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Learning the Liturgy with Mr. Miyagi: The Case for Liturgical Catechesis

Benjamin Leeper

“**Y**ou’re the best around! Nothing’s gunna ever keep you down!” Joe Esposito’s famous rock anthem plays in the background. The sweaty gymnasium is filled with a cheering crowd, watching as sparring matches play out around the room. A 16-year-old boy in a white uniform and a black belt, Daniel LaRusso, looks nervously around until he spots his girlfriend Ali and his teacher, Mr. Miyagi. Mr. Miyagi nods confidently at him, assuring him silently that he is prepared for this moment. Mr. Miyagi has trained Daniel for weeks and is confident that he taught him everything he needs to know. Daniel turns toward his opponent, a Cobra Kai member whose uniform is marked by their sleeveless black and gold jackets, intimidating fist icon, and icy cold stare. Daniel squares off against him as the referee drops the flag. Daniel suddenly confronts a flurry of incoming blows. Fear crosses his face. What is he supposed to do? The punches are coming so fast, and Daniel has no idea how to defend himself. Mr. Miyagi said that he was teaching him karate, but faced with actual combat, Daniel doesn’t know what good any of it was. Bam! A sudden kick to the face and Daniel goes down, knocked out in the first round. Mr. Miyagi shakes his head, wondering where it was that he went wrong. The credits roll.

For those that have seen the 1984 film *The Karate Kid*, I suspect that this scene is both familiar and foreign. I confess, that is not how the movie really ends. Instead, underdog Daniel LaRusso works his way up in the tournament, overcoming a leg injury to prevail against his long-time rival, Johnny Lawrence, with the now-famous crane



Daniel LaRusso faces off against a Cobra Kai member.

kick, winning the tournament and respect of his peers. But I propose that the alternative ending of *The Karate Kid* which I sketched above is an apt image of what is happening in the church today. Christians in the West are facing extraordinary challenges and many of them seem to be losing, knocked out in the first round. Why do our people look no different than their neighbors, “except that we go to church on Sunday mornings while they’re home reading the paper”?¹ They gossip, divorce, and lie at seemingly the same rate as non-Christians. They struggle to “contemplate that there might be irresolvable tensions between being Christian and being ‘a good American.’”² They relegate Christianity to a Sunday morning activity instead of a daily way of life. Pastors and church leaders are baffled. Haven’t we prepared them? Don’t we worship every Sunday? Don’t we teach them in Bible studies? Don’t we run our youth through two years of confirmation? We shake our heads and wonder where we went wrong. But it is not that what we are doing is wrong. We have taught our people karate—the problem is they *don’t know they know it*.

Using the narrative of *The Karate Kid* as a guide, I will demonstrate that Christian formation is a matter of recontextualizing liturgical practices in the daily life of the believer, so that she knows when, where, and how to use the precognitive spiritual habits formed by Word and Sacrament in Christian worship. This understanding challenges prevalent liturgical theology, which tends to assume an automatic connection—or worse, no connection at all—between worship and daily life, by highlighting the necessity of locating for believers the telos of the church’s rites and ceremonies in discipleship. Finally, I will provide concrete examples of the many forms that liturgical catechesis takes to holistically address the head, heart, and hands of Christian disciples. A right understanding and application of liturgy is the key to bridging the gap between Sunday and Monday.³

The Broad and Narrow Sense of Liturgy

What is meant by the word “liturgy”? While the term is used in a wide variety of ways, most usages can be sorted into two main categories: narrow and broad. The referent of liturgy in the narrow sense is the rites and ceremonies performed in Christian churches during formal public worship services. Timothy Maschke explains the narrow definition of liturgy well, writing, “when we speak of *the* liturgy, we mean the corporate structure of the worship experience and practice, which is centered in hearing God’s Word and the proper administration of the sacraments.”⁴ Liturgy is the pattern by which worship is done. If one speaks of “parts of the liturgy,” they are operating within this category by describing the ordering and elements which provide the structure and shape of worship. While the term is technically neutral (and originally secular), many worship patterns share as their source a common *ordo*, or narrative structure, which has been derived from particular historic, cultural, and theological factors.⁵ While elements of the *ordo* are Biblical, the structure itself

is not mandated by Scripture, nor are specific elements commanded to be included. This does not mean that these elements are superfluous or optional—far from it. Rather, it means that one will need a criterion beyond tradition or divine command to either remove or add to the practices that one has inherited. These patterns of worship are part of a centuries-long conversation between God and his people, in which he speaks his promises and commands to them, and they respond by speaking God's words back to him.⁶

