

Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Midwestern
Regional Conference, 1d 1977
The theology and experience of worship
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**THE THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE
OF WORSHIP**

**Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic
Midwestern Regional Conference**

**KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
NOVEMBER 28-30, 1977**

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THE THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP

Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic
Midwestern Regional Conference

Kansas City, Missouri
November 28-30, 1977

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The Home Mission Board
Department of Interfaith Witness
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Foreword

The fifth in a series of Southern Baptist/Roman Catholic regional conferences was held at Midwestern Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, November 28-30, 1977. Over 80 persons attended the gathering.

Among them were bishops, state convention and association directors, pastors, professors, interested laity and staff workers from the two sponsoring groups. These conferences are jointly sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs together with the Department of Interfaith Witness of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

To those who planned the conference, to those who attended and to those who served on the scene, very special gratitude is extended. Expressions of appreciation for growth in awareness and understanding of each other, as a result of this conference, were made by those who participated in the three-day event.

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SECTION I

OPENING REMARKS

Opening Remarks

By

Dr. Glenn Igleheart
Baptist-Catholic Dialogue, Kansas City, Missouri

Interfaith conversation is a new experience for many people. Therefore I would like to suggest some guidelines for us to follow as we come here together for these days. I will call it an acrostic for dialogue.

D is for DESIRE. You do not stumble into an interfaith conversation. You are here because you wanted to be here. That mutual desire for meeting is a grand foundation for our conversations.

I is for INTERCHANGE. Genuine dialogue demands two-way conversation. When two people deliver monologues, speaking past each other, that is not dialogue. There must be real exchange of experience and viewpoints for dialogue to occur.

A is for ACCEPTANCE. I speak here of an attitude of respect. This acceptance has several dimensions. It must first be self-acceptance, an inner attitude of self-integrity. It includes acceptance of one's own tradition. Without parroting a denominational line, we try to represent our own tradition fairly and accurately. Further, dialogue means acceptance of the other person we meet here. It also means respect for his or her tradition as a faith that has captured his/her belief and commitment.

L is for LISTENING. Most of us are good at talking; many of us here are professional communicators. Therefore dialogue is extremely difficult for us, for it demands listening. It requires really trying to hear what the other is saying. It means waiting to fashion a reply until we have truly listened.

O stands for OPENNESS. I refer here to a readiness to learn new things. Many of our stereotypes about Baptists and Catholics will be destroyed or modified here, if we are willing. I call for an openness to ask questions in order to learn more. I appeal for the openness even to challenge one another in loving concern for truth. I hope for the openness not to feel threatened when such questions or challenges come to us.

Dialogue should contain an openness to the future. Both Baptists and Catholics tend to define themselves by their past, not by their present, or their future. We need to look beyond today to tomorrow, and to search for the effect our conversations here will have on both our Churches in the future.

G is for GIVING. Dialogue is an occasion for sharing "an account of the hope that is within you," in the words of 2 Peter 3:15. Dialogue means giving a witness, of permitting each person to express his or her commitments and convictions in a setting that makes such sharing natural.

Dialogue means all of these things: desire, interchange, acceptance, listening, openness and giving . . . and none of these is easy.

But the hard work which dialogue demands is worth it, for God is in it, and His desire that these three days be meaningful for us is even greater than our own. So these days are ours; let's use them well.

Opening Statement

The Most Reverend James D. Niedergeses

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

With our sincere gratitude to the President and all at Midwestern Baptist Seminary, I wish to express, if I may, the great joy on the part of all Roman Catholics who are here to participate in this conference.

It is truly a joy to greet you as brothers and sisters in Christ. Because we all recognize Christ as Lord, we have received a great power from the Holy Spirit. "No one can say Christ is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."¹ We are grateful for this great grace given to us both as Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics.

We are happy that we are not only able to say Christ is Lord, but that we are able to know that He is powerfully present with us in this conference. We have His word for this fact. The promise of Christ is: "For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them."²

We have come here as Christians in His name in His love for us, in ours for Him and in love of each other. Where love and charity prevail, there is God; for as the Apostle John tells us: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."³ May we all grow in His love.

We have come here to share with each other our theology and experience of worship—our reasons for and manner in which we acknowledge and celebrate the reality of God in our life for time and eternity. Whatever we have that is pleasing to God in a way that is special to us as Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics—that specialty is from God. As we try to share with each other our theology and experience of worship, we can be witnesses through whom God will reveal Himself more fully to each of our ecclesial communions. Thus, as we both receive a greater revelation and experience of God theologically and liturgically, we shall also grow closer to that unity with Christ and one another for which our Lord Jesus prayed, "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."⁴

With this vision and hope before us, may we all rejoice in the blessing of our coming together. May we show ourselves joyful and grateful. May God's grace guide those who will contribute to our program and make

each moment to each of us one that is truly fruitful for our growth theologically and liturgically for our experience in worship. Thank you!

¹ 1 Cor. 12:3.
² Matt. 18:20.
³ 1 John 4:16.
⁴ John 17:21.

SECTION II

ADDRESSES

The Preacher

Dr. Calvin Miller
Pastor
Westside Baptist Church
Omaha, Nebraska

INTRODUCTION

The age of the artists has come! We are back home from Disney World, now! We are ashamed that we ever thought the River Jungle Cruise really belonged in adventureland: there is grease and dust on the plastic banana leaves. The hillbilly bears have lost their plush, and there's a kind of technological lumbago in the great moments with Mr. Lincoln. Someone has slipped Minnie a "Mickey" and the pink is all gone from Tinkerbelle.

And did the pulpit survive? And did worship go on? Yes, we even had the year of the evangelical, complete with a Baptist President and Charismatic Catholics. There was a new kind of vulgate at Notre Dame, and it was the same kind they were using at Melodyland, Angelus Temple, and the Charley Doaks Miracle Healing Crusade.

Yes, the pulpit survived! But as I said, the age of the artists has come, now. And again we feel the same threat we once felt when Milton Berle first came upon our security with the threat of black and white video. It was all so magic to have the stars right in our homes. Those were the early days, when we left our Bibles and missals on the television stand and could never find the TV guide. Now we always know where the TV guide is.

But at every point of cultural encroachment, we felt uneasy about the pulpit. Could it compete? With Charlton Heston looking so much like Moses and Jeffrey Hunter reconstructing a \$3 million Messiah, what hope was there that we could make the theology and experience of worship really attractive. Yes, we often were boring by comparison. I couldn't help but wonder that Burt Lancaster, who was so stunning as Rev. Gantry, might not have made the perfect pulpit, had his commitment been in a different direction.

Now, again, we are insecure. The elite artists, the men of immaculate imagination have all the world of cameras and microphones and studios at their disposal. And they leave us reeling under the impact of their powerful images. If 1976 was the year of the evangelical, what of

1975—the year of the shark? The shark? I ask you. For one bloody year everywhere we turned we were staring into teeth! We felt like orthodontists. And why was our culture locked in the giant jaws of intrigue because of the \$400 million myth of Peter Benchley?

And what of 1974? We paid \$300 million to be frightened into asylums by Pazuzu, a magnificent demon whose ferocity made Bella Lugosi look like a Sunday School teacher.

