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Body-and-Soul: Embodied Participation of the Laity in the Divine Service

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BODY-AND-SOUL:
EMBODIED PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

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Since God has created us as body-and-soul creatures, it follows that worship of Him is not only spiritual but also physical in essence and in practice. The resurrection of Jesus Christ in the flesh points to the holistic nature of our faith; as such, the physicality of our worship is a fruit of this faith in an incarnate Lord. The benefits of bodily movement and gesture associated with the Word in Christian worship are a vitally important part of worship that undergirds the spirituality of the worship. This is demonstrably evident through a review of psychological and social disciplines, an anthropological examination of culturally contextualized bodily movement, the exploration of ecclesiastical postures and gestures, and a consideration of the theology of bodily movement in worship. The movements of our bodies in worship not only enable us to further participate in the Word of God and respond to it but to be formed by it as well. Examination of the cultural context of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod worship within the American cultural context provides insight into how its ritual actions have been shaped and can be most thoughtfully implemented going forward. Within this context, there are movements that are helpful and beneficial to the formation of those present in worship. Movement in liturgy is not merely symbolic and useful but integral and formative. In this embodied form of worship, we are able to rest in the presence of our creator as his creatures – the body-and-soul persons He created us to be.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CREATED BODY

Introduction

In the small town of Arcadia, Michigan, Camp Arcadia rests on the shores of Lake Michigan and has been a Lutheran destination since 1922. Over those ninety-five years, Camp Arcadia has grown to understand that its mission is, "to provide a setting for Christian families and individuals to vacation with God, and to foster the renewal of the whole person—spirit, mind, and body—amid the beauty of His creation and in fellowship with other Christians."[1] Now, and as it has always been, the life one lives in the culture is demanding, draining, and dehumanizing. We are stretched thin. We are asked to engage in tasks that dismiss the reality of our creator.[2] Because of this, we yearn for opportunities to return to see God's handiwork in our creation, in His Word, and in our very lives. The experience at Camp Arcadia is as good as it sounds, and one will likely receive renewal of his whole person—spirit, mind, and body—while vacationing there. It is because we are spirit, mind, and body people that this vacation sounds appealing. The popularity of this vacation destination reinforces the fact that we are body-and-soul creatures in need of regular renewal, and that our whole lives are lived in relationship to our

[1] "Mission of Camp Arcadia," Camp Arcadia, accessed March 12, 2018. https://camp-arcadia.com/about/mission/.

[2] The scientific community has shown that it is hostile to any aspect of theism in the midst of scholarship, analysis, testing, or research. The belief that we are created creatures living because of God speaking us into existence is a boundary that science regularly asks one to check at the door. However, although there are untestable aspects of human experience, the very fact that we are creatures with an observable reality enables us to test, measure, and begin to understand the bodies that God has given to us. The employment of such metrics in our understanding of our God-given bodies and how they can be used to glorify Him will be further developed throughout this thesis.

creator. As embodied people, and not simply thinking machines, we, in body, mind, and spirit, live out our creatureliness as we work, play, and worship. As body-and-soul people, we turn our attention specifically to what it means to worship, not simply spiritually, but also physically.

It is common for the majority of Christianity that the body of Christ gathers in a weekly ritual action. Since the time that the early church started coming together regularly on Sundays, this gathering of the church has been shaped, formed, and created to reflect the truth that the gathering professes. Primarily and foundationally for this community, this truth is that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Every word, every movement, every posture, every ritual action that takes place in this assembly exists to proclaim that singular truth.[3] The church, the body of Christ, has gathered Sunday after Sunday ever since first proclaiming this truth, and from this proclamation ritual action is born. Readings from scripture, statements of belief, song, teaching, sacramental celebration, fellowship, and rite have all been developed by this assembly to hear and to proclaim once again that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. In the resurrection of Jesus, the church receives its birth: Sunday after Sunday Christ's church has continued to celebrate this reality in many and various forms.

These many and various forms, developed by Christian communities over the past 2000 years, continue to convey meaning. This is true in the ways that the clergy lead a worship service, and it is also true in the way that the assembled congregation comes together and worships alongside and in fellowship with one another. Every ritual word and action possesses,

[3] The terms *ritual action* and *ritual* will be used throughout this paper to describe the incorporation of movement in worship. The word ritual can be narrowly defined as "the words in the Divine Service": see Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), 8. In this thesis, what Lang calls ritual will be referred to as *rite*. The terms *ritual* and *ritual action* will be used to express the use of bodily movements in connection with the words of the Divine Service. Synonyms for *ritual action* in this thesis are *embodied ritual*, *ritual practices*, *liturgical ceremonies*, and *embodied ceremonies*.

conveys, and instills meaning. However, this meaning does not form in a vacuum. It always arises within and from a cultural context—the life of the church as derived from both internal and external forces. This culture determines which ritual actions grow and develop, and which ritual actions are left out or forgotten.[4]

Particularly in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the use of liturgical rites[5] are core and central to its culture. Historically, these rites are generally held in common from congregation to congregation, and the church body's culture is comfortable with the spoken word and language of the rite, while being selective about the ritual actions that she adapts to be used alongside that rite. In the past, the spoken, sung, and preached word, litanies, professions of faith, prayers, and sacramental rites have formed the worship of an LCMS congregation. There is a need to incorporate ritual actions[6] that more fully express the theology and faith of the Christians that gather in worship. While current rites seems to lack rich bodily engagement, there are individual and corporate movements, postures, and gestures that can be incorporated into a Christian's worship that allow both the individual and the corporate gathering to express common meaning behind the liturgical rites that exist in the form of liturgical worship known as the divine service.[7] A number of factors have caused worship to be presented as a solely spiritual

[4] In addition to a congregation's cultural context, there are other factors that impact a worshiping body's incorporation of ritual. Ritual action incorporated in the worship life of God's people in the Bible may be purposefully emulated. The hierarchy, structure, or individual leadership of a congregation may influence ritual practices as well.

[5] In this thesis, *Liturgical rite* is defined as the order or setting of the worship service. Thomas Winger, *Theology of Worship*, (Unpublished Essay), 13.

[6] A further exploration of these ritual actions is presented in chapter three of this thesis. Biblical examples, historical precedent, and cultural context all influence the development of ritual action.

[7] For the focus of this paper, the term "divine service" is employed to narrow the scope of the analysis of the paper to a specific set of actions connected to liturgical elements. The "divine service" should be understood as the "liturgical service of God," or "the Western Mass Ordo." Multiple settings of this ordo are found in the *Lutheran Service Book*. The setting known as "Divine Service, *Setting One*" will serve as the outline for examining the Western Mass Ordo. Herein, the setting contains the "Invocation, Confession and Absolution, the Introit of the Day,

act. Thus, the movement, posture, and gesture of the laity has been downplayed and underutilized in the worship life of the average LCMS congregation.[8] It is therefore the intent of this paper to present an argument for the use of contextualized movement by members of the gathered assembly in the divine service.