This is not the only way to define liturgy. Broadly speaking, liturgy refers to the pattern of the entire Christian life. Authors such as James K. A. Smith, Aidan Kavanagh, and Jim Marriott have, in various ways, located liturgy within this category. In his primer to his Cultural Liturgies Series, *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith writes that liturgies are “rituals that are formative for identity, that inculcate particular visions of the good life, and do so in a way that means to trump other ritual formations.”⁷ Smith wants to expand liturgy beyond Sunday worship to include—often unconscious—patterns of formation in daily life. Smith's argument is that “Liturgies make us certain kinds of people, and what defines us is what we *love*... every liturgy constitutes a pedagogy that teaches us, in all sorts of precognitive ways, to be a certain kind of person.”⁸ Meaning trickles down not through cognition, but through habits and practices which shape the imagination and dispositions of individuals. In this way, Smith advocates for a liturgical anthropology in which a person's *telos*—that is, their ultimate orientation toward a “vision of the good life”—is shaped by the patterns of their life. Aidan Kavanagh has similarly advocated for the importance of imagination in liturgy, writing that “a liturgy of Christians is thus nothing less than the way a redeemed world is, so to speak, done.”⁹ Liturgy refers cosmically to the ultimate pattern of a rightly ordered world. Jim Marriott, drawing from both Smith and Kavanagh, thus argues that “Liturgy, then, is not merely a pattern of rites and ceremonies that we enact as community on a consistent basis...It is performing our redemption, living out God's story, ‘doing’ the world rightly. It is the performance of our faith—not by ‘our own understanding or strength,’ but by the Spirit's work in and through us as the Church in the world.”¹⁰ The broad definition of liturgy is not divorced from the narrow. Rather, as Marriott explains, “Sunday morning becomes a microcosm of daily life—a true ‘little world’ that is neither removed from the real world nor positioned as the destination for the world. Instead, Sunday morning is aimed at the real world.”¹¹ Sunday worship shapes the gut (*kardia*) of those who participate in the liturgy of the world done right, such that they are formed into people oriented towards God's vision of “the good life.” Thus, the *telos* of worship can be said to be toward discipleship, as one's life is patterned in and after Christ.

Both the narrow and broad uses of liturgy are present in Lutheran Confessional literature. In Article XV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession,

Melanchthon writes, “we gladly keep the ancient traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquility...We can claim that the public liturgy in the church is more dignified among us than among the opponents.”¹² Here, Melanchthon makes the argument that the Lutheran practice of public worship through the ancient rites and ceremonies of the church is more faithful than their Roman counterparts because Lutherans do not have an *ex opera operato* view of those rites. The rites themselves do not justify by the mere act of performing them. In fact, the rites themselves are *adiaphora*, although the means of grace given in worship are not. Under the Lutheran reformers, worship shifted from a supernatural rite to one in which God’s gifts were clearly given and God’s people were intentionally formed. They wrote of these didactic elements, boasting, “The children chant the Psalms in order to learn them; the people also sing in order either to learn or to pray.”¹³ Liturgy was used to refer to Sunday worship and the practices therein, but was oriented toward discipleship and paired with catechesis. In this way, the Reformers also use “liturgy” in the broad sense. In the original quarto edition of the Apology, Melanchthon writes, “the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God...the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness.”¹⁴ By this reception, Melanchthon is referring to the entire life of faith which receives imputed righteousness. His scope is far larger than Sunday worship, but includes the life of the Christian in discipleship, in which they honor God by trusting in his promises.