And now it is 1977, and Lucas has made R2-D2 into squat enchantment. Will they really listen to us lead them in worship? Alderon has been destroyed. Obi-Won Kenobbi, the last of the Jeddai Knights has been cut down by laser of Darth Vader. Do you not understand? Most of the young people of our youth choir have seen Star Wars, half-a-dozen times, and yet complain if they have to sit through two services a month at church.

I have a fear for the church at the end of the 20th century, when the current emotional indulgence is spent and the religious fad is dissipated. Where then, will worship be? My fears are genuinely coupled to the expanding prominence of the video and theater arts. It is clearly *widescreen versus the monologue*. Can worship survive as a kind of indistinct hologram in a world of magnificent light?

For many churches there is currently a poor show going on. The attendance like the show is poor. And as we might suspect, the "show" and the "attendance" have a direct relationship. Like an uncapped soda, the "fizz" is gone. Richard Quebedeaux has suggested that the average church is dying because of a problem of weak amperage. He refers to this weak current as the "flashlight" church, and says that they must clearly have more voltage or die. His solution is the charismatic movement:

The "flashlight church" does not have enough to offer. The high voltage religious experience is a breakthrough phenomenon because it is needed. If churches are not open to an infusion of high voltage, they are in real trouble. . . .

God is upping the voltage in many places. He knows that it could be dangerous but he knows that it is needed, and that is the new Pentecostalism.¹

Quebedeaux perhaps overrates this idea as a way of restoring the lost "fizz" to the church's worship. I am not sure of all that the Charismatic movement means, but even if Michael Harper has broken into tongues while in his bath, I cannot believe that the force of his experience will restore the lost vitality of the church. Nor do I think that the protestant offering of Pat Boone or the Catholic offering of Maria Von Trapp, will bring any real return of interest. When the spotlight falls so

intensely around show-biz charismatics, it is most difficult to measure the intensity of their inward illumination. I have the feeling that when the glitter has faded, we will still see a great deal more genuine illumination in the pages of Thomas à Kempis than Demos Sharakian.

But what immediately can bring the “fizz” back to worship? We will need a worship so dynamic that in the midst of this entertainment revolution, we can hold interest. But holding interest is not the only goal of our worship—Grace is the business of worship! Changing the world through the dissemination of the Grace of God is the commission of each of us who stand before a congregation.

Protestantism has erred most seriously at this point. We have sinned by moving entertainment to the church. Concerts by religious artists are now ever-so-many dollars per seat. It is all for Jesus—and the record sales, of course. But most of the unwary Church has yet to realize that applause is not the evidence of worship, but the cry of the penitent heart, “Lord, what will thou have me to do?”

I have often thought that what C. S. Lewis said in “A Grief Observed” ought to apply to our worship. It was Lewis’ tribute to his years with his wife, but what joy might dawn upon the Church if it be said of our worship:

For those years . . . I feasted on love, every mode of it—solemn and merry, romantic and realistic, sometimes as dramatic as a thunderstorm, sometimes as comfortable and unemphatic as putting on your soft slippers. No cranny of heart or body remained unsatisfied.²

But worship is not an indulgence in the warm and finished abundance of God. It is pulling the cowl about our faces and entering the storm of life. We have not worshipped, until like St. Francis, we have sung barefoot in the snow. Oh, I have gotten the impression at a dozen college rallies that worship is pitching our tube-socks and tennies and taking our tambourines and praising God barefoot in the park—but it is not. It is definitely barefoot in the snow.

I have a dear friend who serves God in Africa. My greatest worship experience to date, occurred the night I helped him pack his mission boxes for the next tour of duty overseas. To clasp him at the airport, and see his family going with him for four long years, was worship—ripping, tearing worship, but wholly proper. I do not find this sort of fullness in tambourines and religious concerts. At such moments, I have known the full presence of Christ, and the half-torn theater stubbs were gloriously missing from my pockets.

But I realize that the kind of worship that we are here to consider is neither of these—show-biz nor the missionary extremes. We are

considering worship and experience within the church building. And here our problems probably have to do with predictability. The communicants know what we are going to say ahead of time. Like Holiday Inn, we have no surprises for them. In the Catholic church the experience of the Eucharist has for its greatest strength its greatest weakness; its sameness. The same thing is also true of protestant worship. Its greatest strength is also its most blatant liability: the sermon. Sermons by the millions pour forth each week, but few are coming for the indulgence.

Eric Berne and the Transactional Analysis have made us blatantly aware of the psychological transactions which they have called scripting. Perhaps in all worship, scripting has become the drab sport. Worship goes on with the same unchanging lack of appeal.

Worship has an immensely different character in Catholic churches than in Baptist churches. In Catholic worship the drama of the Mass and surrounding liturgy holds the central place of piety; in Protestant churches (and indeed throughout protestantism) the central event of worship is the sermon. Since it is so central to our own experience of worship, I would like to deal specifically with this part of our worship. The sermon suggests the strong centrality of human personality that has come to characterize Baptist and Protestant services.

In this sense, the pastor of the church, himself, is channel to worship. As the mediator of worship, I would like us to see how important he is to the life of the Church as a whole and the individual communicants which come to him. It seems to me that pastor has a three-fold role as leader of worship. Therefore I do not want to deal with the sermon as such, but the person of the pastor as he mediates the experience of worship. His roles come as Counselor, Warrior, and Shaman.

I. THE PASTOR AS COUNSELOR

As far as I know, Harry Emerson Fosdick was the first pastor to conceive of the sermon as counseling on a group basis. To the current time, there have been a host of pastors who have come into prominence because they became very serious in this specific use of the pulpit. Protestantism's positivism was most dynamically heralded by Norman Vincent Peale. In Peale the forces of psychological deliverance often usurped the power of scripture itself. Peale's messages often addressed themselves to some Biblical principle, scripture or slogan. But most of the time, his sermons were so psychologically oriented that they were not very close to the dynamic of scripture. This cleavage of the sermon from the Bible led many of his critics to coin the new slogan: "Paul is appealing, but Peale is appalling."

Peale's west-coast devotee, Bob Schuller, preached an even more psychological gospel than Peale had done. As Peale before him, Schuller

came under the scrutiny and attack of biblicists for his shallow positivism. For the building of his multi-million dollar Chrystal Cathedral seems to most not so much a tribute to Christian worship, as to the motivational psychology which his ardor pursues.

For this motivational psychology, void of both Scripture and social concern, the Wittenburg Door recently awarded him the "Green Weenie of the Month." Because he has been so often under attack for his psychological salvation, he has offered the following defense of his ministry:

We are trying to make a big, beautiful impression upon the affluent non-religious American who is riding by on the busy freeway. It's obvious that we are not trying to impress the Christians! . . . Nor are we trying to impress the Social Workers in the County Welfare Department. They would tell us that we ought to be content to remain in the Orange Drive-In Theatre and give the money to feed the poor. But suppose we had given this money to feed the poor? What would we have today? We would still have hungry poor people and God would not have this tremendous base of operations which he is using to inspire people to become more successful, more affluent, more generous, more genuinely unselfish in their giving of themselves.³

I am one who sees Schuller's use of the pulpit as counsel to be so divorced from the Christian Scriptures as to be lacking a real authority.

While it may not be proper to quote Luther at this conference, he saw human life as a battlefield between the freedom of servitude and the bondage of indulgence. Schuller may need to take some time and study these categories. Should he manage to do that, he might see a more authentic offering of himself as counselor. He might be less popular with Luther's model, but he might mean more to the culture.