Since God has created us as body-and-soul creatures, it follows that worship of Him is not only spiritual but also physical in essence and in practice. The resurrection of Jesus Christ in the flesh points to the holistic nature of our faith; as such, the physicality of our worship is a fruit of this faith in an incarnate Lord. In this thesis, I will assess the benefits of bodily movement and gesture associated with the Word in Christian worship and the faith formation that results from it. Through an anthropological examination of culturally contextualized bodily movement, the exploration of the ecclesiastical history of bodily movement in worship, and gestures interpreted

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the Kyrie Eleison, the Gloria in Excelsis or This Is the Feast, the Salutation and Collect of the Day, the First Reading, the Gradual, the Second Reading, The Alleluia and Verse, the Gospel lesson, the Holy Gospel, the Sermon, the Nicene Creed, the Prayer of the Church, the Offertory, the Preface and Proper Preface, the Sanctus, the Prayer of Thanksgiving, The Lord's Prayer, the Words of Our Lord, the Pax Domini, the Agnus Dei, the Distribution, the Dismissal, the Post Communion Canticle, the Post-Communion Collect, and the Benediction." The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, ***Lutheran Service Book*** (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 151–66.

[8] Lack of motion, especially in adults, is not restricted to worship. Alice Yardley is astute in noting, "As adults we have learned to move with our minds and our tongues, and bodily movement as a means of expression is half-forgotten." Alice Yardley, ***Senses and Sensitivity*** (New York: Citation, 1973), 90. While the scope of this thesis is not as wide reaching as Yardley's statement, her observation is quite astute, and gets at some of the issues that this thesis paper will address. While not researched and documented, anecdotal observations of worshiping LCMS congregations may allow the observer to conclude that physical movement is minimally incorporated in the Divine Service. Lang agrees that this has happened in Protestant and Lutheran worship, "and Lutherans have minimized the use of bodily and non-verbal signs and symbols in their worship services at the expense of achieving most effectively the edifying of the body of Christ." Lang, ***Ceremony and Celebration***, 64–65. The possible reasons behind the minimal incorporation of movement are many: 1) For Lutherans, the Book of Concord argues that outward actions are not what God looks for. For example, see F. Bente and W. H.T. Dau eds, "The Augsburg Confession IV: Of Justification," in ***Concordia Triglotta: Die Symbolischen Bücher Der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, Deutsch-Lateinisch-English*** (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 45. Instead, He looks at faith and the fruits of faith. Therefore, Lutherans have often tended to avoid suggesting outward behaviors for fear of legalism or works righteousness. 2) The church growth movement asked worship leaders to eliminate actions that are not common in the secular world, imploring the church to provide an entertainment pattern of worship for the sake of seekers. 3) American society lifts up the individual. Therefore, no one should try to make one do something that does not fit their personality or preference, so asking for conformity in a group is off-putting. 4) Americans have slid into the general American Pietist reluctance to embrace gestures and postures that appear to be too "Roman Catholic." 5) Historically, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been a very cerebral denomination, and has therefore downplayed the physical and elevated the spiritual in worship.

through the theological-liturgical context of worship, I will demonstrate that physicality is a vitally important part of worship that undergirds the spirituality of that worship. While the culturally-specific movements of a particular worshiping body are not obligatory, movement of one's physical body is an integral and helpful part of the worship life of the Christian community. Through my analysis of anthropology, history, and theology of worship, coupled with an exploration of the variety of culturally practiced physical gestures by which one may engage the Divine Service, I aim to prove that it is beneficial for a community of believers to receive God's gifts of word and sacrament in body, mind, and spirit, and then respond with gestures and postures that return praise and thanks to Him in worship.

This thesis will create a justification for an embodied engagement with the Divine Service by creating a framework using multiple perspectives. I will engage John Milbank and James K.A. Smith's anthropology in order to analyze bodily movement in the spheres of psychology, social theory, and proprioception. I will engage the culturally contextual examination of LCMS worship within the American cultural context as a means through which its ritual actions have been shaped. I will convey a Lutheran theology of worship based upon the work of Timothy Maschke and Vilmos Vajta as their work is grounded in the writings of Martin Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. Finally, I will engage the Christian traditions of the assembly's ritual bodily movement ranging from descriptions found in scripture to the actions described by authors such as Frank C. Senn, John K. Leonard, and Nathan D. Mitchell. Research in bodily, anthropological and social sciences that can be read through a cultural framework will show that bodily movement is a fundamental aspect of the life of the Christian worshiper in the Divine Service.

How We Arrived Here

René Descartes published his *Discours de la méthode* in 1637. This major work solidified an era of thought, which stemmed from the foundational philosophical principle and well-known axiom, "I think, therefore I am."[9] While Descartes' intent was to provide a proof for the existence of God and of the rationality of the soul, his thinking presented a framework of philosophy that has developed to convey the general image of a human person as a thinking and perceiving rational soul. This has engendered a high view of scholarship, teaching, logical conception, and rationalism. In the midst of these pursuits, the unintended consequence of Descartes' thought is a diminishment of the human person to a cognition machine whose other accidents are only employed to further the existence of this cognition machine. At a base understanding of Descartes' philosophy, one's body is understood as simply the housing for an individual's cognitive processing. With this Cartesian philosophy permeating our cultural thinking for hundreds of years, it is no wonder that we find ourselves in a time that has a dismissive view of the body when it comes to engaging in corporate worship.[10]

A Better Anthropology

A step past this line of thinking allows for a better anthropology. Frank Senn notes in his work, *Embodied Liturgy*, that a new philosophy of phenomenology has been taught by Edmund Husserl and later Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[11] This thinking teaches that the body is fundamental to

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[9] René Descarte, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (New York: Liberal Arts, 1950), 21.

[10] For a further discussion of Descarte's influence on Western and religious thought, see David Torevell, *Losing the Sacred: Ritual, Modernity, and Liturgical Reform* (London: T&T Clark, 2000), esp. 72–82; Colleen M. Griffith, "Spirituality and the Body," in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, ed. Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 73–75; James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 41–43.

[11] Frank Senn, *Embodied Liturgy: Lessons in Christian Ritual* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 5–6.

all experience, and the self is the body. While Husserl would state, "I have a body,"[12] Merleau-Ponty would say, "I am a body."[13] And so Senn says that, "By moving my body, I cause the world to exist for me. Therefore, the body is more than a collection of physical systems; it is how I express myself and communicate with others . . . . Gone here is the Cartesian separation of mind and body. There is no difference between mind and body; the mind is part of the body."[14] This provides the basis for my thesis. At the essence of our humanity, we are body-and-soul people. That is both who and what we have been created to be. Any attempt to act contrary to this truth is dehumanizing.

