made Clean
 - i. Community Event
 - j. Family Event
 - k. Re-birth

10. Please pick a number from the scale to show how much you *agree* or *disagree* with each statement and jot in the space to the right of the item.

Scale

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neutral

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

- a. Sermons should relate to the readings
- b. Baptism is about welcoming a person into the church community
- c. Communion should occur every Sunday
- d. Only adults should be baptized
- e. Sunday services that include Communion are too long
- f. Attending Sunday service is about my relationship with the congregation
- g. Eucharist enhances the hearing of the word proclaimed (sermon)
- h. Communion should be a part of the wedding ceremony
- i. Music should relate to the sermon
- j. Baptisms should include only invited guests.

11. Please pick a number from the scale to show how fulfilling *each* of these services would be *to you*.

Scale

Extremely

Unfulfilling

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Extremely

Fulfilling

- a. Scripture reading, prayer and sermon
- b. Scripture reading, prayer and baptism (no sermon)
- c. Scripture reading, prayer, baptism and sermon
- d. Scripture reading, prayer and Eucharist / Communion (no sermon)
- e. Scripture reading, prayer, Eucharist / Communion and sermon

12. How many years have you been a practicing Presbyterian?

13. How many years have you been at Timber Ridge

14. What other denominations have you worshiped with? Been a member of?

Appendix D: PCUSA Communion Study

How Frequently Do PCUSA Congregations Celebrate the Lord's Supper? by Membership Size

	Small Cong. 100 or less n=3,633	Medium Cong. 101-250 n=3,311	Large Cong. more than 250 n=3,263	All Cong. n=10,207
Weekly	1%	1%	2%	1%
Monthly	30%	47%	43%	40%
About every 6 weeks	15%	24%	33%	24%
Quarterly	50%	25%	18%	32%
Less Frequently	2%	1%	<1%	1%
Bimonthly (volunteered response)	3%	3%	4%	3%
Total*	101%	101%	100%	101%

* = percentages may add to more than 100 due to rounding

Smaller congregations celebrate the Lord's Supper less often than do larger congregations. One-half of congregations with no more than 100 members offer Communion quarterly (just four times a year). Almost as many congregations with more than 100 members celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly (12 times a year).

Source: 1989 Congregational Annual Statistics Report (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

Appendix E: Invitation to Christ

The following five practices are commended to every congregation by the sacraments Study Group over the two-year period following the study. The full text of the report, as well as a helpful study guide for use in congregations exploring sacramental practices, can be found online at <http://www.pcusa.org/sacraments/guide.htm>.

1. Set the font in full view of the congregation.
2. Open the font and fill it with water on every Lord's Day.
3. Set cup and plate on the Lord's Table on every Lord's Day.
4. Lead appropriate parts of weekly worship from the font and from the table.
5. Increase the number of Sundays on which the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

NOTES

¹ For an insightful exploration of congregational struggles between the post-traditional and postdenominational worship styles and the worship of “tradition and history,” see Diana Butler Bass, *The Practicing Congregation* (48).

² The definition of this term and subsequent terms in boldface/italics may be found in the glossary at the end of this dissertation (Appendix A).

³ All scriptural citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

⁴ For the purposes of this study, the terms Eucharist, Communion, and Lord’s Supper will be used interchangeably, and are all understood to refer to the entirety of the sacramental celebration within the worship service. This includes, specifically, the portion that begins with the invitation to the table, and moves through the Great Thanksgiving, the words of institution (which may sometimes be included as part of the Great Thanksgiving), the distribution of the elements, and the post-Communion prayer. Although these terms are often and appropriately used interchangeably, each may communicate a different theology of the sacrament. ‘The Lord’s Supper,’ as Moltmann suggests for instance, is closely associated with Jesus’ final meal with his disciples, whereas “the name ‘Eucharist’ puts the meal in the context of divine worship, of praise and thanksgiving” (244). Similarly, the word ‘Communion’ can emphasize the communal aspect of the gathering of the body of Christ. Although each appropriately applies to the Communion sacrament celebrated in worship, attention to the choice of language may help to enrich understanding of the sacrament by drawing together a multitude of images.