Helmut Thielicke has certainly described the psychological plight of modern prodigals who throng our worship, whenever our worship is thronged:

"I wanted to be free," says the prodigal son to himself—perhaps he cries it aloud. "I wanted to become myself; and I thought I would get all this by cutting myself off from my father and my roots, fool that I am! I have found nothing but chains." And bitter laughter goes up from the pigsty.⁴

Assuming the Scriptures really are the book of authority out of which we offer our counsel, what then shall be our psychology? It certainly cannot be the psychology of the Transactional Analysts, who build security into their clients by teaching them to forgive their own sins and bypass repentance by saying, "I'm O.K.—You're O.K." Nor can we

claim that Freud's psychotherapy is a biblical model since it dismisses human responsibility in proclaiming healing by transference. And the current popular Rogerian model is of no help. It begins and ends with man making his own way: this is totally unacceptable to any grace-oriented worship. And what of the lofty model of Viktor Frankl? Logotherapy is a magnificent concept but it runs aground in its definition of "the logo" part of its therapy. I'd feel more comfortable if it saw human meaning implicit in Jesus Christ and called itself "Logos" therapy.

But it at least understands the greatest human need is in terms of meaning. Carl Jung confesses in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*:

Among my patients from many countries, all of them educated persons, there is a considerable number who came to see me, not because they were suffering from a neurosis, but because they could find no meaning in life or were torturing themselves with questions which neither present-day philosophy nor religion could answer. Some of them perhaps thought that I knew of a magic formula, but I was soon forced to tell them that I, too, had no answer to give.

Jung's admission is disturbing. Understanding the human drive for meaning, he confesses with all of his education that he does not have the answers.

Jay Adams has been criticized by advocates of main-stream psychology for his "nouthetic" counseling. But it seems to me that his evangelical suggestion does live in truth at the very heart of the pastor as a counselor. This consideration I will call in the last part of the paper, a "Liminal" consideration. Still, I consider Adams' suggestion to be a very real suggestion for all of those who wish to make the pulpit a place to disseminate the counsel of God to those who really are starved for meaning in our culture. Pope John XXIII had a magnificent emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Although his emphasis might have been more liturgical than Jay Adams', Adams has put us in touch with a proposition which is the dynamic of the entire Christian Faith. The Kingdom of God is within us. Its very inwardness is a result of the Holy Spirit of God indwelling the life of the believer, and "instructing" him from his very heart. The Holy Spirit's inward counsel, is the most magnificent form of direction and meaning and is based, says Adams, upon the very fact that the name of the Holy Spirit is *Parakalesis*—one called along side—that is, COUNSELOR:

Counseling is the work of the Holy Spirit. Effective counseling cannot be done apart from Him. He is called the paraclete (counselor) who in Christ's place came to be another counselor of the same sort that Christ had been to his disciples. Because unsaved counselors do not know the Holy Spirit, they

ignore His counseling activity and fail to avail themselves of His direction and power.⁵

The indwelling counsel of the Holy Spirit of God is nourished and made effective by the sine qua non of all spirituality: *intimacy with God*.

Here is both the missing dimension of our spirituality and of our counsel. Intimacy best thrives in mysticism, and the Catholic Mass therefore in some regards provides the best womb to nourish the inner life that can be imagined. While Tolstoy participated in the orthodox observance of the Eucharist, he was truly born again. In his *Memoirs of a Lunatic*, he describes his agony of spirit, until he came to that wonderful time when he was joined in spiritual intimacy to the source of meaning.

While the categories are widely separated, I believe that sexual intimacy and spiritual intimacy provide the same kind of mortar for relationships. Speaking in this assembly, perhaps the illustration is not appropos. Still, I believe that the missing dimension in the life of most communicants is a sense of intimacy with God.

Most worship seems to develop in an atmosphere of exhibitionism. We put forth our best soloists, musicians, and orators. The result, as we have said, is usually applause. Jesus' admonition to spiritual intimacy lies in the prayer closet. Whatever counseling is done in worship is still predicated upon that principle. Only when the preacher has been alone with God, feeding upon his own intimate affair with Christ, will he have any counsel value. And, of course, only when he can induce the habit of spiritual intimacy within the individual members of his flock, will they find the inner source of power.

Intimacy usually goes under the traditional name of communion. We recognize that communion and communication are from the same root. The principle of intimacy is communication. To track back to the sexual metaphor a moment, we speak culturally of this sort of intimacy as intercourse, and by doing so, indicate that we are speaking of a sort of intimate communication. In the word communion, we are again referring to communication of an intimate nature.

But we are now at the zenith of the relational movement. Let us remember this and remember that there are two kinds of communion which occur in public worship. God-intimacy, Catholics are masters at. With hundreds of years of mystical and devotional traditions, they speak well to this vertical, transcendent intimacy with God. But evangelicals have better understood the horizontal, human communion of worship. Baptists, specifically, have made much of "Fellowship" as an obligation in worship. It is a relational day, and since evangelicals in their short traditions have propagated a relational faith, they are faring quite well at present.

Horizontal relationships certainly may obscure the vertical, and leave the Baptist worshipper with a cheap second-rate devotional humanism. But many Catholics are incapable of achieving the basic mysticism they need to acquire the vertical intimacy and hence are amputated from the communion they seek.

The horizontal intimacy of Baptist worship can be a frightening item for Catholics. In our church, we often link hands and sing "The Lord's Prayer," or "We Are One in the Bond of Love." Linking hands, I feel, provides a desperately needed ministry of touch among the lonely and alienated city dwellers of our day. But this ministry of touch is often undesirable to some, who feel awkward holding hands with someone they don't know.

As the counselor of my flock, I think that the horizontal communion which we enjoy can provide a dimension to the spiritual communion. There is more than a casual relationship between coping with the problems of a complex society and the intimacy that my people have with God and each other. And their worship will be meaningful if they consistently participate in this communion. As a pulpit counselor, therefore, I am constantly working to be sure that I am disseminating this psychology of intimacy.

II. THE PASTOR AS A WARRIOR

Why a warrior? Because there is lurking behind every part of our existence, the demons and beasts, which all primitive religions originated to deal with. How then, can the sermon and the pastor best act to deal with the beasts? Christianity has for one of its best attributes, the ability to take the fear out of the living. There are the standard academic fears: Death, hell, the judgment. Christianity is an immediate antidote to death, hell and the judgment.

But the other fears continue lurking around existence long after the believer has accepted these basics. The fears of the future: cancer, job loss, loneliness, financial reversal, embarrassment, failure, the heart-break of psoriasis, acne, incapacitation, fire, loss of loved ones, flu, automobile accident, inflation, old age, tooth decay, etc. Week after week they bring these little fears to church and regularly hope that they can have the little hounds put to sleep by the warrior.

Let us not assume that these little grievances are unimportant. Six-hundred people drag them to my congregation each week. They have fought the little beasts and lost and they are crying for help. They would like for me to fight the beasts with them and put them all to sleep. No matter the station in life, they are all fighting beasts. Remember Arthur in *Camelot* as he anticipates his marriage? He confesses that after having slain the great beast of his existence, he is intimidated by

the little fears; he fashions his people pondering what the king must be doing on his bridal night:

I wonder what the King is doing tonight;
What merriment is the king pursuing tonight?
What occupies his time while waiting for the bride?