Also providing a corrective to Descartes, James K.A. Smith writes about the importance of reclaiming the identity of a human person as an embodied creature with our identity stemming from our embodiment, and not from our cognition.[15] He makes the case that the dominant anthropology of our day defines persons just as Descartes defines them, as thinkers, and leads us to a "sense of functional disembodiment."[16] The result, he says, is that "because the church buys into a cognitivist anthropology, it adopts a stunted pedagogy that is fixated on the mind."[17]

The alternative, for Smith, is to define this embodied creature as a lover, a definition that accounts for the entirety of human identity. Our *kardia*, our heart, or even more basely, our gut, show that we are "affective, embodied creatures who make our way in the world more by feeling

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[12] See Edmund Husserl, Karl Schuhmann, and Marly Biemel, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1952), 94.

[13] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénomènologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 90.

[14] Senn, *Embodied* Liturgy, 5–6.

[15] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, esp. 72–82.

[16] "(That is, the person as thinking thing is only contingently related to a body)." Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 42.

[17] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 43.

our way around it" than simply by thinking, and show that we are "embodied agents of desire or love."[18] We are not dualistic people, we are holistic people, and the practices of our bodies, known as habits and rituals, end up taming and training our *kardia* toward certain desires.[19] "Over time, rituals and practices—often in tandem with aesthetic phenomena like pictures and stories—model and shape our precognitive disposition to the world by training our desires. It's as if our appendages function as a conduit to our adaptive unconscious: the motions and rhythms of embodied routines train our minds and hearts so that we develop habits—sort of attitudinal reflexes—that make us tend to act in certain ways toward certain ends."[20] Smith's presented anthropology is nothing new. It is simply a corrective and a return to what exists in our foundational nature as creatures formed by our creator (e.g. Gen. 1:27; Ps. 89:47; Col. 1:16, 3:10; Rev. 4:11).[21] Biblically, the importance of our bodies begins in creation. God formed Adam's body out of the dust of the ground, and He breathed into him the breath of life.[22] Adam

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[18] Smith goes on to state that, "We might say that in our everyday, mundane being-in-the-world, we don't lead with our head, so to speak; we lead with our heart and hands." Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 47.

[19] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 57–58.

[20] Smith *Desiring the Kingdom*, 59. Smith's understanding is that following Christ is most faithfully done with a focus on love – loving Christ and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This is learned and embodied through the participation and ritual actions of worship; "we are made to be such people by our immersion in the material practices of Christian worship – through affective impact, over time, of sights and smell in water and wine." He refers to liturgy as a "hearts and minds strategy" that trains our hearts and forms us to be a people that love in order to proclaim the kingdom of God. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 32–33. The third chapter of this thesis will present the places where this can be enacted within the divine service.

[21] Theodor Filthaut has written about this same desire for a return to a holistic expression of our body-and-soul creatureliness: "The men of the middle ages still had it. They were still capable of seeing and creating symbols; for these men were still living within the lively unity of spirit and body, of individual and community, of man and the world. By contrast, modern times have lost this unity, this tension. The result has been the separation into the two extremes of a dualistic or a monistic interpretation of existence. The piety of the faithful has been profoundly influenced by this development, so that they have lost a living relationship to what is genuinely liturgical. . . . Man once again desires the unity of spirit and body; he is tired of his isolated, individualistic existence, and presses violently on towards community and to an objective grasp of things. . . . This means more than just a knowledge of liturgical matters: it comprises a formation of the whole man, of his mind and his body." Theodor Filthaut, trans. Ronald Walls, *Learning to Worship* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1965), 35–36.

[22] The physical formation of Adam is foundational for Roland H. A. Seboldt warns that "An attitude that depreciates man's physical nature ignores the 'fearful and wonderful' reality of all that 'dust of the earth' includes; and forgets that the very breath of God breathed into man's nostrils results in the combination 'man, a living soul.' It

is a creature whose body is uniquely and intimately shaped and formed by God.[23] Later on in the incarnation (John 1:14), the second Adam, Jesus, is born of a woman.[24] He is at the same time both fully God and fully man, and as a man is consubstantial with the rest of humanity by assuming human flesh and blood.[25] His bodily death and resurrection is vital to the truth proclaimed by the apostles that our bodies will be reunited with our souls in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Our bodies are important in this life and the next, because we have been created by God as body-and-soul human creatures.[26]

Therefore, as body-and-soul people, God created us to be people who do not only think about our faith, or attain a rational understanding of it, but instead we are created to be people who live out the faith—worked into our hearts by the Holy Spirit—through our bodily actions. And these bodily actions themselves help to continue to form and shape our faith and trust in the words of God that are spoken to us as we read, hear, learn, and embody those words.[27]

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was this *man* that was then able to walk with God, to adore and thank and speak, to serve the neighbor in love, and, sadly, to eat the fruit of death and yet at last by God's grace to confess and live again." He concludes that our relationships with God and our neighbor reflect reality and that in worship our "total creaturehood" is involved. Roland H. A. Seboldt, ed., *The Child in Christian Worship*, Sixteenth Yearbook (River Forest, IL: Lutheran Education Association, 1959), 20.

[23] Gen. 2:7. Martin Luther develops this in his explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses." Bente and Dau, "The Small Catechism II: The Creed," in *Concordia Triglotta*, 543.

[24] Michael Waldstein in his introduction to John Paul II's *Man and Woman He Created Them*, speaks of Descartes' work as an "attack on the body," and then summarizes what John Paul II has to say about Cartesian thought. "Put negatively, John Paul II's response to Descartes is, "The body can never be reduced to mere matter." Put positively, the response is, "The richest source of knowledge of the body is the Word made flesh." Michael Waldstein, introduction to *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, by John Paul II (Boston: Pauline, 2006), 95–96.

[25] See Heb. 2:14. Francis Pieper does well in explaining Jesus' human nature, and the particularities of that nature in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1951), 2:65–85.

[26] Our bodies are important in God's plan for relationship with his creatures. "The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it." John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 203.

[27] Through the divine service, we are able to hear once again what Jesus has done for us. Additionally,

The Way our Bodies Work

John Milbank's often quoted line from *Theology & Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, "Once, there was no 'secular,'"[28] begs one to look at what is currently deemed "secular" with eyes that seek to see divine work in all things. In what is now seen as "secular" science today, the material is what matters and the divine is dismissed.[29] Scientific research and study focus on empirical evidence to support, prove, or disprove hypotheses. If one wants to study the body, one can look to the "secular" sciences to learn more. However, if one wants to study the soul, one is relegated to an area outside of science. However, this was not always the case, and Milbank presents a corrective to modernity's push for secularization. If one observes the scientific study of the human body in the past few decades while presupposing that the body is more than just a body—that it is a body-and-soul unit—then one can begin to understand why our bodies are integral to both our personhood and our worship as God's creatures.