⁵ According to a 1989 congregational study by PCUSA Research Services, quarterly Communion is still the norm in half of all small congregations, defined as 100 members or less. As congregational size increases, so does the likelihood of monthly Communion, with approximately 45% of medium and large sized congregations celebrating monthly. Independent of congregational size, however, only 1% of congregations reported celebrating Communion weekly. See Appendix D for the full text of this study.

⁶ The words of institution have traditionally held a place of prominence in the Reformed eucharistic liturgy. Indeed, in many congregations they may function as the only requirement for the Communion celebration. In the Roman church, the *verba* signaled the moment of consecration of the elements. Calvin likewise deemed the Words of Institution as “the indispensable minimum [just as] the Roman church had likewise taken them” (Byars, 2005:28)

⁷ The *Directory for Worship* states that “[d]uring his earthly ministry Jesus shared meals with his followers as a sign of community and acceptance and as an occasion for his own ministry,” then proceeds to acknowledge the Lord’s Supper not only as a memorial meal of the Last Supper, but also as a “foretaste of the messianic banquet,” a meal of thanksgiving, of remembering (*anamnesis*) of Christ’s life and ministry, a communion of the faithful, and as invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*) (W-2.4000-4007).

⁸ Although Reformed theological hesitancy to understand the Eucharist as a means of grace is rightly identified with Zwingli’s early eucharistic theology, at least one biographer suggests that Zwingli came to a fuller appreciation of the sacrament toward the end of his life. As Moore-Keish has noted, while he never claims the Eucharist itself as a means of grace, Zwingli does admit that “by the signs themselves, the bread and the wine, Christ himself is as it were set before our eyes, so that not merely with the ear, but with eye and palate we see and taste that Christ whom the soul bears within itself and in whom it rejoices” (Furca:157; Moore-Keish:fn55).

⁹ As Thompson has noted, “the Eucharist was [for Zwingli] above all a contemplative experience...Zwingli apparently decided that such an occasion need only be offered to Christians four times a year: at Easter, Pentecost, autumn, and Christmas. With that decision, the Eucharist was disconnected from the normal service of the Lord’s Day; and Zwingli was left to devise a new type of Sunday worship around the sermon” (143).

¹⁰ See, for instance, Calvin's *Short Treatise on the Supper of Our Lord*, in which he writes that "if we duly consider the end which our Lord has in view, we shall perceive that the use [of the Lord's Supper] should be more frequent than many make it...therefore, the practice of all well ordered churches should be to celebrate the Supper frequently. [I]t should suffice us to know the intention of our Lord to be, that we should use it often, if we would fully experience the benefit which accrues from it" (155).

¹¹ This pattern of breaking bread is found several times in Luke-Acts. On both occasions in the gospel, it is Jesus who has broken the bread in the presence of his disciples. In Acts, the phrase is used several times as well. It's usage in Acts 2:42 suggests it is to be considered an normal and regular part of worship. Acts 20:7 even uses the phrase "when we met to break bread" to refer to the entire act of worship. Acts 27:35-36 has Paul follow his teaching with the breaking of bread, an act through which "all of them were encouraged" to follow his example.

¹² See, for example, paragraph nine on the prayers and rules of distribution for the Eucharist that offer what is by this time a developed pattern for the community to celebrate the thanksgiving meal together in a liturgical setting (Ehrman:431).

¹³ Although Justin does not record a definitive or set liturgy, his *First Apology* clearly suggests a regular and ritualistic pattern to the weekly eucharistic celebration. For a further exploration of Justin's order of worship, see, for example, Jasper and Cuming's *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (18-19).

¹⁴ Although Zwingli and Calvin are both fathers of the Reformed tradition, as Nevin notes, "it was not the Zwinglian [sic] view of the Lord's Supper, but the Calvinistic view, in all its length and breadth, as already described, which was now recognized as the proper doctrine of the Reformed Church" (80).

¹⁵ The full statement, dating back to at least the early fifth century, reads *ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* ("the law of prayer grounds the law of belief"). It expresses the Church's belief that, "we can get to know what we are to believe by starting from an order on how to act...A large part of the Church's belief has become known to it through the holy living-out of its faith, hope and love" (Vogel:10).