He's looking high and low for someplace to hide . . .
You mean that a King who killed a dragon,
Chopped him in two and fixed his wagon
Goes to his wedding terrified with fright?

Right!

A warrior who's so calm in battle,
Even his armor doesn't rattle,
Goes to be wed in terror and distress?

Yes!

You mean that appalling clammering
That sounds like a blacksmith hammering
Is merely the banging of his royal knees?

We are all afraid. We all want the various dragon and goblins to be slain. We all admire the dragon-slayer. Throughout medieval times they were the widely heralded. They were the liberators. The maidens were no longer devoured. The sword was in the scaly plates, and life was again free.

Thus it is the job of the pastor to liberate. The problem is that the church is often itself the beast. How many times in my ministry I have caught people refusing to join the church because they thought the Baptist church was kill-joy. They saw Christ as a kind of orge set against playing cards, wine and Pepsodent. How many times in my ministry have I seen Catholics refusing to go to church because they didn't believe in birth control, or resented the "Mythocide" of St. Christopher, or missed the mystery of the Latin Mass.

These dragons are harder to slay. Take the immense dragon of exclusivism. Fresh from my little province in Oklahoma, it was so hard for me to grant eternal life to those who were not Southern Baptists. Only in recent years, have I been able with tears to admit that John the Baptist was not John the Southern Baptist. It will take Catholics even longer to confess that he was not John the Catholic, since they have so many more years of institutional tradition to overcome. The agony of it all may prove as hard as loving Masons and Lutherans. But you will identify with your Baptist brothers who only lately have been able to say R . . . R . . . R . . . ome, without stuttering.

There is no need to make a fetish out of fighting the beast. Remem-

ber Pelinore in *The Once and Future King*. He deserted his pursuit of the monster Glatisant and found that the monster was soon dead:

“. . . Poor creature,” said King Pellinore indignantly. “It has pined away, positively pined away, just because there was nobody to take an interest in it. How could I have stayed all that while . . . and never given my old Beast a thought I really don’t know.”⁶

But the beast is not that easily slain for most people.

It is interesting that Paul so often described the pastor in terms of a warrior. Here is the knight errant of the pulpit:

Finally, my brethen, be strong in the Lord . . .
Put on the whole armor of God
that you may be able to stand against the
wiles of the great beast . . .
Stand, therefore, having your loins gird about
with truth,
And having on the breastplate of righteousness,
And having your feet shod with the preparation of
the Gospel of Peace:
And above all, taking the shield of faith,
Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery
darts of the wicked.
And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of
the spirit, which is the word of God.⁷

Is it any wonder that the great paintings of the final conflict show Michael and the beast locked in the struggle to the death.

Perhaps we have some fear that to attempt to be warriors at worship, we shall appear quixotic. Yet it is absolutely imperative that the Man of God appear to be clothed with integrity and honesty and righteousness in an evil and fallen world. If those who come to worship see us in the warrior configuration, they will feel secure in our churches.

It is the weaponry of our struggle from which the worshipper will draw strength as he sits in the assembly. What is the sword that we shall plunge into the various dragons of existence:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.⁸

Here is a bit of Greek word study. The *machaira* is the sword mentioned here. The *machaira*, was the short infantry sword that the Roman legions made famous, for while it was a short sword, it was double-

bladed and excellent in close combat. With its excellent maneuverability, Rome had conquered the world.

The *machaira* is the dragon slayer. Maneuverability in the close ranks of dreadful circumstances that come upon us like advancing armies of droids and orgs. We shall win. The beast will be slain! Our anthem like Martin Luther King's will be victorious:

We shall overcome! We shall overcome!
Deep in my heart, I do believe,
That we shall overcome someday.

Yes, there must be a warrior in the pulpit. He does not have to be *obermann*, but he does have to be a slayer of defeat. He must be a man of power who can take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing, end them. And, of course, the symbol of the warrior is he who stands behind the cross and says to these who are always tilting at the beast, "In Hoc Signo." In this sign shall you conquer.

III. THE SHAMAN

The shaman, said Theodore Roszach, ought to be the model for the man of God. The reasons that he offered, was that modern man in the technological environment needs to tough the world of the spirit. The shaman, he said, represents that other world. He used the term "liminal." The world of the liminal refers to that world that is barely discernible. The word liminal comes from the Latin word, *limen*, *limen* meaning *threshold*.

There is an entire world beyond the threshold of scientific and material experience. As men of God we represent that world, and it is a substantial part of our calling to make that world substantial. I think this is what Robert Frost is hinting at in his great poem which served as a frontispiece to *In The Clearing*:

But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit
Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation.
Spirit enters flesh
And for all it's worth
Charges into earth
In birth after birth
Ever fresh and fresh.
We may take the view
That it's derring-do
Thought of in the large

Is one mighty charge
On our human-part
Of the soul's ethereal
Into the material.

I am sure that this is what I had in mind when I wrote in *Poems of Protest* (It sounds like it might even have been written by a Shaman):

Amber flame, and murky night;
Cavorting shadows and yellow light;
Wails of terror, cries of fright!
Hail Otombu!

Tongues of orange and black silhouettes;
Naked braves with black hearts set
On, sacrifice for atonement's debt.
Hail Otombu!

Beat the bones on the jungle drum;
The warrior screams—his life is done.
Otombu, smile—and the black God come.
Hail Otombu!

(Meanwhile in another part of the world)

Genuflect, bow, circle the cup:
Down on your knees, lift the censer up.
In fire and reverence all must sup,
Hail to the church.

Kneel and stand; speak the litany;
Go through the form of piety.
Turn a page of the liturgy.
Hail to the church!

The Orgna thunders; the candles burn;
The robed man speaks, and then he turns
And prays the God-grained words he's learned,
Hail, Hail, Hail to the church.⁹

I think that Roszak is right. Our function in worship is much like that of the witch doctor. We are trying to make real the world not discernible. I believe his doctrine because it sets beside that of C. S. Lewis, who taught that discipleship was really the belief in two separate worlds. Lewis taught that those who believe in only one world, end up being disinherited; having no world of their own. Only those who believe in two worlds have a destiny.

It is therefore our job to make real that liminal world, that is barely obvious above the material threshold. If we are unable to do this, then we leave the communicant imprisoned in a material system. When he

is imprisoned in such a world, he will seek the values of that world since it is the only one that he knows. Jesus told a parable about a rich man who was imprisoned in a material system: the world beyond the threshold was not very real to him:

The land of the rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" and he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take ease, eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.¹⁰

In Luke 12:15 Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness (*pleonexia*): for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." What is *pleonexia*? It is the delight of the *one-worlders*. Covetousness is the obsession of those unacquainted with the *limen*, the *threshold*. It is our job to so believe in that world that we can help our world with its obvious problems of *pleonexia*. But we cannot deliver our world if we indulge in its values. It is impossible for those who are afflicted with *pleonexitis*, to heal *pleonexia*. When we truly are ambassadors of liminal world, then we may become of help.

It is in this regard that the Charismatic revolution may have helped. People who found their behaviour unexplainable in terms of this world's psychology and science, may at least suggest the invasion of God, or the "descent into flesh," as Robert Frost said.

Deliverance must come! Deliverance from the concerns of petty earth! Deliverance from the material and finite. Again, Helmut Thielicke has stated the terms of our worship and preaching. He has defined the task well:

Ah, there is only one problem, only one in all the world. How can we restore to man a spiritual significance, a spiritual discontent; let something descend upon them like the dew of a Gregorian chant.

