THE WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANION TO

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

EDITED BY

Porter C. Taylor and Khalia J. Williams

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To my wife, Rebecca. Your wisdom, grace, and love have shaped my understanding of liturgical theology more than any textbook or class ever could. Whether in the daily rhythms of our home, the holy routines of our ministry, or the sacred moments in the life we've built together, your influence on my theology has been profound. You are the most important liturgical theologian in my life and this is for you.

Porter

To my beloved family – Damon, Thomas, and Ethan. It is in living the love out loud through marriage and motherhood that I am drawn more deeply into a knowledge of God that moves beyond words and rituals, into the very heart of grace and communion. Damon, my dear husband, you are wellspring of strength, care, love and support; and for this I am ever grateful. And to my precious children, your laughter and wonder reveal the sacred in the everyday, a divine gift that I will always cherish.

Khalia

This is for every Mrs. Murphy and Sis. Green in the pews. While some may be set aside either to teach or to lead, you make liturgical theology possible. As you pray and as you believe, this is for you.

Porter and Khalia

Contents

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Foreword

Liturgical theology has, over the past 60 years, developed remarkably as a family of disciplines in both academic and ecclesial life. For those of us trained before and during the period of Vatican II – and the profound ecumenical sharing that resulted – the theological harvest has been rich and abundant. The sheer range of writers and sources in this volume is ample testimony. Early preoccupations with textual comparisons and the anatomy of forms and historical sources have given way to a wide diversity of voices, cultural contexts, and methodologies. Good theology requires good, formative practices. It has been my good fortune to have been a participant in these developments.

As a pastor, musician, and teacher of theology, I confess to living simultaneously in several cultural worlds. At times these are never fully congruent with one another. This is the glory and the travail of doing serious liturgical work. My question, inherited from the likes of Alexander Schmemann, Johannes Metz, and Geoffrey Wainwright, remains: Can the eschatological promises and the kenotic beauty of faithful liturgy reach into all our human habitations? Can our prayers and our music and our fidelity to God enact what has been promised in scripture and tradition? Can the poetry and prophecy of shared liturgical life contain the "deep down things" the poet Hopkins sang about? In my own work I continually confront the permanent tension between the "is" of the world and the "ought to be" of God-with-us.

The current state of things in our world inclines us toward lament. Much needs to be said about the "cultural captivity" of our religious institutions. The Psalms have always given us honest ways to weep and to rejoice. For the Christian community, these are held together in Christ. The worship of God is strenuously oriented to glory as well as to the mystery of death and life. To put the issue bluntly, anamnesis is not nostalgia, and liturgy is not mere entertainment. As these essays show, this awareness requires paying attention to cultural contexts, to critical reflection, to disorienting beauty, and to human maturity in God over time. Can we learn in our own time and place what the old Prayerbook language said: We are invited to be "partakers of the divine life." This is the profound hope of liturgical integrity and faithful practice.

I have no doubt that the essays in this volume set an agenda for all who wish to study the theological and pastoral depth of the worship of church and synagogue. Knowledge of what's at stake in understanding the depth and breadth of the aesthetic/theological mystery and cultural force of liturgical life is a continuing task and responsibility of theological inquiry.

We must always begin where and with whom we worship, and in the formed traditions of Word, sacrament, and common life. If the promises of God are taken seriously, we must become artists of what Joseph Gelineau once called the "paschal human in Christ." Without dogmatism, cultural violence, or intellectual self-aggrandizement, liturgical theology must aim at bringing the humanity of God out of our "arenas of human folly" to the "arena of God's glory." The songs of Zion are to be remembered and learned again and again.

Don E. Saliers

Introduction

Porter C. Taylor and Khalia J. Williams

This volume is the literary encapsulation of the adage "necessity is the mother of invention." As Porter waded through his doctoral research, it became abundantly clear that while edited volumes had been written honoring liturgical theologians[1] or with contributions by liturgical theologians, there was nothing on the market which served as a truly comprehensive[2] resource for the field. In the midst of his dissertating, he grew increasingly determined to create in the future the volume for which he had a necessity in the present. One of his primary goals was to assemble a group of the field's leading voices, emerging scholars, and prolific writers. In our earliest conversations as co-editors, we set a common goal: to compile the volume that we wanted to read. *The concept for this volume was thus born.*

As we began our collaborative work of co-editing, we started to envision a potential future for liturgical theology. This future was not pre-determined by us as though we somehow had the power to shape an entire field, rather, it was the sort of aspirational future which emerges and erupts from the soil of the work performed by so many in the past and the ongoing contributions of scholars in the present. The potential future we were seeing, therefore, was one which took seriously our historic roots, acknowledged the vast diversity within the field, looked toward the horizon of further exploration within the field, and which embraced interdisciplinary opportunities.