¹⁶ As one student has observed of Nevin's liturgical work at Mercersburg, "Mercersburg was focused on the theology of the Reformation rather than on its liturgiology. He [the student] further comments that 'prior to Mercersburg, Reformed theology and Reformed liturgics never came together in any self-conscious, practical way'" (Byars, 2005:46).

¹⁷ There does seem to be some awareness of the discrepancy between the limited understanding of baptism experienced in the very infrequent welcoming of an infant into the congregation and the richer, fuller images of baptism found in Scripture. This can perhaps be seen in a hesitancy among many congregational members to refer to infant baptism as such. Instead the term 'christening' is more comfortably used. The inconsistent usage of the term 'baptism' to apply to the sacrament as administered to infants and adults may suggest an awareness that baptism rightly plays an important role in the ongoing Christian life of faith, whereas the celebrations of infant baptism may seem to come and go with little impact on the week to week life of the congregation. One of the ways many congregations, including Timber Ridge, are addressing this discrepancy is to intentionally lead appropriate parts of the liturgy from the font, including weekly confession and pardon, as well as occasional services of ordination, installation, and commissioning.

¹⁸ While much debate has surrounded the nature by which the body and blood of Christ are made present in these elements of bread and wine, Paul seems to clearly indicate that Christ himself is, in some manner, indeed present with the worshipping community that breaks bread together. Furthermore, as Collins has noted, the Christological nomenclature used by Paul is Χριστός, a term that in Pauline usage alludes to the death of Jesus (Collins and Harrington:379). So while 'the body of Christ' in 1 Corinthians 10:16 calls to mind first the element of the broken bread, that bread is at the same time for Paul the real presence of the crucified and risen body of Christ.

¹⁹ The Confession of 1967 places at the forefront the reconciling work of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This ultimate act by which humankind is reconciled to God continues to be manifest in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. "God the Holy Spirit fulfills the work of reconciliation in man. The Holy

Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which men are reconciled to God and to one another. He enables them to receive forgiveness as they forgive one another... To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as his reconciling community” (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2004:256-257).

²⁰ Most extant texts from the early Latin rites suggest that the eucharistic prayers of the time commonly lacked an epiclesis. Prayers were modeled as a series of petitions centering on the sacrificial act of Christ. For a fuller discussion of the petitions in early Latin prayers, see, for example, Byars’ *Lift Your Hearts on High*.

²¹ Question 3 of the survey asked the participants to respond to the importance of a number of different factors to the efficacy of a worship service. Ninety percent of respondents ranked Eucharist as ‘very essential’ to a worship service. The only element deemed more important to worship was prayer. Surprisingly the Eucharist ranked even higher in the survey than elements such as Scripture reading and sermon, often identified with Protestant worship. Although this may seem to suggest a subjugation of the “Word of God purely preached and heard” to the “sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution,” follow up conversations with the study group point instead to an understanding of the Eucharist as a means of the proclamation of the Word of God. As a number of respondents’ comments confirm, when considered in its entirety, the eucharistic liturgy is both proclamation and sealing of the Word. While God’s promises are sealed in the bread and wine, they are proclaimed in the *verba*, as well as the recitation of God’s mighty acts of creation and the *anamnesis* portion of the tripartite prayer that recalls Christ’s life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension.

²² See, for example, Paul’s encouragement to the Corinthian church that, “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1Cor 11:26).

²³ For further exploration of the relationship between physical, bodily senses and the experience of worship, see for instance, Saliers’ book, *Worship Come to Its Senses*. As Saliers notes, “The Christian assembly for worship is a gathering for hearing, speaking, singing, seeing, washing, drinking, feeding and being fed, greeting and dancing... In the worshiping assembly, we remember with our bodily participation the promises, and invoke the presence remembered in Word, bath, and holy meal. Here we bring our sense of being alive in the world, our sense of restlessness, our sense of sorrow, our sense of gratitude, our hopes and fears, and all our questions. What emerges in living ritual action is a vision of the world as the arena of God’s creative and redemptive glory” (86-87).

²⁴ (See **Appendix B**) Although a number of scholars have adapted this language to refer to the constitutive elements of the Lord’s Day liturgy, Gordon Lathrop gives considerable attention to the use of these terms as a means of seeing holy things in local and human terms (89ff).

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