. . . Don't you see, we cannot live any longer on refrigerators, politics, balance-sheets, and crossword puzzles. We simply cannot.¹¹

To catch hold of this magnificent reality of the Spirit, requires the realization that the material is transient and the spiritual, forever.

It is a difficult step to manage for it is literally a being born again into the higher realm, having split the old chrysalis and escaped the

narrow confinements of the ego. Henry Miller was not right about a lot of things but he well described the prison of the materialist:

When our very lives are threatened we begin to live! Even the psychic invalid throws away his crutches in such moments. For him the greatest joy is to realize that there is something more important than himself. All his life he has turned on the spit of his own roasted ego. He has made the fire with his own hands. He has dripped in his own juices. He makes himself a tender morsel for the demons he liberated with his own hands. This is a picture of human life on this planet called earth.¹²

How do we deliver those who are roasting in their one-world prison? It is by making the *real* world an option.

CONCLUSION

There are moments when it looms large and in our desperation we have the whole world pondering it at once. Nagasaki, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Russian military threat. At such moments of threat, as Henry Miller says, we do begin to live. But most of the time it lies submerged and quiet.

Is there a chance you can waken the world from its lethargy on Sunday morning? There is a chance. It probably is still the best chance that the world has. But the Commitment must be obvious. St. Francis kissed the leper, and said clearly, "My affections are not hidden in the values of my material countrymen." Since you and I never run into lepers, we will have to find other ways to take our stand for the greater reality.

In Carthage in 252 A.D., the plague raged and the bodies of dead stacked up in the streets, continually worsening the condition and the infection in the city. Finally Cyprian, the bishop, called upon the Christians to form a kind of *Parabolani* and cartage away the corpses and try to save the city from complete decimation even at the personal risk. They did! And the city was saved from the worse ravages of plague.¹³

The *parabolani*, Christians who worked with the diseased, who risked death because it really was a promotion to die. The *parabolani* (derived from the Bathhouse or hothouse servants) knew how to bear the heat of their commitment. Yes, they did get the plague and some of them even died, *or did they?*

But had we been watching these strange creatures laying the wooden corpses in the carts, what would we have said of them? I suspect we would want to know something of their spiritual diet. We would want to know what drove them and fueled them. And had they been Baptist

parabolani we would have learned the importance of our worship as we saw them filling the drayage wagons, and stacking the funeral pyres. For we would have heard them singing on the clear mornings:

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Savior waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore,
In the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

To those of you in the Catholic tradition, our populist hymns may seem quaint and folksy. But they are nonetheless the worship of free men. For the free man, like St. Paul really is:

In a straight betwixt two,
having a desire to depart and be
with Christ which is far better . . .

Anyone whose desire is union with Christ in the immediate is not so much prepared to worship. Indeed, he has already been at worship. His heart lives in the constant adoration of his one great affection.

Remember St. John the Divine? Old with years and exiled. Yes, his eyes have searched the vacant skies long enough. He is weary with emperors and Roman hedonism! He has seen indulgence and depravity and *pleonexia* close at hand. He has seen a thousand rich fools tearing down their barns and building bigger ones. And he has been hungry to set himself upon the newer plane. And when he weeps that Patmos is still rigid and dusty beneath his literal feet, he cries out for the finer. And in a starburst of fire, the old warrior sees it and marvels through those old lips:

And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying,
"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them,
and they shall be his people,
and God himself, shall be with them
and be their God.
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
And there shall be no more death,
Neither sorrow nor crying,
Neither shall there be any more pain.
For the former things are passed away." ¹⁴

If we can make the old man's vision
as relevant as the Wall Street Journal
as absorbing as Star Wars
as crucial as the Red Cross Handbook,

Then we will have achieved as leaders of
Worship

Then,

They will hear our counsel
and accept our defense
and through us they will have
discerned the world of reality
barely visible in their ordinary
moments—It will in the
counsel and the victory be
the only world they see.

“Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

¹ Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (New York, Doubleday and Company, 1976), p. 168.

² C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York, The Seabury Press, 1961).

³ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 1977), p. 55.

⁴ Helmut Thielicke, *The Waiting Father* (New York, Harper and Row, 1975) p. 26.

⁵ Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1970), p. 20.

⁶ T. H. White, *The Once and Future King* (New York, Berkeley Publishing Company, 1939), pp. 152-153.

⁷ Ephesians 6:10-17.

⁸ Hebrews 4:12.

⁹ Calvin Miller, *Poems of Protest and Faith* (Grand Rapids, Wisconsin, Baker Books, 1968), pp. 8-9.

¹⁰ Luke 12:16-21.

¹¹ Antoine de Saint-Exupery, "Letter to a General" in *The Waiting Father* by Helmut Thielicke (New York, Harper and Row, 1975), p. 11.

¹² Henry Miller, *The Rosy Crucifixion, Sexus* (New York, Grove Press, 1965), pp. 425ff.

¹³ Fritz Ridenour, *It All Depends*, p. 223.

¹⁴ Revelation 21:2-4.

The Theology and Experience of Worship

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THE THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP

I would like to put my more theoretical remarks today in the framework of an annual Thanksgiving Day 10:00 a.m. Mass we celebrated last Thursday in our parish of 750 families.

Six hundred people came to this eucharistic celebration which has become one of our most popular and joyous liturgies of the year. That attendance alone on a so-called free day for Roman Catholics speaks of its meaning and relevance for contemporary Americans.

These believers arrived at the church laden with gifts, each member of every family bringing some item of food for the poor. In the pews they found a green leaflet designed by an artist parishioner and run off on an A. B. Dick offset machine by another volunteer of the church. The music had been reproduced with copyright permission, in case you wonder if we are being sued by the F.E.L. publishers. The procession began from the rear of the building with the priest concelebrants wearing vestments designed and made by several talented women of Holy Family. After a "Happy Thanksgiving, everyone" from the celebrant and a similar response from the congregation, all were invited to turn and introduce themselves to those around them.

After an opening prayer composed by the American bishops and approved by the Vatican for Thanksgiving Day in the United States, a lay reader, who had in the entrance procession carried the large lectionary held high in the air, proclaimed the first two scriptural readings, a text from Deuteronomy and one from Colossians. In between the choir and congregation alternated with the antiphon and verses of a responsorial psalm.

After an appropriate Alleluia sung by all, the priest proclaimed the Lucan account of the ten lepers. The sermon, better now termed a homily, was a bit different on this day as is our custom for Thanksgiving. The preacher sat down and gently took the congregation through a quiet, reflective review of the past year and the many gifts God has

given each person. One could detect a few tears here and there as the memory of especially cherished blessings struck responsive chords in the heart. At the conclusion of the 5-10 minute meditative homily, the priest invited them to respond in litany fashion to a portion of Psalm 136, "Give thanks to the Lord of Lords, for his mercy endures forever."

The highlight of the liturgy every year seems to be the presentation of food offerings for the poor. Following the homily, every person comes forward to the altar and gives to the two priests his or her gift—a jar of peanut butter, a homemade loaf of bread, a bag full of canned goods, even a bottle of cocktail onions from one thoughtful soul. These are piled in front of the altar for later sorting and distribution to the needy of our area. The procession takes ten or fifteen minutes, but no one seems to mind. The choir sings several appropriate numbers including classical religious pieces and current secular songs suitable for the occasion. The huge mound of material is always impressive, being \$1,000 in store value and filling 35-40 cases.