Empirical study of the body has always been generally accepted. However, its application in analyzing thought processes—learning theory, social theory, cognition, behavior—has been neglected until recent years when social sciences began working to reclaim the body from Cartesian influences. Chris Shilling writes about this history in *The Body and Social Theory:*

> 'The body' became one of the most unstable, contested concepts in the social sciences, its analysis constituting an intellectual battleground over which the

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through movement and gesture, we act out what that truth is in a way that reinforces the words we speak, and the gifts we receive that are for us, body-and-soul. In a statement that also can relate to the way we worship, Smith remarks, "Education is not primarily a heady project concerned with providing information; rather, education is most fundamentally a matter of *formation*, a task of shaping and creating a certain kind of people. . . . An education, then, is a constellation of practices, rituals, and routines that inculcates a particular version of the good life by inscribing or infusing that vision into the heart (the gut) by means of material, embodied practices." Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 26.

[28] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 9. Simon Oliver has also highlighted the importance of this opening line as a springboard for the theological sensibility of Radical Orthodoxy. Simon Oliver, "Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: From Participation to Late Modernity," in *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, ed. John Milbank and Simon Oliver (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4.

[29] See Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 9–26.

> respective claims of post-structuralism and post-modernism, phenomenology, feminism, sociology, cultural studies and emerging theories fought. Tied to competing agendas, the body appeared to have become a metaphor through which particular concerns could be pursued: being all things to all people, there was no agreement about how it should be conceptualized. It was not simply that the body was viewed from contrasting perspectives, but that these perspectives were tied to *mutually exclusive* theories predicated upon opposed ontological and epistemological views about what the body was and how it could be known. Tied to these agendas, moreover, issues regarding the physical *materiality* of the body were not only subordinated to them, but often disappeared. . . . This fading of the body is chronic within writings that conceptualize human physicality exclusively as a location on which structure, cultures or relationships 'imprint' themselves, 'inscribe' their effects, or 'hail' subjects in transmitting their existence to each new generation. Of course, if the body is 'always ready' invested with and structured by discourses transmitted by society, an argument that remains a norm in body theory, it is perfectly legitimate to focus on these extra-corporal factors. . . . [If] we wish to understand how the body can be an active re-creator (a reproductive recreator or a transformative creator anew) of 'social forms', as well as a location for their transmission, I would reiterate the argument I made in the first edition of this book. In order to overcome the problem of the absent presence of the living body in social thought we need to conceptualize embodied subjects as simultaneously social and biological phenomenon possessed of emergent properties and capacities that are both shaped by but irreducible to contemporary social relations and structures. To rob the body of its *own* history and characteristics, in contrast, is to neglect how our embodied being enables us to remake ourselves by remaking the world around us.[30]

The body, says Shilling, has been a contested concept for some time. Scientists, theorists and social activists have been unable to agree on how to categorize or define it. The body has been so highly contested that any discussions concerning the body's materiality were completely dismissed in the pursuit of other agendas. Therefore, Shilling desires to reclaim the embodiment of the human person and show that the body is not just a passive vessel but also an active player in its existence and development. To deny the importance and the activity of the body downplays its very role in self and creates missed opportunities for developing, learning, and loving. An examination of the inner being, then, is hollow without a study of the inextricable outer bodily existence.

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[30] Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, SAGE, 2012), 214–15.

Psychology and Sociology

In psychological research, much has been studied concerning how our actions, movement,[31] and behaviors influence the way people internalize information. As body-and-soul persons, we are ontologically created to experience the world. This then affects the way that we internalize information, continue in a learned behavior, and are formed as followers of Jesus. By looking at these scientific findings, we can get a glimpse of what God intended when He created us and begin to imagine how we can intentionally use our bodies in worship to enhance our engagement with His Word.

Cognition: Imitation & Learning

According to J. Barnard Gilmore, understanding imitation theory, the act of learning through imitation or modeling, can be truly complex.[32] To simplify the theory, he puts forth a

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[31] In past years, this idea of motion can be broken down into further categories that help to designate the degree of movement, and the type of movement being exercised. When understood holistically, these movements are integral to all of our perception. "In organized patterns of motion, we recognize three movement components: postural, transport, and manipulative movements. These components can be defined operationally, by analyzing the movements of the body in specific integrated motion patterns. . . . The postural movements of the body are in general the "large" movements, which regulate body position in relation to the force of gravity and acceleration. . . . Transport movements move members of the body, including receptors, e.g., the eyes, through fluid space, either air or liquid. Transport movements are intrinsically organized, mainly according to the bilateral symmetry of the body, with right and left members moving together or in opposition. These movements can be continuously controlled, highly precise movements, as observed in visual tracking or manual steering, or they can be free-thrown, discrete movements, as in walking, throwing, or moving the eyes from point to point in reading. These movements are integrated with postural movements, which support and direct them and control their magnitude. Transport movements and the finer manipulative movements are also interrelated, because manipulation depends upon the proper positioning of the member. For example, before an object can be grasped by the fingers, a travel movement of the arm must bring the hand to the object. The third space-organized movement component is fine manipulation of the terminal members of the body or the receptor systems of the head. Here we include eye movements; manual manipulation; tongue, jaw, and lip movements and movements of the feet in contact with the substrate. Manipulative movements are controlled according to the characteristics of hard space, i.e., the dimensions and position of objects. . . . It is our belief that motion and perception are inseparably related. The development of perception in the child *is* the development of motion, and the only valid understanding of perception at any level is in terms of the movements that define it." Karl U. Smith and William M. Smith, *Perception and Motion: An Analysis of Space Structured Behavior* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1962), 6–7. However, even more than our perception is being looked at here, and a further analysis of movements will provide further explanation of how our bodies and minds are integrally linked.

[32] See J. Barnard Gilmore, "Toward an Understanding of Imitation in Social Facilitation and Imitative Behavior," in *Social Facilitation and Imitative Behavior*, ed. Edward C. Simmel, Ronald A. Hoppe and G.

worthwhile summary on the acquisition of imitative action:

> A theory about imitative acquisition of novel responses takes the position that learning occurs in one trial, and contiguity alone is sufficient to produce it. Such is the position taken by Sheffield (1961).[33] Sheffield holds that upon observing any model, a subject automatically acquires perceptual and symbolic responses, which possess all the cue properties necessary for many later acts of imitation.[34]

This is especially helpful in incorporating gesture into the Divine Service. By simply observing a new ritual action, a worshiping community can quickly adapt and imitate the action. Additionally, when gestures or movements are already present in a congregation, a new member to that community can easily learn the action and become connected to its ritual. While further instruction about the movement should not be neglected, the point that Gilmore and Sheffield are simply making is that an individual is prone to effortlessly acquire imitative action.

In Gilmore's discussion, he also sets forth nine different types of imitative behavior.[35] The final type that he presents is an imitative behavior that seeks information, so that the "reward for the imitation is intrinsic to the imitative act itself and reflects the acquisition of some understanding, comprehension, or gain in information."[36] This is often the type of imitative behavior that we are talking about in Christian worship. However, we are not only looking to imitate the action of the gathered body of believers in worship in order to gain understanding, but rather to gain identity as a believer in Christ and a participant in Christian worship. The imitated action incorporates us into the habitus of the congregation and forms an embodiment of faith. A

Alexander Milton (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), 217–38.