Many prefer to use only the narrow or broad definition of liturgy. But by allowing both to stand, the connection between the two becomes sharper. One cannot hope to encourage discipleship in the parish without a richly patterned worship life. Likewise, one cannot call their Sunday liturgical worship “good” if it fails to produce people who live lives which are patterned in and after Christ, Monday through Saturday. If this is *not* happening, why? We need a way to help Christians recognize the role liturgy in the narrow sense plays in shaping their lives in liturgy in the broad sense. Unfortunately, Smith’s original proposal that this happens automatically is insufficient in a church body which has—for the most part—retained historically rich patterns of worship yet struggled with connecting Sunday to Monday just as much, if not more, than any other church body. Neither can a purely rationalistic solution be employed, in which the liturgy is simply explained cognitively, as this tries to solve a heart and hand problem with the head. Perhaps a certain part-time karate instructor may be able to help us address this issue.

Wax On, Wax Off

At the beginning of this article, I compared our current liturgical crisis to an alternative ending to the 1984 film, *The Karate Kid*. Why didn’t the movie end in that way? For those that have not seen the film, the main character, Daniel LaRusso, finds

himself the ruthless target of a group of bullies known as the Cobra Kai gang. One night, while the bullies are beating him in retaliation for a prank, the handyman in Daniel's apartment appears and defeats the Cobra Kai bullies with his far superior karate skills. Daniel convinces the man—Mr. Miyagi—to train him in karate as a means of self-defense, but he soon finds himself slated to compete against the Cobra Kai dojo in an upcoming regional Karate Championship. Daniel shows up at Mr. Miyagi's house, expecting a rigorous training regimen. Instead, Mr. Miyagi hands Daniel a rag and tells him to wax his car. He gives specific instruction on the technique he wants Daniel to use—“Wax on, wax off”—making an inside-out circular motion with his hands. In the coming days, Mr. Miyagi has Daniel do a wide variety of other tasks—sanding his deck, painting his fence, and re-painting his house. Eventually, Daniel becomes frustrated and explodes at Mr. Miyagi after Mr. Miyagi returns from a day of fishing while Daniel is sore from working on the house all day.

DANIEL: Maybe I would have wanted to go, you ever think of that?

MR. MIYAGI: You karate training.

DANIEL: I'm what? I'm being your G-damn slave is what I'm being man. Now we made a deal here.

MR. MIYAGI: So?

DANIEL: So? So you're supposed to teach and I'm supposed to learn, remember? For four days I've been busting my ass and I haven't learned a G-damn thing!

...

MR. MIYAGI: Not everything is as seems.



The problem is that Daniel does not know what he is learning. He becomes frustrated by the ritual practice Mr. Miyagi puts him through. He does not understand

why Mr. Miyagi will not let him accomplish the tasks in a more efficient manner. Not understanding the *telos* of this ritual, Daniel believes that Mr. Miyagi may even be taking advantage of him. So, Mr. Miyagi guides Daniel to a moment of discovery, in what turns out to be the crux of the entire film. He asks Daniel to show him the hand motions he used in his chores over the past week. “Show me wax on, wax off.” Confused, Daniel kneels to make the circular motion on the ground, but Mr. Miyagi pulls him to his feet, making him perform that action he has repeated and practiced hundreds of times. As he does so, Mr. Miyagi recontextualizes these actions, showing him that each ritualized movement is actually a specific defensive karate move. Finally, after working through all the motions, Mr. Miyagi attacks Daniel, who responds with the “wax on, wax off” motion, moving his hands in a circular movement to block the incoming blow. This whole time, Daniel has been building a habit that laid dormant, awaiting activation through recontextualization. Daniel realizes that the ritual has a purpose because he now knows where to use it.

If Mr. Miyagi had never told and shown Daniel where this practice belonged, the movie would have ended exactly as I imagined in the beginning of this article. That does not mean that Mr. Miyagi was not teaching Daniel karate until he informed Daniel of the meaning behind the rite. Nor does it mean that Daniel was not practicing karate until he cognitively knew the purpose of his actions. Rituals form regardless of our awareness of them. Rather, it means that rituals, which form our gut, must be awakened by being recontextualized. Recontextualization names the moment when a habit formed by rituals is enacted in a new context. Without recontextualization, habits stay in our gut and never become action. One must discover where, when, and how to apply a ritual for it to become a useful, embodied habit.