This volume is drenched in the blood, sweat, and tears of the co-editors and the contributors. We began our work in 2019 *before* Covid, we worked tireless *during* Covid, and we are releasing it into the wild of life *after* Covid. It has been a unique gift to see how practical ministry was transformed during the months and years most heavily influenced by the pandemic. Covid shaped and shifted the application and direction of many of the essays in this volume. As practitioners, professors, pastors, or priests, we have witnessed the strength and significance

[1] Cf. the festschrifts honoring Nathan Mitchell, Aidan Kavanagh, and Maxwell Johnson.

[2] The present volume is comprehensive though not exhaustive because to produce the latter would be, in our opinion, a truly impossible feat.

of embodied practices and liturgical formation in a Covid and post-Covid world. Many, if not most, of the essays contained in this volume bear the implicit marks of leaders who sought to understand and guide their churches, dioceses, denominations, or classrooms through a global pandemic which changed the landscape of liturgical leadership and ministry in the local church.

Structure, Audience, and Contributors

We have organized the volume into three sections pertaining to distinct aspects of liturgical theology. In addition to describing the liturgical theological field, one could argue that these sections are simultaneously an attempt to assess *where we have been, where we are, and where we are going* as a field. They are:

i. Liturgical Theology: What it is
ii. Liturgical Theology: What it does
iii. Liturgical Theology: Moving forward

These sections provide the necessary structure to (I) outline the history and meaning of liturgical theology; (II) demonstrate the methods and methodology of the field; (III) explore the exciting horizon of innovative research and interdisciplinary opportunities. The decision to organize the volume this way was threefold. First, we intend for this collection of essays to be accessible for students of and newcomers to the field. To that end, this volume can and should be read by students, professors, practitioners, and Mrs. Murphy or Sis. Green in the pews. Second, we wanted to tether the envelope-pushing exploration of liturgical theology performed in the present to the groundbreaking, foundational work done by previous generations of scholars. Finally, it is our hope that this volume will be revised and added to in years to come as the field continues to progress in research, method, application, and collaboration. As a field, we are moving *further up and further in* with our understanding of worship as both performance and reflection. The possible avenues for future work within liturgical theology are boundless; in fact, it is a dream of ours that the essays contained within these pages might serve as the catalyst and inspiration for innovative projects. Perhaps the next Evelyn Underhill, Louis-Marie Chauvet, Jean Jacques von Allmen, or Howard Thurman will read these pages. The essays contained within have been conceived, written, edited, and compiled with these audiences firmly and intentionally in mind.

Regarding other volumes in print, Dwight Vogel's classic *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader* comes closest to providing an introductory text. Vogel did a masterful job of assembling a top-notch group of scholars to both contribute and whose work he sought to highlight. *Primary Sources* has been a primary resource since its initial publication more than two decades ago. The difficulty with such a text, however, is that it is uniquely bound and therefore directly tied to the scholars presented within. Much has changed over the last 20 years, however; new scholars have emerged, the field has shifted toward an interdisciplinary and multiethnic perspective, and the topography of the land (as depicted by Vogel in his volume) is quite different. The volume is at once both evergreen and cemented to a specific point in time. This volume is comprehensive but not exhaustive. Rather than being a beginning or ending, this is a continuation of a conversation already in motion.

In assembling the *Companion*, we, as co-editors, made a deliberate decision to engage a diverse and balanced group of contributors. This choice reflects our commitment to presenting

a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration of liturgical theology that honors the rich plurality within the global Christian tradition. By drawing on voices from various cultural, theological, and ecclesial contexts, we ensure that the Companion offers readers a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how worship shapes, and is shaped by, different communities. A diversity of perspectives not only enriches the dialogue but also challenges any singular narrative, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic theological conversation that remains faithful to the universal and catholic nature of liturgical communities. We were both amazed when our "dream team" came together so seamlessly. As with most edited volumes, we experienced some attrition as the Covid years passed us by but miraculously the group of contributors you will find in these pages has remained largely intact since the beginning.