[33] Gilmore is referencing F.D Sheffield, "Theoretical Considerations in the Learning of Complex Sequential Tasks from Demonstration and Practice," in *Student Response in Programmed Instruction: A Symposium*, ed. A. A. Lumsdaine (Washington DC: National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council, 1961), 13–32.

[34] Gilmore, "Toward an Understanding," 222.

[35] Gilmore, "Toward an Understanding," 222–27.

[36] Gilmore, "Toward an Understanding," 229.

member of a congregation may bow his head in worship along with the assembly to participate in the communal prayer of the church. This in turn allows him to reflect not only on the imitated action, but on the nature of prayer itself. One can apply Gilmore's premise to conclude that imitation is not simply about classical conditioning, but is instead a means to engage bodily in the very act that would further one's connection to worship in the divine service and faith in Jesus Christ.

Developmental Psychology: Repetition & Internalization

Developmental Psychology helps us to know that repeated action assists in formation. Occasionally, these repeated actions are referred to as habits. While the term "habits" may get a bad reputation and are sometimes personally destructive, most of our habits are simply part of our daily routines.[37] These are either conscious or unconscious learned behaviors that help us to both internalize the meaning behind our motions and regularly participate in the tasks we hope to perform every day. The incorporation of habits into our lives can also be referred to as internalization. "Concepts of internalization which are constructed on a base of representational and evaluative capacities rest very heavily on the extraordinary ability of human beings to acquire cognitive structures with which they can process information about their behavior and their environment."[38] The amazing work of our Creator has given us the ability to use our bodies to not just learn about the world around us, but to be formed by that information as we interact with his world. This can be wonderful but also dangerous if harmful habits are internalized.

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[37] The aversion can be described this way, "Most of us are reluctant to describe ourselves by our habits. We like better to talk about our intentions and beliefs." Bonaro W. Overstreet, *How to Think about Ourselves* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 71. Smith also discusses how practices form habits, especially *thick* habits, which are "identity-significant." Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 80–85.

[38] Justin Aronfreed, *Conduct and Conscience: The Socialization of Internalized Control over Behavior* (New York: Academic, 1968), 16.

Therefore, we need to be careful that our senses process that which is excellent and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8). By engaging with an environment that will positively focus us on God, we are built up as his people. By engaging in behavior that is God-pleasing, we are working in step with His kingdom. By moving our bodies in worship in relation to the truth, God is teaching in and though His word, we are acquiring cognitive structures with which we can process the meaning of the movements that we make and the words associated with those actions.

The formation of habit has been studied at length in children, assessing how they receive and internalize information through physical practice. Aronfreed gives some thoughts on what this looks like:

> A substantial part of the positive value that social reinforcers acquire for a child may also be established by their intermittent relationship to other kinds of pleasurable events which are not selectively contingent on the child's specific overt acts. To the extent that these acquired reinforcers are not established on the basis of their value as signals of the child's instrumental control over other reinforcing events, they would tend to retain more easily their subsequent value as independent reinforcing outcomes of the child's overt behavior. Of course, any loss of their acquired value would also be replenished, from time to time, by their further association with other stimuli whose positive value had not been attenuated.[39]

For children—and adults—the positive value that social reinforcers secure come from the good news of Jesus Christ. It is in relationship to him that we "live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28); belonging to Jesus Christ we "live by the Spirit" and "keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16–26.) The value in these developed actions is furthered by continual use of motions, which continues to reinforce the point of the gesture, which is to connect one to Christ and embody the reception of his gifts. Aronfreed goes on to say:

> A child's conduct may be externally maintained in still another way when it is governed by the child's empathetic or vicarious response to its observable consequences for others, rather than by its directly positive or aversive consequences

[39] Aronfreed, *Conduct and Conscience*, 26.

> for the child. Of course, the effectiveness of this kind of external support of conduct already implies a certain degree of internalization in another and more extended sense of the concept . . . the sense in which some cognitive representation must necessarily have been imposed on the immediate concrete properties of social stimulus events.[40]

Here we see the impact of using bodily gesture in worship communally. In children, it has been observed that many habits are not continued because of positive or negative consequences, but simply for the benefit of others. As a "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12–31) worshiping together, we do so in unity with one another and with intentionality. There is a "cognitive representation" behind the motions of the assembly. While initially the child may not understand why certain motions are attached to significant portions of the service, over time, she will be taught why the congregation worships and moves in this way, and therefore further internalize the actions and meaning associated with God's Word.

Aronfreed additionally writes about the power that repeated habits have on us: "The power of external stimulus over internalized conduct can also be seen in the appropriate discriminations which children learn to make. There are very few acts which are always treated in the same way by socializing agents, without regard to the situational context in which they occur."[41] The external context of the Divine Service elicits action of the worshiper. Over time, children, and adults, discover that their embodying of certain gestures continues to form them in their faith and practice as a Christian. As one begins worship, routinely making the sign of the cross during the Invocation allows one to remember her baptism and acknowledge the Triune God that she has come to worship.

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[40] Aronfreed, *Conduct and Conscience*, 29.

[41] Aronfreed, *Conduct and Conscience*, 32. Aronfreed discusses how this is true of aggressive behavior, which is acceptable in one context, but unacceptable in another. However, this thought can also be applied to internalized behavior in worship that is contextual by nature. A further discussion on contextual worship is rehearsed below.

Psychology of Belief: Attitude & Behavior

What we believe, and the attitude[42] that reflects those beliefs, will consequently shape our actions. Conversely, those actions, when practiced, will reinforce beliefs. "The attitude has cognitive and affective properties by virtue of the fact that the several beliefs comprising it have cognitive and affective properties that interact and reinforce one another," says Milton Rokeach.[43] Movement, used in worship, as it displays our attitude, both embodies what we believe and works to form us into deeper belief.

Beliefs, values, and behavior all work together according to Karl E. Sheibe, in *Beliefs and Values*.[44] Through the examination of multiple psychological theories, he summarizes two conclusions. The first is that people are both knowing *and* wanting creatures.[45] Sheibe points out that we cannot forget that the desires of hearts, which appear to be the primary drivers of our creatureliness, are understood in light of our brain's work to think, understand, know, and comprehend. His understanding that our bodies and our cognition work in tandem offers a helpful assessment of the importance of body-and-soul cooperation.

The second psychological conclusion that Sheibe draws out is that combining beliefs and values with environmental inputs determines behavior. Here Smith would disagree with Schiebe: "our attunement and behavior is . . . profoundly shaped by bodily practices."[46] However, we have

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[42] Milton Rokeach defines an attitude as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner." Milton Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values: A Theory of Organization and Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969), 112.

[43] Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values*, 116.

[44] See Karl E. Scheibe, *Beliefs and Values* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1970), 68–73.

[45] Sheibe looks at Atkinson's motivation theory, attitude theory, and social role theory. While these theories individually do not speak to the direction of this thesis, pairing them together brings out a helpful summary. This is an example of the Euclidian axiom: "τὸ ὅλον τοῦ μέρους μεῖζον."