As the liturgy of the Eucharist continues, the celebrant consecrates small, circular loaves of unleavened bread baked by a parishioner. These are divided just prior to Communion and distributed by the two priests with assistance from two nuns. On this special occasion, four other lay ministers of Communion offered the chalice to those who wished to receive the Lord's body and blood under both species.

"The Star Spangled Banner" and "Now Thank We All Our God" concluded the service and accompanied the recessional. The priests stood at the door and greeted the happy, enthusiastic worshipers who then headed for home and the turkey feast under preparation. This unique Mass truly makes the holiday for them a day of thanksgiving to the Lord.

With that celebration in mind, I now wish to draw up several points or principles about Catholic theology and experience of worship in today's world.

1. *Where Roman Catholics are today is another stage in the rather complex historical development of our liturgy.* A dangerously oversimplified view could summarize the overall worship trends since the time of Christ in this fashion: The early centuries featured a eucharistic liturgy which was more informal, less structured, less clerical and more community oriented. During the medieval period, official worship became more clericalized, with the altar facing the wall, not the people, the clergy assuming most of the roles, Communion received seldom and normally under the sign of bread alone. Just prior to the Council of Trent and the Reformation, the liturgical scene became somewhat anarchical, with almost as many styles or forms as celebrants.

The Council of Trent, the missal of Pius V and the Congregation of

Sacred Rites tightened up this condition and formalized a pattern of worship which remained relatively satisfactory, but frozen for the next 400 years. Around the turn of the century, both grass roots Catholics and Vatican officials saw the need for changes in this rigid ritual. Piecemeal reforms occurred thereafter, both officially and unofficially, throughout the first part of the 20th century. With the Second Vatican Council the Church began a thorough historical, theological, scriptural and pastoral study of the liturgy. The result has been the publication of revised ritual books for the entire sacramental and public prayer life of the Catholic Church. I am sure you are familiar with some or all of these. The principles which follow are integrated into those revised texts and were operative in the Thanksgiving Day Mass I described earlier.

2. *Unity, diversity and creativity.* I believe that history will judge the current official Roman liturgical books a stroke of genius. The many experts who contributed to them have combined a core rite which preserves the sense of unity in the Church with a rich variety of options from which to choose which adds a diversity to our worship experiences. Moreover, the general norms for liturgical celebrations and the freer structure of the rituals themselves provide opportunities for creative efforts by the local worshiping community.

Those three points are exemplified in our Thanksgiving Day liturgy.

First, the core ritual of an entrance rite, liturgy of the Word, liturgy of the Eucharist, and dismissal service is followed. Moreover, the other prescribed texts and actions were observed quite faithfully. Essentially it was the same eucharistic celebration we have, as Roman Catholics, maintained for centuries and the identical one now in use throughout the world.

Secondly, there were a wide range of scriptural texts, prayers and blessings available in the official lectionary and altar book or sacramentary for this service. We selected those which best suited the here and now needs of our parish and praying family.

Thirdly, the prayers composed especially for the United States and the all-inclusive procession with food gifts illustrate the kind of imaginative and locally created words or actions now permitted and possible within the structure of Roman Catholic worship.

3. *Liturgy is viewed today as both building the Christian community and expressing the inner unity which already exists.* The Church, when examined under the model or concept of community, can be termed a group of persons who are linked together by inner ties of faith, grace, prayerfulness and love. We express that in worship and try to deepen those real, interior links with God and one another.

Many of the simple gestures of our special holiday liturgy attempted

to achieve those two goals. The introductions, the semicircular church building which facilitates visual contact between the believers, the altar facing the congregation, the exchange, sign or kiss of peace, the outstretched arms and expressive eyes of the priest—all of these sought to lift worshipers out of their individualism into the living, loving faith family gathered for public worship.

4. *A blend of the secular and the sacred.* We believe our liturgy should be prayer to the Father above and beyond who loves us and yet touch the hard-nosed realities of life here on earth. Good worship should have an element of the sacred, the transcendent, the mystery of the wholly other in it; but this liturgy must also reflect our awareness that the Lord of Lords also broke into human history, is Emmanuel or God with us, and the Lord Jesus whom we follow was a man like us in all things, but sin.

Those who plan and execute worship try to blend those secular and sacred, divine and human strains. However, actually achieving the proper balance is more difficult than defining the ideal to be pursued.

Integrating "Now Thank We All Our God" and a Fred Waring arrangement of "America the Beautiful" within the same worship service; reflecting on the very specific blessings the Father bestowed upon us during the past year and then thanking the supreme giver of all good gifts; praying for President Sadat and for peace between Arabs and Jews while at the same time asking that all men and women might come to accept Jesus as savior: those are practical illustrations of an attempt to fuse the secular and the sacred in our liturgies.

5. *Sounds and silence.* Our pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Mass was in Latin, prayerful, mysterious, formal, but very, very quiet with almost no congregational response in word or song. That has changed dramatically in the past decade or so, more or less successfully depending upon the enthusiasm and energy of the parish leaders in a particular parish.

The reaction to silent liturgies of the past, however, may have gone a bit too far. Many liturgical people today feel that our American penchant for activity, work and productivity has led us into a trap. Silent liturgies have become noisy liturgies. There was too much silence before and not enough sounds from the congregation. At the present moment we may have too much sound and not sufficient silence.

Official documents cannot be blamed for that development. The directives carefully stress the need for periods of silence within every liturgy. In our own parish and during that Thanksgiving liturgy, for example, we ask our readers to pause for the period of an Our Father before moving on to the responsorial psalm. That pause keeps us from making worship too much like a MacDonald's production line in which

we hurry up and eat or rush, rush, rush to the next part of the service. A proper use of silence within public worship can, perhaps more than any other factor, make it truly a liturgy which is prayerful, reverent and faith filled.

6. *Importance of the Word.* Dr. James White, professor of Christian worship in the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, writing for the September 28, 1977 issue of *The Christian Century*, observed: "More scripture is being read at Roman Catholic Masses these days than in most Protestant services."

I quote this not in a triumphalistic way, but simply to show the growth among Roman Catholics of our appreciation for and use of the Bible in worship. Sunday liturgies include three passages from scripture; week-day Masses, two. It would be reasonable to state that no Catholic public worship service in 1977 is without some passage from the holy book.

The dignified lectionary used at the Thanksgiving liturgy, the manner with which our well trained lay reader carried the book itself, and the inclusion of three selections in the Mass are practical examples in a specific, but typical situation of the importance given to the Word.

Theologically, the liturgy of the Word is seen as a preparation for the liturgy of the Eucharist. Christ's presence in the Word stirs up our faith and helps us recognize the Risen Lord's presence later in the sacramental action of the breaking of the bread.

7. *A more sensitive awareness and use of symbols.* We worship a transcendent God who is beyond our comprehension. That Lord God almightly has come to us, has been revealed in signs and symbols, in the word of the scripture and in the flesh of the Father's Son, Jesus.

We in turn externalize our inner thoughts to the Father of us all through visible, tangible, sensible signs and symbols.

There is today in Roman Catholicism, a greater appreciation for those symbols through which Christ comes to us and through which we reach out to the Father.