Acknowledgments

It has truly taken a village to see this volume from concept to manuscript and now into your hands. We are both grateful to Wiley Blackwell for the opportunity to collaborate on this project and for the grace extended (repeatedly) as Covid pushed deadlines further and further back. This volume has taken us so long that we have worked several editors, and we are grateful for each of them. Catriona was the first person to take us seriously and sign us up. We then worked with Marissa, Clelia, and Charlie for short seasons. We eventually received the gift of the wonderful team of Rachel, Ed, Madhurima, and Jamila who have seen this project through production to publishing. We are grateful for the contributors who have worked us tirelessly, demonstrating both a great deal of patience and a steadfast commitment to completing the work together. Finally, we are grateful to you, the reader, for taking the time to read these pages with us.

Porter – There are several people I must absolutely acknowledge for without them this volume would not be in your hands. *Khalia*, working with you has been a gift; I cannot believe we have finally seen this volume across the finish line and into reality! *Cynthia and Ellis*, your love and support remains one of the greatest gifts in my life. *Jet, Case, and Ellis*, we have been talking and doing liturgical theology for years together even if you did not know it. Thank you for asking questions, showing grace with my lame answers, and challenging me to be the best father and liturgical theologian I can be. Most importantly, *Rebecca,* this volume would not exist apart from your support, encouragement, and love. You are always the audience to whom I am writing and the conversation partner with whom I am sharpening and honing my thoughts. By the time this book is in your hands, we will have lived in five different houses and three states since we started working on it. Thank you for believing in me!

Khalia – At the heart of this volume is the imaginative fruit of shared conversations, classroom discussions, emails, text messages with many brilliant minds. For all who have been a part of the journey in one way or another, I am thankful. *Porter*, it has been a gift and joy to work with you. Through a lot of life happening, time passing, brainstorming, writing, and rewriting, we have made it! I could not think of a better person to do this work with, and I am grateful for the friendship that has evolved. To the woman whose living faith has been my primary textbook since childhood, my mother *Mollie Jelks*, your witness is a testament of God's continued activity in the world. To my *W650* students, who have inspired me as we have journeyed through the depths of feminist and womanist spirituality and worship together. Your questions, ideas, and thoughtful reflections continue to teach me more than I could have ever expected. *Damon*, our lived experience of marriage and ministry partnership

rests at the heart of my theological reflection and practice. Your support and encouragement fuel me to continue to do the work that rests deep in my soul, even when that soul is weary. To the women of the *Feminist and Womanist Studies in Liturgy Seminar* of the North American Academy of Liturgy, words cannot express how much you all have encouraged me. You all are the model of communal support and connection. Thank you for embracing me over the years and anchoring my liturgical scholarship journey in grace.

A Word on Reading

There are many ways one can digest these pages. You could opt to read through volume chronologically and in one sitting; this would be long and arduous but certainly possible if you have a lot of free time in front of you. You could cherry pick the essays which interest you most and/or which are assigned for the course(s) you are taking; this is logical, but you may lose the cohesiveness of the overall project that way. Lastly, and the format we suggest, you could read through this *Companion* as though it was a companion, a trusted conversation partner with whom you are in a meaningful dialogue. This type of reading would be done slowly, intentionally, and over a long period of time.

We encourage readers to take their time journeying through each essay in this volume, allowing the depth and breadth of the reflections to resonate fully. Liturgical theology is a rich and multilayered field that invites contemplation, and each contributor has offered nuanced insights that are best appreciated through thoughtful engagement. By slowing down and reflecting on the arguments presented, readers will not only gain a greater appreciation for the diversity of thought but will also encounter new perspectives that may challenge and enrich their own understanding. Each essay stands as a distinct offering to the larger conversation, and taking the time to sit with these writings will enable readers to experience the full scope of liturgical theology's impact on worship, faith, and community life.

Section I

Liturgical Theology: What It Is

CHAPTER 1

What Is Liturgical Theology?