[46] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 60.

seen that behavior has an influence on how individuals think and how they learn, and the converse is also true; bodies and cognition work in tandem. Sheibe makes the point, "If behavior is a function of beliefs and values, then presumably an individual who is obsessed by a single overriding value would direct his behavior according to expectations about how that value might be realized."[47] This concept should have broad application toward the use of motions in worship. If we believe that we are meant to worship God as body-and-soul people, and we form our relationship with Him through interaction with God in body-and-soul, then our obsession with worshiping Him should include gestures, postures, and motions that hope to realize that reality. For instance, when the divine name is spoken or sung in worship, out of a desire for reverence toward God, the assembly may bow to show Him proper honor. Necessarily, then, the believer will not be a bystander, but will seek to holistically engage in his worship.

Educational Psychology: Neuroscience & Kinetic Learning

In recent years, studies have shown that there are strong links between physical movement and learning. When the two are separated, we do a disservice to ourselves and especially to our children who are learning and developing from a very young age.[48] The brain, especially the cerebellum, is wired to receive information through the use of motion. In fact, "the vestibular (inner ear) and cerebellar system (motor activity) is the first sensory system to mature."[49] These

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[47] Scheibe, *Beliefs and Values*, 63.

[48] It is impossible to divorce movement from life. Alice Yardley makes the statement, "The child moves because he must; movement is essential to life and all living things move." Yardley, *Senses and Sensitivity*, 83. However, in academic systems, children's movement often becomes restricted in the effort to provide a proper learning environment. Yardley would disagree that the restriction of movement is beneficial. Similarly, restricting a child's movement in worship eliminates various ways in which that child learns, gathers, and interprets information. It would be beneficial for children to be encouraged to participate in movement and gesture in the midst of the divine service, which will reinforce the message of the gospel that they are receiving. Both guided and spontaneous movement helps to develop learning and formation in worship.

[49] Eric Jensen, *Teaching with the Brain in Mind* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1998), 82–84.

act to gather information through movement. At the Annual Society of Neuroscience Conference in 1995, close to eighty studies suggested "strong links between the cerebellum and memory, spacial perception, language, attention, emotion, nonverbal cues, and even decision making."[50] With this understanding we can posit that movement is valuable, or we could say essential, to the way that we learn and interact with our environment.

Movement is also essential to communication. Alice Yardley argues, "Movement is also the child's first means of expressing himself, and will remain a major means of communication throughout his life."[51] In worship, our movements and gestures similarly act as a form of communication. The account of the tax collector in prayer is reminiscent of this truth. As he beats his breast, he communicates both his humility and his repentance (Luke 18:13).

Not only do we express, but we also create through movement. Actions allow us to build up sensations and thoughts, stimulating the brain, and engaging us more fully in our physical context. "Movement both procures experience and provides a means of expressing experience, and education in the art of movement is as essential as education in thought or feeling."[52] Here Yardley is speaking specifically of Physical Education, but her conclusion can be implemented in reference to how our bodies reflect on our experiences.[53] For instance, in some worship spaces kneelers are provided to allow the congregation to express penitence physically during a time of confession, as they are able. In certain cultural contexts, this action displays the Christian's

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[50] Jensen, *Teaching*, 84.

[51] Yardley, *Senses and Sensitivity*, 83.

[52] Yardley, *Senses and Sensitivity*, 84.

[53] "Movements natural to the individual child have been used as the basis of his activities. The part played by the emotions and the use of the body as a means of expression are fully recognized. Children are encouraged to work individually and with other people, and movement is seen as an aspect of the child's total growth, as an end in itself and not merely as a means to an end. It is understood in terms of the activity of the whole organism, and movement of the physical body is visual evidence of movement of the mind and the imagination" Yardley, *Senses and Sensitivity*, 86.

sorrow for sin, and the experience of kneeling also teaches and reminds them of their need for the forgiveness God gives through Christ.

Sociology: Body Theory

Garnering increased academic interest in recent decades, the field of sociology known as body theory builds upon psychological theory. Body theory presumes that we are embodied beings, with our bodies being essential to our individual identities. Chris Shilling, in *Body and Social Theory* points out that, "Growing numbers of people are deliberating about the health, shape, 'purity' or appearance of their own bodies as expressions of individual, group, cultural or religious identities."[54] This is true of many cultures and especially of American culture. A focus on the external characteristics of our humanity has highlighted our embodied identities. There is a growing desire to display our inner beliefs, attitudes, and values in an outward manner. Necessarily, this will translate into worship practice where we display our faith and identity in Christ.

Throughout his book, Shilling also critiques the sociologists that have gone before him, and even some contemporary social theorists, to drive forward a truly embodied analysis of social theory.[55] In presenting body theory he analyzes its proclivity toward Cartesian thinking, which in

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[54] Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, see pp. 32–44.

[55] For example, Shilling reviews the social constructionism of Michel Foucault, who has been seen as foundational in discussing the body as an unstable socially constructed product. While his work focuses on the body, Shilling argues, "Foucault's epistemological view of the body means that it disappears as a material, biological phenomenon. The physical body can never be grasped by the Foucauldian approach as its existence is deferred permanently behind the girds of meaning imposed by discourse or technologies of the self. . . . For me, the epistemology adopted by Foucault is why one gets a sense that his analyses are disembodied. The body is present as a topic, but absent as a focus of investigation. . . . One manifestation of this is Foucault's view of the mind/body relationship. Once the body is contained within modern disciplinary systems, the mind becomes the location for discursive power while the flesh is reduced to inert passivity. Similarly, technologies of the self suggest the body is managed by regimes of cognitive introspection that subsequently instantiate physically the lessons of religious or secular texts. In neither case do we get a strong sense of the mind's location within an *active*, socially and personally *generative* human body." Shilling, *Body and Social Theory*, 83–84.

the past, has profoundly influenced Sociology.[56] He argues that our mind and body are more closely connected than the way sociologists have previously presented.

In his afterword, Shilling speaks of the future of this theory and the implications it has on sociology. His presentation of body theory can be understood in light of our creatureliness:

> We need to recognize that the body constitutes a location for the transmission of societally sponsored and socially approved norms, habits, identities, techniques and symbolic systems. Embodied subjects enter a pre-existing world, not of their own making, and develop in the context of this particular external environment. . . . [I]t is also important to acknowledge that the body is possessed of emergent properties and capacities . . . that enable us to act upon our environment, and that also constitute it as an active vehicle for lived experience. Thus, embodied subjects are not passive recipients of structures or the natural milieu. Individuals experience social norms and technologies through the *mediating powers* of their own senses, sensualities, neurological, muscular and physiological processes.[57]

An investigation of respected psychologists and sociologists leads one to conclude that the body and its actions are integral and necessary in the study of how individuals learn, behave, and interact. Together with Rokeach and Yardley, Shilling presents an image of the person who is both shaped by external experiences and engages in experience to express and embody his reality.