Baptism by immersion is presented as the ideal in the official ritual book. Altar breads which truly can be broken and eaten are encouraged. Communion from the cup is common for feasts like Thanksgiving and is a daily practice at smaller weekday Masses like ours at Holy Family. The laying on of hands in various ritual ways, forms part of every sacramental gesture.

8. *The Church as a servant of others.* Bringing up food for the poor and distributing those items to the neighborhood's needy is, in a sense, Band-Aid service to others. But it does ease some pain and, perhaps more importantly, raise the consciousness of parishioners to the dimen-

sions of Christian worship which calls us to be servants of others, particularly those less fortunate.

Our own parish has just finished a tithing program. The tensions and opposition from parishioners was enormous—the greatest in my six years as a pastor. But the collection rose from \$1,700 to \$3,000 on the first two given Sundays. The message of five percent for your parish and five percent for the poor was quite clear and forceful. My dream is to ask parishioners in six months or a year to take 10 percent off the top of the Sunday offering and give this to 52 different hurting parishes throughout the world. That would be good in itself, but more significantly the process would expand their vision of the Church's universal character.

Once a month we now have a glass collection. The ton we obtain every 30 days, taken to a local Owens-Illinois plant for recycling, brings in a modest amount, a little over \$30. But the energy saving impact is substantial—a ton of glass is a sizeable amount of junk for the waste-pile—and the consciousness of our people has again been elevated.

This week we will, we hope, be resettling our second Vietnamese family of a father, mother and seven children. The programs have involved enormous expenditures of volunteer time and talents. But the smiles and happiness of our first family, now, two years later, alone justifies the effort. However, it was not without opposition. I received a clipping critical of the Vietnamese resettlement concept soon after we launched our own project with the added notation: "I will not donate to the church again." It very likely was penned by a Sicilian or Irish immigrant who came to this country, or whose parents did 50 years ago.

All of these are basically stop-gap measures and do not do much about sinful social structures. But they do help some people and surely lift up the eyes of our Christian people.

Through such programs we trust they gradually learn that liturgy must flow over into life and worship into the world. Prayer in church on Sunday which does not move on to the needs of others beyond the structure's walls lacks something. Unless a basic change occurs in that approach, parishioners will very likely discover their worship in time has become dry and dead. On the other hand, when we bring the hungry, the homeless and the oppressed in our hearts to the altar on Sunday, the liturgy has a richer, more fulfilling effect.

Seeing Christ in others helps us to experience the Lord more deeply in both Word and Sacrament. Experiencing the Lord in scripture and the breaking of bread eventually and necessarily will lead us to see Jesus more swiftly in hurting sisters and brothers.

SECTION III
REPORTS OF SMALL GROUPS

Trends in Worship Styles Today

Worship is the awareness of the Holy which results in our positive response to His revelation. Catholic and Baptist have worship experiences which may be described as official, formal, ritual, as well as those worship experiences which may be described as unofficial, non-ritual or informal.

Catholic and Baptist are experiencing change in formal and informal worship. The Catholic worship has experienced more change than Baptist during the second half of the 20th century. Much of the Catholic change in official liturgy has been the peeling off of the many accretions through the ages.

Catholic and Baptist are experiencing increased interest in informal personal expressions of worship, especially related to special small group interest such as: Marriage Encounter or Enrichment, charismatic gifts, Bible studies, etc. Both denominations invited increased lay participation with women becoming more frequent participants in the worship services. Among Catholics, laity are reading scriptures, singing and assisting in communion. Baptist laymen share testimonies, scriptures, prayers and in some churches assist in the planning and preparation for worship experiences.

Perhaps more important than our discoveries regarding worship were those regarding one another. Our discussion revealed the great diversity that exists among Catholics as well as among Baptists. Much of the diversity within our respective denominations rests upon socio-economic variables, while other differences reflect the local pastor's preferences and freedom within his ecclesiastical circle.

Recognizing the diversity between Catholic and Baptist, it was agreed that Catholic and Baptist share much more in common regarding critical ethical and theological issues than either denomination share with more liberal segments of the Protestant movement. Considerable time was spent probing one another's official theology and practical application of that theology. Both groups dispelled false concepts which led to a more clear understanding of one another. The free flowing dialogue was the product of an open fellowship which deepened as each of us struggled to describe ourselves and understand others.

Co-convenors

J. Everett Sneed, Baptist

Lawrence H. Wiskirchen, Catholic

Lawrence Matlock, Recorder

Pastoral Preparation of the Worshiping Community

The points discussed were:

A. Immediate preparation (daily or weekly needs arising from community).

B. Long-term preparation (growth, spiritual self-realization, ability to praise, recognition and service of others).

C. Personal preparation (leaders, liturgy teams).

D. Preparation for roles (deepened involvement).

E. Evidences of successful preparation (ownership of worship by all, witnessing to needs met, acceptance and mutual help, commitment, decision, service).

F. Effect of involvement in church or parish work on worship (small groups, Bible study, infrastructure, role of laity).

G. Preparation in use of symbols (taking reverent thing and doing something with it, actions).

H. Preparation of Southern Baptist pastor (Bible reading, time for prayer, self-evaluation, where people are, atmosphere of trust, purpose of service, staff involvement in planning).

I. Preparation of Roman Catholic liturgy (assessing condition of community, thematic unity, options, criteria, resources, signs within Mass, e.g., Cross, entrance song, penance rite, silent prayer, articulated prayer, options, e.g., Gloria, water rite).

Co-convenors

M. Dale Allen, Baptist

Peter Foote, Catholic (Recorder)

From Worship to Service

Although there are many ways and places we can worship God and many ways to describe it, we seemed to begin with a consensus that the topic of concern would be the worship of the congregation of our respective churches.

We are all called to service and somehow we noted a general conviction among us all that worship should stimulate us to greater service in the world around us and that the very service we perform can in turn lead us to an ever deepening participation in the worship of our churches. We realize very soon in our discussion that we have some basic differences in our ideas of worship as Catholics and as Baptists because of our different understandings of the very nature of church and of priesthood and types of worship services. Yet we noted how frequently we both realized and hoped that the goal of our worship among Baptists and Catholics would be greater service to those in need.

Each of us described specific areas of service in which our churches, or we as individual church people, engage. The concern arose that we were not tackling the root problems of social injustice but that we were involved most often in alleviating the surface crises. We spoke of a hope that worship should kindle in us a desire to get at the root causes, but we did not discuss how this could come about. If we had had time, this would have been a fruitful topic.

We reminded ourselves that genuine worship requires that we be faithful people filled with love for God and for each other. We must struggle to call people to join in worship who feel they are coming willingly without the threat of commands or social pressure—although we realized these forces are often present and cannot be totally done away with.

To worship God we must come in spirit and in truth. And although we all agreed on the thought, there surfaced once again a difference between Baptist (seemingly exclusive reliance on direct contact with the Holy Spirit) and Catholic (seemingly relying on the community of the Church to bring them to the Spirit and to truth). After much discussion we saw some of this difference primarily as a point of emphasis in our different traditions, although there are some notable differences, e.g., Catholic sacramentality vs. Baptist Biblical emphasis.

We spent much of our evening session discussing practical problems of social morality, e.g., hunger, self-help projects, problems of the isolated people, volunteerism by church members, abortion and sexual

morality. We agreed that somehow our Christian spirit and principles must come to bear on these problems and that somehow our church worship must inspire us to carry on the struggle. We realized that not all come to church worship and so we cannot reach all through it. Yet we felt that we must go out to these people in whatever need they find themselves and administer to them as best we can with what talents we have.