One North American Lutheran View[1]

Gordon W. Lathrop

There is a fascinating nineteenth-century story known by most North American Lutheran liturgists that might be of some interest to other liturgists as well. From 1837 until his death in early 1872, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe was the parish pastor in Neuendettelsau, a small village in Franconia within the Kingdom of Bavaria, who surprisingly mattered a great deal to the development of North American Lutheranism. Although he never traveled very widely and was frequently in serious trouble with both church and state authorities in his region of Germany, from this village Löhe established a center for the mission, sent missionaries to North America, Australia, New Guinea, and Brazil, founded a thriving deaconess community, oversaw the beginnings of what became a large network of diaconal institutions serving the sick and the poor, restored textile arts in the church, and wrote voluminously, while also attending to his pastoral duties with a fierce devotion. Through it all, he cared deeply about the liturgy. His was a sacramentally centered conception of mission and *diakonia*, a conception of church anchored in the congregation gathered around the eucharist. That conception spread to North America.[2] Through his writings and, especially, his *Agende* or liturgical handbook intended for use in German-speaking Lutheran congregations in diaspora, one important foundation was laid upon which the American framers of the *Common Service* – the recovered classic Lutheran shape of the mass – could build. That late nineteenth-century liturgical recovery, formed then in an elegant English influenced by the

[1] This paper was first delivered in a different form as a lecture at the Augustana Hochschule in Neuendettelsau, Germany, on 25 June 2012. I thank Professor Emeritus Klaus Raschzok of that theological school for the question that occasioned this paper and that recurs in its title. Subsequent versions of the paper were published in *Worship* 87, no. 1 (January 2013): 45–63; *Liturgie und Kultur* 6, no. 1 (2015): 10–21. I am grateful to Porter Taylor and Khalia Williams for the opportunity to revisit here both the thesis of those works and the substance of their argument.

[2] For Löhe as a liturgist and for his interest in reform, see especially Schattauer, Thomas H. "The Löhe Alternative for Worship, Then and Now." *Word and World* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 145–156.

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prayer book tradition of the Anglicans, spread throughout the Lutheran synods of North America and became the basis upon which further Lutheran liturgical work was developed.[3] The story of Löhe has encouraged Lutheran liturgists ever since: even without a powerful appointment, even against official hostility, significant work for renewal can be done; liturgy, mission, and response to social needs all go together; and the role of the parish pastor can be of great importance.

It has seemed to me that Lutherans might rightly think about liturgical theology again in dialogue with Löhe, and in so doing, I have wondered if their thoughts might then be useful to other Christians as well. I am quite aware that since the publication of Alexander Schmemann's *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*[4] and Aidan Kavanagh's *On Liturgical Theology*,[5] an extended conversation has been carried on among many liturgical scholars and others in North America and then beyond, inquiring if there is such a thing as "liturgical theology" and, when it is granted that there is, if its nature and method can be specified. Contributions to this conversation have included Dwight Vogel's generous "conceptual geography" of the subject in his anthology of sources,[6] Graham Hughes's magisterial study of theories of meaning in relationship to Christian worship,[7] David Fagerberg's re-worked monograph devoted to the idea of the liturgy itself as *theologia prima*,[8] as well as the critical questions in the published dissertations of both Siobhán Garrigan[9] and Melanie Ross.[10] The present volume indicates that this continuing conversation has broadened and expanded. Still, Löhe might yet suggest to us another way that could be helpful in the discussion. In any case, I have long thought him to be an example of a liturgical theologian, working 175 years ago and yet worthy of attention today.[11]

Liturgy and Liturgical Theology in *Three Books Concerning the Church*

In 1845, Löhe published his important study *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (*Three Books Concerning the Church*). In the long run, the book was so important to American Lutherans that it was translated twice, first in 1908 by Edward Traill Horn, one of the principal architects of the Common Service,[12] and again in 1969 by James L. Schaaf, a professor at the Lutheran

[3] On the Common Service, see Senn, Frank C. *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*, 584–591. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997; Reed, Luther D. *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 182ff, rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1947.

[4] New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973.

[5] New York: Pueblo, 1984.

[6] Vogel, Dwight W. *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader*, 3–14. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000.

[7] Hughes, Graham. *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[8] Fagerberg, David W. *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?* 2nd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004.

[9] Garrigan, Siobhán. *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

[10] Ross, Melanie C. *Evangelical versus Liturgical? Defying a Dichotomy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

[11] See my *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993: 6, 205.