While the scope of psychology is broad in regards to this topic, each field builds the body of evidence. Imitation theory shows how the worshipper is physically drawn into the rite and ritual action of the congregation. Such action can then be repeated, and internalization and habitus are created. These shape formative beliefs and values, which in turn nurture behavior and engender movement that sets the worshipper's focus on his Savior. And in this movement kinetic activity facilitates faith formation. Body theory ties all of this psychological evidence together by highlighting individuals as embodied beings. Experience influences and molds a person;

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[56] Shilling, *Body and Social Theory*, 12.

[57] Shilling, *Body and Social Theory*, 241.

moreover, it works as a medium by which one seeks to express and engage in his reality. The psychological and sociological evidence show that the body and soul are inextricable and validates the holistic approach to our human experience of worship.

Proprioception

Another area that provides insight into how we perceive, attain, and internalize information in the world around us is proprioception. Proprioception is the "sensation pertaining to stimuli originating from within the body related to spatial position and muscular activity or to the sensory receptors that they activate."[58] Through bodily movement, one activates her senses and engages with stimuli. However, proprioception is not an active sense brought about by our cognizance. As Brian O'Shaughnessy points out, "Proprioception is attentively recessive in a high degree, it takes a back seat in consciousness almost all of the time."[59] However, this is not a bad thing when it comes to worship and formation. Working in the background, this sense allows us to subconsciously accumulate information and find meaning from actions performed without our effort. Purely by engaging in movement, our bodies end up as a conduit through which we are further formed and shaped by an action.

However, proprioception can also be practiced actively. Rick Kemp writes about proprioception in the context of acting and performance:

> Proprioception plays a crucial role in our sense of self, and this feature makes it of particular interest in the relationship between physical activity and the actor's creation of character. Habitual gestures and postures contribute somatically to a

[58] Related to this is also proprioceptive sensation: "the feeling of body movement and position, including motion of the arms and legs, resulting from stimuli received by special sense organs in the muscles, tendons, joints, and inner ear. The stimuli may be produced by changes in muscle tension or stretching and reaction to the pull of gravity on the body." Kenneth N. Anderson, Lois E. Anderson, and Walter D. Glanze, eds., *Mosby's Medical, Nursing, & Allied Health Dictionary* (St. Louis: Mosby, 1998), 1333–34.

[59] Brian O'Shaughnessy, "Proprioception and the Body Image" in *The Body and the Self* ed. Jose Luis Bermudez et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 175.

> feeling of one's "normal" or everyday self. When different gestures and postures are used, the feedback system creates a different sense of self.[60]

An actor uses movements that are uncommon to their usual sense of self to change their identity, for a short time, in creation of a character. In the divine service, the goal is not simply to play a part, but through the God-given feedback system of movement, an individual receives His gifts of Word and sacrament, which then create systemic change in her belief and behavior. Kemp argues that through this gesture and posture, our internal identities are shaped for the long term:

> The postural and gestural elements of [non-verbal communication] are related to emotion through proprioception; the relationship of thought, speech and gesture participates in how we define Feelings; the relationship of self to character is intimately bound up with body schema and body image, which in their turn engage in the experience of affective state.[61]

What we do with our bodies influences our thoughts and emotions (the affective), and ultimately, our sense of self.

As Smith presented above, we are "affective, embodied creatures" that sense the world around us in order to navigate it.[62] Through proprioception we understand not simply the world but even our basic sense of self through the gestures that we regularly employ. When engaging in movement that is at the core of our character—movement in worship, we are reinforcing our sense of self in relation to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As body-and-soul people, we can understand that holistically, the movements that we make with our bodies shape our identities. O'Shaughnessy makes the point, "We ourselves must bring

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[60] Rick Kemp, *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 112.

[61] Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, 184.

[62] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 47, 59.

the spatial content to the proprioceptive experience, and do so upon receiving the stimulus of sensation. More exactly, remembering that sensations mutate as posture alters, we must bring all of the space that we encounter in proprioception."[63] Proprioception shows that our bodies are uniquely the receivers and actors in response to our own posture stimulus. While this may appear to be a basic proposition, it is an important aspect of understanding how body-and-soul people are formed by posture and movement. Our very motion creates sensations inside of us that shape the meaning of those movements and our understanding of identity. When a Christian comes to worship, she moves and interacts with the liturgical rite, which in turn shapes and forms through proprioception her primary identity—a child of God.

Putting This into Practice

As has been demonstrated, the recurring movement, posture, gesture, and ritual action that occur in our day-to-day actions have discernible effects on the individual. These movements allow the self to receive information in a demonstrable manner with the effects of creating memories, reinforcing beliefs, and building habits from those motions. When influenced by a physical experience, the body-and-soul individual recalls memories of the bodily movement to practice those movements again, which develops further formation. The movement exists as an expression of self.[64] For instance, out of love in a grandparent-grandchild relationship, these two exchange hugs when they are able to get together. This practice is formed early in the grandchild's life and becomes a normed ritual. More than just a physical movement, the hug is

[63] O'Shaughnessy, "Proprioception," 192.

[64] Annemarie de Waal Melefijt makes a similar comment. "Rituals are designed both to express belief and to bring about specific ends. Ritual behavior is motivated by the desire to gain some form of satisfaction and is expected to be effective." Annemarie de Waal Melefijt, *Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1968), 189. Ritual action as an expression of cultural context will be discussed in the next chapter.

exchanged with intentionality and meaning behind it, embodying the love between these two individuals. The same applications can be brought into Christian worship. Movement, posture, gesture and ritual action are used to create habits that incarnate the relationship between us as creatures and God as our creator.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BODY IN CONTEXTUAL RITUAL

Contextual setting is vital to how we participate in worship as body-and-soul persons. The previous chapter makes it clear that as body-and-soul persons, our bodies respond and relate to movement in ways that help form us by those particular movements. Cultural context has a profound effect on these movements. Since worship can never be completely separated from culture, an anthropological discussion sheds light on how to consider the surrounding community with its forms and practices as worship takes shape. With the proper understanding of cultural impact established, the work of Elochukwu E. Uzukwu is useful in further analyzing the importance of the role of Christian ritual. An examination of the foundational Nairobi statement can then be used to navigate the somewhat complex intersection of culture and ritual.

As this paper focuses on The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States, the cultural context of its believers will shape their participation in the Divine Service. What is culturally distinctive for this synod as it rests in American culture? And how does its theology work with and against that culture to shape a theology of the body in worship? The works of Martin Luther offer some guidance, and the resulting conversation leads to a discussion that focuses solely on the Divine Service. All these elements together assist in constructing the necessary context for gesture in the Divine Service.

Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Context

A proper understanding of anthropology is necessary to examine how worship and culture intersect. The field of anthropology studies the development of societies and cultures; by

examining various cultures around the world, the anthropologist gives insights into how people live in community. This field is useful in understanding how culture affects a congregation and the implications it will have on worship.