Christian worship works in much the same way. The church asks her members to do practices that may look very strange to them: stand for the Gospel reading, recite the Nicene Creed, respond with “and also with you.” These ritualized practices can frustrate members who do not understand the *telos* of worship. “You are in discipleship training,” the confused pastor hopefully responds. Perhaps he assumed that was obvious, or perhaps he assumed that there was a simple one-to-one transference of the ritual to everyday life. But not everything is as it seems. If the church expects her members to be liturgically formed (in the broad sense), then pastors must guide their parishioners to discover the purpose of liturgy (in the narrow sense).

I enjoy the image of *The Karate Kid* to illustrate this point, but Luther uses another: a builder and his plans. In “On Christian Freedom,” Luther compares the ceremonies of the church to the plans a builder uses to construct his building. The plans are certainly necessary, but they are not themselves the *telos*, or the end goal of the task. Luther writes, “Who would be so silly that they would care for nothing in life other than plans that they had most lavishly, carefully, and stubbornly prepared

while never thinking about the structure itself and only being pleased with and boasting about their work in making plans and such vain first steps?”¹⁶ Luther is not denigrating the rites and ceremonies of the church, but is more concerned with the gifts received and the character formed by such worship. Many “high church” and “contemporary” worship services ironically share this error, getting so caught up in the rite itself that they lose sight of the end goal. To return to *The Karate Kid*, this is the equivalent of worrying about the kind of wax to use on the car—Carnauba, resin, or polymer? The point is the performance of the rite by the Christian, not the achievement of the rite itself. Luther condemns the rite-focused view, as “they waste their whole life by tying their life to works, and yet they never arrive at the goal for which works are done. As the Apostle says, they ‘are always being instructed and can never arrive at knowledge of the truth.’”¹⁷ The purpose of the narrow liturgy is not self-contained, but finds its goal in the promises of God and the life of the believer.

A very clear example of this would be the performance of Confession and Absolution. Many assume that they confess their sins and receive absolution every Sunday to do exactly that—confess and be forgiven. This is certainly true. But if that were the only purpose, then there would be no need for that practice to be liturgical. The words used in the confession could be changed every week while keeping the rite in place. This might even be more effective, as it prevents people from getting into a rut and simply going through the motions. But the benefit of reciting the same confession and hearing the same absolution over and over again is that it builds a habit. Consider the words of Divine Service Setting I in the Lutheran Service Book: “Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone...”¹⁸ Saying those words, week after week, does not only produce the effect of confession and forgiveness. It forms a certain type of people—a people who recognize their own sinful nature and the limits of their fallen humanity, who realize that sin is more than action but also thought, and that sins of omission are as serious as those of commission. One could cognitively inform the congregation of these facts, but it is no substitution for the formation to the gut—the precognitive disposition of the believer. One only has to bring a non-believer into a church service that says these words to realize how strange a people they make us. But what would happen if, on a Tuesday morning, a husband comes into the pastor’s office because he is having trouble in their marriage and the pastor says, “Show me Confession and Absolution!” As many pastors know, they might as well have said “wax on, wax off!” The parishioner freezes, unsure exactly what to do. They know the rite, but this is a new context, and they aren’t sure how to apply it—and this location is still within the church building! Now imagine that the pastor tells the husband to go home and “do confession and absolution” there. He tries it, but it feels clunky and unnatural. “I have sinned against you and against God in

thought, word, and deed.” He’s done this hundreds of times, but never at home. But then he hears his wife say, “Christ forgives you and so do I” and it clicks. Confession and Absolution is not only an event that happens on Sunday—it is a way of life that brings reconciliation and peace to those that follow after Christ.

These moments of discovery are always aided by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit works through means. As Chad Lakies argues, the pastor has a responsibility to catechize the congregation on the narrative of the liturgy. “If you’re not telling the story, your liturgy is probably doing something else. Context is necessary. And it is up to the shepherd to actually be doing the shepherding in this regard.”¹⁹ It is a responsibility of the pastor not only to bring Christ’s forgiveness through absolution in the worship service, but to help form God’s people into a people of forgiveness, which includes both building the routine through liturgical enactment and the facilitation of the moment of discovery through recontextualization of the established habit. Sometimes this recontextualization of rites really does happen automatically, such as when a teenager takes their 2nd grade math skills and applies them to their 1st job working a cash register. But for the thickest, most important rituals which get at the center of our identity, such as Christian worship, we dare not assume that this will happen without a guide.