[12] *Three Books Concerning the Church*, Horn, Edward T. trans. Reading: Pilger, 1908.

seminary in Columbus, Ohio.[13] As an important part of the ecclesiology of that volume, Löhe wrote about the church's liturgy, and one particular passage still retains something of his lyrical love of the subject:

> The Church not only learns, she prays. She prays not only in her single members in their closets, but together in crowds [*Haufen*] in her houses of assembly. She prays in speech, she prays in song, and the Lord dwells amid her praises with his Sacraments. Her approach to him, his approach to her, the whole form of her approach and of his coming, we call the Liturgy. – These forms are free, few parts are commanded; but in spite of her freedom the Church from the beginning has decided with pleasure for certain forms. A holy manifoldness of singing and praying has developed itself, and a lovely course of thought [*Gedankengang*] in drawing near to and departing from the Lord of lords has made itself beloved. Just as the stars go about the sun, so the congregation in its services, full of loveliness and dignity, moves about her Lord. In holy childlike innocence, which only a childlike innocent heart rightly understands, the host of the redeemed sanctified children of God moves in celebration about the universal Father and the Lamb, and the Spirit of the Lord of lords leads their ring dance.[14]

I love this passage. But carefully. I am not a nineteenth-century man, nor am I naïve. One rightly has serious questions about the nineteenth-century tone and conceptions found here. Surely the church as feminine, as a *she*, and – for that matter – God as a male approaching the female in a dance: these images are not very helpful to us in the present time. Neither is the presumed innocence of children, that widespread nineteenth-century theme that may have been extensively used but too often also hid an extensively unacknowledged abuse of children. And it is certainly not the stars that move about the sun!

Still, for me, the quote is nonetheless deeply true: there are those remarkable and still evocative phrases: the dance of the assembly around and in the holy Trinity; those crowds of people (*Haufen* is even more literally "heaps," "swarms," or "multitudes") who nonetheless are in the wonderfully named "assembly houses" (*Versammlungshäusern* in the German) and are to be characterized by that remarkable "dignity" (*Würde*); those free yet long-used and long-beloved and manifold forms of singing and speaking, for which the church has over time declared itself with pleasure; the ambiguity of whether it is God or the assembly or both that approach and withdraw; and especially that "course of thought," that *Gedankengang*! In Löhe's German: *Eine heilige Manchfaltigkeit des Singens und Betens hat sich gebildet und ein lieblicher Gedankengang des Nahens und Fernens von dem Herrn Herrn hat sich beliebt gemacht* ("A holy manifoldness of singing and praying has developed itself, and a lovely course of thought in drawing near to and departing from the Lord of lords has made itself beloved").

Gedankengang. That is an important word choice. From that word, one might say that for Löhe, the beloved classical liturgy has – in its experience of God's presence and God's distance, of the assembly's *Nahen* and God's *Kommen*, of the liturgy's drawing near to God and distancing from God, of *Nahen und Fernen von dem Herrn Herrn* – established a train or pattern of thought, a conceptual field, a way to think and talk about who God is and what we are before God. I want to say that such a *Gedankengang* is already what I would call "liturgical theology."

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[13] *Three Books About the Church*, Schaaf, James L. trans. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.

[14] *Three Books Concerning the Church*, 196; translation emended. The German original is found in "Drei Bücher von der Kirche," in Löhe, Wilhelm. *Gesammelte Werke* 5.1, Klaus Ganzert, ed. Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1954: 176–177.

That is – here is my definition – liturgical theology is a way of thinking of God and before God that arises from the liturgy itself, is found first in the liturgy, and yet outside of the liturgy can also form ways that are used to elucidate the meaning of our liturgical practice. Explicitly, liturgical theology seeks to speak about who God is as this God is encountered in liturgy. And such speaking has an important and reforming goal. As Alexander Schmemann said, such theology seeks "to make the liturgical experience of the church again one of the life-giving sources of the knowledge of God."[15]

Löhe was already such a theologian, not just a practical liturgist. Not only did he make liturgies available – in his own congregation and especially in the *Agende* he proposed for the churches in North America – but he also wrote about liturgical meaning and, to say the matter in Schmemann's terms, he did so with the intention of making the liturgy again a place to know God in a life-giving way.