We spoke of how our financial contributions through the church services can truly help others—although we realized that we must make service on a person-to-person basis where we can.

When we come to worship we need to be aware of the people who come with their gifts and needs. The worship must be concerned with them and speak to them. Hopefully, all worship will lead people to greater values and service both in relationship to God and our fellowmen.

Let us discover the needs, identify the resources, choose our priorities, select our volunteers and frequently evaluate. A genuine worshiping community will take these steps inspired by its worshiping spirit.

We were pleased with what we heard and learned from each other; we laughed well at our own foibles, we found genuine points of commonality amidst our differences.

Co-convenors

W. Trueman Moore, Baptist
Sister Maureen Kelly, Catholic

Paul J. McLaughlin, Recorder

Worship in the Family and in Small Groups

It takes God's presence and our response for worship to take place. Therefore it takes two. There is need for meaning in every person's life. The importance of worship in the family is that it makes connection with the meaning of life.

Prayer is urgent; it must pervade as a climate of living. Three components or elements need to be present: 1) Wonder-reverence-awe, an openness to mystery; 2) Gratitude, the sense of indebtedness to God for the gift of life; 3) Solitude-silence. Each one of us is to find his/her individual strength in God. Silence is vital to this. Silence brings much fullness—corporate silence has great possibility.

One priest shared with the group some maturing and growth in his parish family in the worship of children. They used the Thanksgiving season to express the children's love for their parents and the parents' love for their children. Thus they were able to show God's love for people even when they were naughty and they could come to God and experience His love and forgiveness. James Goodson indicated that there is a crisis in the Protestant family in that there is little usage of the Bible in family life.

Bob Hastings indicated that one family has solved the problem of family worship by getting together once a week for family worship. On the other days there is a quiet time for each individual member of the family. In one community the churches put pressure on the school to have one night for the family called "at home night." The families used part of this time as a time of prayer.

One member of the group indicated that there needs to be strong training of adults in how to conduct some kind of family worship. One pastor has a marriage enrichment class for families in the church. This has been very successful. One of the lectures is "Eleven Ways a Husband Hurts His Wife." They have a personal evaluation sheet for the husband and an evaluation sheet for the wife. The children also are brought into this evaluation. This has enriched family life in their church.

Some people think that the preaching of the sermon is worship and think it has to be repeated in the family. Perhaps what we need to teach our people are the ingredients of worship.

Some things Catholics are having:

1. Family retreats

2. Marriage encounters
3. Teenagers encounter Christ (T.E.C.H.)
4. Day of Recollection (hear scripture proclaimed)
5. Holy Hour (each week)
6. Three minutes a day (to read scripture, pray, etc.)
7. Family-centered religious education programs
8. Prayer groups
9. Anniversary service as a family

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The Role of Art, Music and Symbolism in Worship

As leaders in worship, we must be conscious of some problems: 1) man-made environments in conflict with nature, 2) mobility and loss of community ties, 3) atomization of community brings in its wake an indifference to the past and its power to shape the future, 4) liturgy (worship) as performance-to-be-watched vs. ritual-to-be-shared, and 5) work ethic and pragmatic philosophy which questions any functionless, purposeless activity.

The use of art, music and symbolism in worship can bring about a sense of community. This usage is only valuable as the congregation learns to appreciate and accept the art or symbol. Certainly the educational, ethnic, and cultural background of a congregation will determine what art forms and symbols will be acceptable and meaningful.

Many Baptists would say that Baptist worship is free from symbols. However, the following can be considered ritual symbols in worship: 1) a personal devotional life, 2) Baptism—the baptistry is the focal point in Baptist architecture, 3) Lord's Supper and Table—along with the elements, 4) offertory, 5) pulpit—if it is moved, many people are highly disturbed, and 6) Bible.

Art usage in the Church incorporates drama, readings, dance, music, painting, sculpture, etc.

Music in both groups is highly important. There is an attempt to involve the laity in the act of worship through music. This involvement may be through instruments, choral music, congregational singing, handbell choirs. The list could be greatly expanded.

We discussed the fine line between art forms being creative and appreciated for art's sake or art forms, however creative, being a means to experiencing worship. Art for art's sake can take away from worship.

The group discussed the importance of architecture. It must be worship centered. Some congregations react against multipurpose buildings. They want a recognizable "church building"—more traditional. However, a multipurpose building allows for freer movement in worship. Its practicality is a plus. Financially, many churches must use a multipurpose worship center.

The question was asked "Do our congregations understand the symbols that we take for granted?" The Eucharist is a meal. But, in reality people have trouble seeing it as a meal because of their home experience. Worship helps us to see human beings as symbol—"Christ in

you." Art, architecture, symbols and signs help to link us to our past and keep us from spiritual impoverishment.

As a "side track," it was pointed out that Protestants need to build on the "Kingship of Jesus." Catholics need to build a more personal/friendship relationship to Christ.

Due to the great diversity in churches—educational background, etc.—music appreciation is on many levels. Should we try to raise the congregation's level of art appreciation? Yes!

The idea was raised that perhaps there is a parallel between the Baptist invitation and Catholic movement forward in the Eucharist. Perhaps, we felt, the parallel was more with the old Baptist "mourner's bench."

Possibly there is a need for more gestures and movement in worship. Baptists have always been reactionary to dance. However, in the past 10 years, youth musicals have begun to incorporate choreography.

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Forms of Spirituality Expressed in Worship

Perhaps a common ground for dialogue can be found in exploring the meanings of various ideas/words which are expressed in a diversity of thoughts, behaviors and cultures. What we try to say or do in worship will have a relationship to one or more or all of these three areas of expression.

A common problem for both Southern Baptist and Roman Catholic arises when we attempt to associate these three expressions of reality with religious ideas or experiences.

Worship is both an act and a life-style expressing our beliefs. A spirituality arises when we focus upon one aspect of our beliefs or faith and attempt to give it concrete form in our daily life.

More often than not a spirituality or devotional life for a Southern Baptist centers around the fundamental belief and commitment to Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. There is contained in this belief and commitment an intimacy, a sense of immediacy and a conviction of independence from any mediation through symbols. Worship reflects this spirituality by way of an unspoken desire to transcend anything material. For example, the preacher may attempt to change his natural voice into a solemn or "other worldly" voice, and utilize religious language only.

A personal spirituality or devotional life is reflected in the traditional time for testimony or witness during worship. However, a Southern Baptist has traditionally equated spirituality with morality and an emotional experience, not necessarily a reflective meditative experience. There are, of course, exceptions which abound.

Roman Catholics have traditionally had access to numerous spiritualities, e.g., Franciscan monasticism and asceticism, each emphasizing a particular way of life based on a particular perspective of the Gospel life.

The charismatic movement within Roman Catholicism has reintroduced another form of emphasizing spirituality, however there is a need for a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and a dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit. The uniqueness of charismatic spirituality can be found in the desire to be particularly receptive to the variety of gifts from the Spirit and the need for a *community* life of service and evangelization, but more especially in a spontaneity and testimony.

The difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Churches in this area of spirituality may lie in the ability to

accommodate and adjust to a variety of spiritualities in a local church. Despite our various problems in accommodation and forms of spirituality in our worships, the criterion for unity in diversity should be *Love*.

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