Performing the Liturgy as though We Had Enemies

One of the best ways to assist with this recontextualization is to reveal the enemies which oppose Christian liturgy—that is, the way of discipleship. The devil is liturgical too. He uses rival liturgies which form people—often without their knowledge.²⁰ There are many rich practices all around which are centered on forming our desires, imagination, and identity in ways counter to the will of God. But by exposing these rival liturgies, they are robbed of some of their power. The point of this is not the demonization of culture but the recognition of a lack of neutrality. Once again, *The Karate Kid* can help illustrate this point.

Before training with Mr. Miyagi, Daniel has only ever seen one way of learning karate—that embodied by the Cobra Kai dojo. At that dojo, the students wear special uniforms, recite a creed (Strike first! Strike Hard! No Mercy!), and practice fighting each other. John Kreese, the sensei of that dojo has meticulously formed his students in the way of the fist. They move with precision and purpose, motivated by fear of Kreese and the message that anyone on the street may be their enemy. No doubt they are good at karate. But when Mr. Miyagi observed them—both in their ritual practice and their everyday life—he noticed that these boys were liturgical animals. They had been



John Kreese threatens Daniel and Mr. Miyagi.

habituated into a way of life—the way of the fist—and they lived that liturgy on and off the mat. Mr. Miyagi realizes that what he is up against is not a few school bullies, but a rival liturgy. So, when he sets out to train Daniel, he takes an entirely different approach. Instead of being formed by fighting others, Daniel is formed in service. He learns karate by helping Mr. Miyagi. This is reinforced by Mr. Miyagi's rival creed: "Rule Number 1: Karate for defense only." Mr. Miyagi realizes that winning a trophy in a local tournament is not what matters—what matters is combating the harmful liturgy of the way of the fist with the good liturgy of karate which protects others. To do that, Mr. Miyagi not only has to teach Daniel karate, but make him into a specific kind of person. Mr. Miyagi does not teach Daniel how to punch and kick until right before the tournament, after he has learned all the other skills, because offense is the last resort. Daniel's liturgical formation relies on rich ritualistic enactment, practice and repetition of virtue forming habits, the order of the elements, and recontextualizing catechesis.

In an essay originally titled "Preaching as Though we had Enemies," Stanley Hauerwas argues that "Most of us do not go to church because we are seeking a safe haven from our enemies; rather, we go to church to be assured we have no enemies."²¹ This will have to change if the narrow liturgy is to have stakes. We must recognize that there are rival liturgies vying for our identity—that these are real enemies which have an ultimate spiritual antecedent in the devil and his goals.²² We have very real liturgical enemies, but just as Mr. Miyagi attacked Daniel to help him recontextualize his habits, so can we use the assaults upon liturgical living as moments which activate our gut and bring us to action. There is no greater mockery of the devil than that he be used as an instrument in spiritual formation. Arguing for the importance of catechesis, Luther writes that God,

knows our danger and need; he knows the constant and furious attacks and assaults of the devil. Therefore, he wishes to warn, equip, and protect us against them with good "armor" against their "flaming arrows," and with a good antidote against their evil infection and poison. Oh, what mad, senseless fools we are! We must ever live and dwell in the midst of such mighty enemies like the devils, and yet we would despise our weapons and armor, too lazy to examine them or give them a thought!²³

We must not despise our weapons and armor. We cannot reject the value of liturgical formation, nor should we neglect to demonstrate when, where, and how to use it. We must perform the liturgy as though we had enemies.

One example of a "liturgical enemy" is the liturgy of privatized belief. In his book *American Babylon*, Richard John Neuhaus writes, "The confinement of

the question of God or of the gods to the private sphere constitutes what might be described as political atheism. Many today who are believers in private have been persuaded, or intimidated, into accepting political atheism.”²⁴ In other words, many Christians have bought into the narrative that their faith is a personal, private matter which they should keep to themselves. So, they confine their faith to an hour on Sunday, careful not to let it overflow into the rest of the week. The reason so many Christians look like atheists Monday through Saturday is that functionally, they are. This rival liturgy is affirmed by such creeds as “separation of church and state,” “personal Lord and savior” and “Well I don’t believe in that Jesus.” The reason we need intentional liturgical catechesis is because there is a massive chasm between Sunday morning and Monday created by this “keep your beliefs to yourself” liturgy. There may have been a time when the narrow liturgy just “worked,” automatically creating the broad liturgy, but the pre-enlightenment era was not hampered by the present distinction between sacred and secular life. The social imaginary of our people prevents them from even seeing that they should—or even can—bring their liturgical practices into their public life beyond the walls of the church. This fact has become unavoidable, and it must be acknowledged as the liturgical enemy it is.