It is fascinating to note that nineteenth-century liturgical theology was frequently exactly a reflection upon the *Nahen und Fernen* of Löhe's *Gedankengang*. One classic theme for nineteenth-century writing on liturgical meaning, especially among Lutherans, was the role of the distinctions and the interchanges between the "sacrificial" – our praise of God and our gifts to God – and the "sacramental" – God's approach in self-giving to us. As Löhe says poetically: "the Lord dwells amid her praises with his Sacraments." Löhe's own thought made extensive use of these distinctions. So did the late nineteenth-century American reflections of a group of pastors and scholars known as the Lutheran Liturgical Association,[16] a group especially important to the development and spread of the Common Service. And over the years, many Lutheran pastors have been taught both liturgical meaning and liturgical practice by learning which parts of the service were to be understood as "sacrificial" and which parts as "sacramental," sometimes using these distinctions to decide which direction they should face as they led the assembly. Here was one classic expression of the "lovely" and "beloved" *Gedankengang*, the *Nahen und Fernen* as nineteenth and early twentieth-century theologians brought it to expression.

These distinctions are no longer so easy for us: a sermon, for example, is not only a word from God but also an act of praise; a hymn or a eucharistic prayer may indeed be praise, but may also be especially a proclamation of God's gift. Indeed, today, we often now do much of the liturgy face-to-face with each other – in a circle or in facing choirs or facing each other across the holy table – and yet, on, in and under our actions, as Löhe himself says, the triune God remains the primary actor: astonishingly, it is primarily *God* who comes near to serve in *Gottesdienst*, in "the Service," as passages like Luke 12:37 and 22:27 assert. Still, the very attempt to talk about liturgical meaning by talking about who God is in the liturgical *Nahen und Fernen* – and learning that talk from the liturgy itself – may give us one model for doing liturgical theology.

There were yet other ways in which Pastor Löhe was a liturgical theologian, at least *in nuce*. That *Nahen und Fernen* can be seen as one way Christians might speak of their liturgical experience of God as an encounter with the plurality in God, with God as triune. Löhe himself sees that, led by the Spirit, the assembly moves around the Father and the Lamb. For Löhe, as for many liturgical theologians of our own day, one might say the doctrine of the holy Trinity is

[15] Introduction to Liturgical Theology, 19; see Holy Things, 6–8.

[16] See, for example, Krauss, Elmer F. "The Function of the Minister in Divine Worship"; Mechling, G.W. "The Fundamental Principles of Divine Service." In *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association*, vol. 5, 9–20, 53–67. 1902–1903, Pittsburgh: Barry, 1903.

the soul of that body, which is the liturgy.[17] What Christians mean by "Trinity" is, first of all, God as God is encountered in an assembly around word and sacrament. Löhe learned that language about the trinitarian dance – that way of describing liturgical meaning, that liturgical theology – from actually experiencing the trinitarian practice of Christian worship: the assembly gathers, moved by the Spirit to encounter Jesus as the Lamb of God in word and sacrament and so, in him, we are brought to stand before the one whom Jesus calls Father.

There were other ways, as well, in which Löhe was a liturgical theologian. He knew that liturgical practice and liturgical meaning had to be taught: "One should not be afraid to teach the liturgy!"[18] Indeed, he introduced his *Agende* with an exploration of the liturgy's *Gedankengang* – using that very word again – seeking to compare the shape of the principal Service of Holy Communion to a double-peaked mountain, on which the assembly ascends and descends, as a way to make clear its meaning.[19] This course of thought in the liturgy itself, in its movement or shape, became one important way that the Common Service was taught in North America. Here was liturgical theology at work.

Liturgical *Gedankengang* in North America

I know that I have been reading Löhe here from a stance formed by the needs and the insights of the early twenty-first century and its own liturgical theology. And I also know that liturgical theology, as Löhe and others in the nineteenth century practiced it, was not directly continued into our time. Perhaps it could not so continue. That may be because the style of its rhetoric could not survive among us, as I have already indicated. But it may also be because liturgy itself often faded into being simply a historical practice: for some, a romantic dream, or, for others, a matter of historic rubrics and rules. Not unlike what happened in the Anglican experience of the Oxford Movement, Löhe himself came to be widely considered, in Germany and in America, as part of the romantic recovery or as an enforcer of those rules. That was all. The reflection on the meaning of the liturgy as a theological source, a reflection so important to him, and the relationship of liturgical recovery to social action as an important part of that reflection were often forgotten. And, for most of us, romanticism was dead.