Imagining Liturgical Catechesis

Liturgical catechesis is not a program or a class but a practice that encompasses a pastor’s entire ministry. Pastors need to *teach and preach* on the purpose of the liturgy, giving special attention to worship as both a habit and a “vision of the ‘good life.’”²⁵ Rather than pitting “rationality” against “habituality”, liturgical catechesis focuses on recontextualizing the established practice in the life of the believer. Liturgical catechesis reveals that which is *already present* in the liturgically formed believer.²⁶ They already know karate. They have been practicing it for years. Liturgical catechesis is not explanation but *confirmation and revelation* of the habits they have already been formed in. They just need to be taught where and when to use it. Thus, liturgical catechesis is not purely—or even primarily—cognitive. Rather, it includes a holistic, bodily training which acknowledges the human person as more than their thoughts and beliefs, but also their feelings and actions.

This means that the narrow liturgical practice must be rich enough that it has a positive formative depth. Liturgical catechesis does not require the use of a specific worship style, but it does require intentionality. With the rise of the Liturgical Movement, there are now liturgically conscious songs which did not exist ten years ago that are written for guitar or praise band.²⁷ The metric for determining whether a liturgy is good or bad is faithfulness to the gospel and formative impact. Because liturgy compounds like interest, we should be reticent to interrupt the liturgical practices of a congregation and instead focus on enriching them and catechizing around them. Preach on intercessory prayer on the Sunday when Abraham inter-

cedes for Sodom and Gomorrah, teach a Bible study on the Lord's Supper, record a podcast reading the Scripture readings for the week so that they can be in the parishioner's ears all week long. Get creative!

We also need to demonstrate how to concretely *identify* rival liturgies which impact our parishioners. It is the pastor's role to "unveil and unmask the idolatrous pretensions of the *polis* that can be all too easily missed since they constitute the status quo wallpaper of our everyday environment."²⁸ This could be done by watching and discussing a popular movie or other cultural artifacts as a group. I have modeled this practice within this article by carefully dissecting *The Karate Kid*. While on the face of it *The Karate Kid* is hardly theological at all, it has helped bring into sharper focus the necessity of discovering hidden formation. Other artifacts can help by revealing a commonly held cultural attitude, raising questions about our faith, or telling stories which positively and negatively shape our imagination of what is possible.

Another key aspect of liturgical catechesis is modeling liturgical living with parishioners by bringing them back to liturgical practices (in the narrow sense) in contexts *outside* of worship so that they can see that it has a place beyond an hour on Sunday morning. Jim Marriott has connected elements of the Divine Service to specific liturgical discipleship behaviors, offering a guide for Christians to understand the points of intersection between discipleship and worship, so that they can practice recontextualizing the spiritual habits formed in worship in their daily lives. Pray the Lord's prayer when they feel tempted to look at pornography. Demonstrate intercession for others in prayer by concretely praying for the individual needs of others in daily life. Practice generosity by letting kids offer a gift to a stranger in need, experiencing the joy of helping others. This is best done as a community, as most discipleship practices are not solo endeavors, but communal ones. Formation does not happen alone—there is a reason that worship is corporate and not individual.

If Marriott is right—and I believe he is—then Sunday worship is the world done right. It is the prototype—or to use Luther's language, the building plans—of Christian discipleship. But if we are going to connect Sunday to Monday, then we need to start living liturgically. We need to teach, preach, identify, and model what performance of the world done right looks like inside and outside of Sunday worship. We have been having our people "wax on, wax off" for a long time. They already know karate—they just *don't know they know it*. But by recontextualizing these practices, we allow people to defend themselves against the devil's rival liturgies. We need to practice the liturgy as though we had enemies, but also as though the God who became Man is really present in our worship, giving his gifts and forming us to be disciples who follow after Him.

Endnotes

- 1 James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Volume 1 of Cultural Liturgies (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 208.
- 2 Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 12.
- 3 James F Marriott, "Inside This Issue: Monday's Coming . . ." *Lutheran Mission Matters* 30, no. 1 (May 2022): 8.
- 4 Timothy Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church*, 2nd ed (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2009), 125.
- 5 The specific content of the *ordo* will not be debated here. Some, such as Jim Marriott, prefer a more general description, such as the fivefold *ordo* of Gather, Word, Prayer, Sacrament, and Sending while others such as Arthur Just prefer to let the ordinary elements, such as Invocation, Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Word, Sanctus, Angus Dei, Sacrament, and Blessing, represent the transcultural *ordo*. I suspect that the first is too broad to be helpful and the latter too specific to be universal.
- 6 As Norman Nagel said in the introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, "Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. . . . The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts and together we receive and extol then. . . . Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new." *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.
- 7 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86.
- 8 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25. Italics original.
- 9 Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, Repr., The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary 1981 (New York: Pueblo Publ. Co, 1992), 100.
- 10 James F Marriott, "How the Redeemed World Is Done: Charting the Relationship between Liturgy, Discipleship, and Mission," *Lutheran Mission Matters* 30, no. 1 (May 2022): 26.
- 11 Marriott, "Redeemed World," 26.
- 12 Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 228.
- 13 Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 229.
- 14 Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 155.
- 15 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 81. This is not to say that Smith does not acknowledge this critical problem. At the end of *Imagining the Kingdom*, he quotes John Witvliet who asks, "If liturgical participation shapes us, why in the world are lifelong participants in worship not better people?" James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works, Cultural Liturgies*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 188. He tackles this criticism in the greatest depth in chapter 6 of *Awaiting the King* under the heading "Our 'Godfather' Problem."
- 16 Martin Luther, *The Roots of Reform*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, and Timothy J. Wengert, *The Annotated Luther*, Volume 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 536.
- 17 Luther, *The Roots of Reform*, 537.
- 18 Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, ed., *Lutheran Service Book*, Pew ed (St. Louis, Mo: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 151.
- 19 Chad Lakies, "Candy Machine God, or, Going to Church without Going to Church: Millennials and the Future of the Christian Faith," *Mission Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (May 2013): 26.
- 20 Smith masterly illustrates this through an inductive demonstration of the mall's liturgical power. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 93–103.
- 21 Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 195.
- 22 It is important to note that any human propagator of these liturgies should not be treated as the devil himself—even though Luther was prone to this rhetorical move. Rather they are neighbors in need of our love, so that they can be oriented toward the greater love of Christ and his kingdom.
- 23 Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 382.
- 24 Richard John Neuhaus, *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 93.
- 25 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.
- 26 "We don't need to come up with a theological 'justification' for connecting worship and public life, because worship narrates an understanding of public life internal to its practice. Our task is simply to make explicit what is already implicit in the liturgy." James K. A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology*, Cultural Liturgies, Volume 3 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), 56. Italics original.
- 27 By "liturgically conscious," I mean that these songs are designed for a specific place within the plot of the worship service. Many so-called contemporary songs focus on thanksgiving and praise, but artists such as Greg LaFollette, Kip Fox, Andrew Peterson, Liturgical Folk, and Cardiphonia Music (to name a few) have expanded the available repertoire worship of songs written for guitar, piano, etc. to include lament, confession, cries for mercy, intercessory prayer, songs of glory, and blessings. There are also an increasing number of albums which attend to the church's calendar, following the narrative journey of the church year.
- 28 Smith, *Awaiting the King*, 195.
- 29 The pairings are: Invocation—Hospitality; Confession and Absolution—Reconciliation; Kyrie—Advocacy; Reading of Scripture—Submission; Sermon—Proclamation; Prayers of the Church—Intercession; Offering/Offertory—Generosity; Preface, Sanctus, Prayer of Thanksgiving—Sacrifice (praise and thanksgiving); Distribution—Communion/community; Benediction—Blessing/sending. Marriott, "Redeemed World," 29–30. It is important to note that these practices are both active and passive. They are often both behaviors done by and to the believer. Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness, as exposted by Robert Kolb, can help maintain this distinction well. Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness; Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1999): 449–66.