In any case, the mid-to-late twentieth century in North America saw a strong rebirth of liturgical theology among some Christian groups and in some ecumenical conversation. This was partly so not because of any nineteenth-century figure, but because of the influence of a few important scholars who were newly thinking about ways to express liturgical patterns of thought. Alexander Schmemann was widely read, by many different Christians, who found significance both in his *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* and in his lectures on worship and the sacraments, first given to an ecumenical group of students and called *For the Life of the World*.[20] Led by Schmemann, some Christians came to see that "liturgy" was not simply a historical study of old practices and a current set of rubrics to be learned according to denominational differences, but a matter of urgent importance, concerned indeed with the life of the world. Then Aidan Kavanagh, in his teaching and especially in his book *On Liturgical Theology*, began to argue that what we do in liturgy itself – especially the adjustments we make because

[17] *Holy Things*, 138.

[18] *Man scheue sich nicht, die Liturgie zu lehren!* "Drei Bücher von der Kirche," 177.

[19] *Gesammelte Werke* 7.1: 13.

[20] New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963, 1973.

of our edge-encounter there with the abyss of mystery, which is God – is our primary liturgical theology, our most basic words about God, our *theologia prima*. Other kinds of theology need to attend to that *theologia prima*. Schmemann and Kavanagh marked the beginning of a new and burgeoning conversation in North America. And it seems to me possible to suggest that what Schmemann and Kavanagh and those who have followed them have been seeking to explore is the *Gedankengang* of the liturgy, the pattern of thought – the *ordo* for Schmemann, the critical readjustment for Kavanagh – that occurs in the liturgy itself and that can then shape reflections on that liturgy and work for its reform.

Of course, in North America, one must ask, "what liturgy?" and "whose liturgy?" and "how do you know what patterns of thought are actually going on for the participants in that liturgy?" Those good questions have rightly brought us all to be more careful. They have at least challenged us to greater humility, to less universalizing assertions, and to more direct use of "I" statements. But, to be honest, liturgical theology – including Löhe's work – has always been the insight of an individual as he or she considers the practice of a community and makes reflections available to that community that may help it enter into that practice again and again with new insight. And any community that makes use of ritual, performs "more or less invariant sequences of acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers," as Roy Rappaport has said.[21] It makes sense, especially among Christians, for whom theology has been so important, that some persons among us work on articulating what might be the many meanings that could be resident in that part of the "code" we have received from others before us, that part "not entirely encoded" by ourselves or our current moment. One way to talk about that "code" is as a "course of thought," a *Gedankengang*, especially if one includes the crises and reversals that may occur in such thinking when it is face-to-face with the signs of God.[22]

While there are certainly liturgical theologians elsewhere in the world, it does seem that the late twentieth century saw an especially significant presence of this way of doing theology in North America. One might ask *why*. Is there any reason other than that people read Schmemann and Kavanagh? I think that there is. By the late twentieth century, the liturgical practice of both Catholic and Protestant churches had come to be marked by an accent on what the liturgical movement called "active participation." Increasingly, among us all, thought about the sacraments had become thought about *participation* in the sacraments, and "sacramental theology" was already becoming liturgical theology.[23] But in North America, with its history of practicality and pragmatism, the pressure on such theology was always to say "why?" What does it mean and why does it matter that we participate in worship and in its central acts? Then, in such a context, Schmemann's "for the life of the world" and Kavanagh's re-adjustment to mystery had resonance and usefulness.

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[21] Rappaport, Roy A. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[22] For other responses to those questions about "what liturgy" and "whose liturgy," see my "Bath, Word, Prayer, Table: Reflections on Doing the Liturgical Ordo in a Postmodern Time." In *Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table*, edited by Dirk G. Lange and Dwight W. Vogel, 216–28. Akron: OSL Publications, 2005; and "Ordo and Coyote: Further Reflections on Order, Disorder and Meaning in Christian Worship." *Worship* 80, no. 3 (May 2006): 194–212.

[23] This shift from sacramental theology to liturgical theology is especially well articulated in the second chapter of Siobhán Garrigan's *Beyond Ritual*.