In *Understanding Folk Religion*, Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou show that culture provides the context for worship.[1] They write about applying the gospel to a group by first studying their culture and asking critical questions of that culture. Their approach is to look at the beliefs and practices of people by using a process of critical contextualization. A key step in that process is to understand the current beliefs of local culture, since these beliefs will dictate how individuals act. This involves "understanding the categories, assumptions, and logic that the people use to construct their world."[2] This is the work of the cultural anthropologist who seeks to understand the interplay of a particular culture and its values. When one proclaims the gospel and constructs worship with cultural context in mind, individuals not only will better understand, but further engage in the worship of God.

As we examine worship within various cultural contexts, Gordon Lathrop argues that it is important that we do not view the Christian assembly as a culture in itself. There are certainly symbolic elements of liturgical rite that distinguish it from any other community practice. However, he concludes, "It is better to say that the Christian symbolic language functions in analogy to culture, *like* a culture, in perpetual dialogue with the cultures among which its assemblies stand."[3] Christianity, therefore, becomes a translated language, not simply into the

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[1] Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), especially pages 15–29.

[2] Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion*, 21–22. In studying the culture, it is important for missionaries to be "culture brokers, seeking to communicate the gospel between specific cultural contexts, helping their sending churches to understand the churches they plant, and the young churches to understand and appreciate the sending churches."

[3] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 163–68. Emphasis

vernacular of a national or ethnic group, but into the cultural milieu of a localized congregation.[4] The symbols that the congregation adapts both may contrast or cooperate with the surrounding cultural symbols based on their purpose and intent. Certainly, this cultural adaptation must be done with intentionality, which is why it is proper that the symbols are chosen and practiced within a local context. The *Augsburg Confession* points out the importance of this understanding:

> Also they teach that the *one holy Church* is to continue forever. The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike.[5]

We therefore use the human traditions of rites and ceremonies in specific local contexts. The gifts of Christ come to us through specific means of Word and Sacrament, but these gifts may be received, celebrated and embodied by using diverse rites and ceremonies in diverse cultural contexts.

If the goal of a congregation's use of rites and ceremonies is to convey a particular meaning, or similarly, a matrix of meaning, then it is necessary that these be created and practiced within a particular culture. Specifically, the use of motions and gestures may be manifested uniquely. This is because different cultures are always going to interpret such body motions and gestures differently.[6] Elochukwu E. Uzukwu comments on the problems that arise

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original.

[4] Lathrop clearly makes the point "This is always happening locally. The universal liturgical patterns of Christians are always and only done *here*, in a particular local place, amid these particular people in their many cultures." Lathrop, *Holy People*, 167.

[5] Bente and Dau, "The Augsburg Confession: Article VII: Of the Church," in *Concordia Triglotta*, 47; cited in Lathrop, *Holy People*, 163. Emphasis original.

[6] Citing work by R. Birdwhistell, Elochukwu E. Uzukwu notes that "Birdwhistell pointed out that in the field of kinesics, after fifteen years of research, he and his associates have not found any body motion or gesture that has the same social meaning in all societies. Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language: Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1997) 15; citing R. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Content* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 81.

when gestures are appropriated from one culture to the next. In his experience, African and Western cultures display different ethnic patterns. Therefore, bodily motion must be developed in a way that truly reflects the interpreting culture. Senn provides the insight, "When missionaries bring their faith and practice to a new country, it is first necessary to 'adapt' this faith and practice to local forms of cultural expression, since the missionary's faith and practice, rooted in the assumptions and expressions of a particular culture, cannot simply be replicated in the new location."[7] This must be done with prudence, so that the cultural appropriation does not also reflect non-Christian cultural ideas that would conflict with the gospel of Jesus Christ.[8]

Applying cultural context to the life of the church leads to inculturation. Inculturation is "the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures."[9] Pedro Arrup defines inculturation as:

> The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about 'a new creation.'[10]

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[7] Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 676.

[8] George Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, echoes this warning based on the dangers of inculturation that he has experienced. "This concept of inculturation has been used in ways, often unwittingly, to allow the surrounding society, sometimes secular, sometimes superstitious in a New Age way, and sometimes merely reflecting some less desirable aspects of mass culture, e.g. hedonism, to enter into our liturgy, especially our music. So the uninitiated came to believe that they had a right to entertainment and novelty, should certainly be comforted and challenged rarely, if at all [*sic*]." Arinze, Estévez, George, and Pell, *Cardinal Reflections*, 9. While Pell notes dangers, there is also a tension that exists, since many of the Western church's ceremonies (such as the use of instruments in worship) were once added through inculturation. The inherent tension of cultural appropriation must be navigated delicately and bravely.

[9] Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 11, referenced in Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 28–29.

[10] Pedro Arrup, "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation" in *Studies in the International Apostolate of Jesuits* (Washington: Jesuit Missions, 1978), 1–9; cited in Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, 11.

Inculturation, then, is the placing of the Gospel message into a culture with all of its forms and practices in order to transform it with the good news of Jesus. This practice will determine which motions best accompany worship and liturgical elements. Anscar J Chupungco holds the following view:

> Inculturation, which is not the same as creativity in the strict sense of the word, is a sure way of conserving and perpetuating liturgical tradition. It will be recalled that inculturation is a type of dynamic translation that allows the original message to be conveyed according to the people's cultural pattern. Inculturation means retaining the sound tradition of the liturgy and keeping the way open to legitimate progress. To this effect, SC 23 cautions: "A careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy to be revised. Careful investigation involves the tedious work of identifying the essential elements of a liturgical rite.[11]

Further, Chupungco explains that essential elements of a rite should be preserved, while others can be removed. Peripheral elements of a rite may not be essential, but indeed support the rite, and these elements carry their own symbolism. Inculturation is concerned with "translating tradition into the living culture of the people."[12] Inculturation assists in ensuring that the motions

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[11] Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 76. Chupungco continues this thought in writing about analyzing the cultural patterns in the *ordo*: "We should determine which of its elements may be—or should be—reexpressed in the culture of the people without prejudice to its original meaning or intention. Like any structure, the liturgy possesses elements that are not subject to change . . . . This goes hand in hand with the study of one's own culture. We, each in his or her own cultural ambit, need to enter into a process of research and introspection in order to define the cultural patterns at play in such values as hospitality, community spirit, and leadership. What images arise in our minds when we speak of these values? What are the words, phrases, idiomatic expressions, proverbs and maxims with which we associate them? Are we able to identify the rites, symbols, and institutions by which our society signifies these values? In short, we need to study those components of culture that share similar traits with the liturgical *ordo* and are able to reexpress the *ordo* adequately." Anscar J. Chupungco, "Reenvisioning 'Liturgy and the Components of Culture'" in *Worship and Culture: Foreign Country or Homeland?* ed. Gláucia Vasconcelos Wilkey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 83. While Chupungco is helpful he is also arguing for inculturation from the foundation of Roman Catholicism and the need to inculturate the Latin Ordo Romanus. The dynamics of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's engagement with culture is much more fluid and the inculturation of the ordo is less obligatory.

[12] Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 76–77. Reflecting on the African Christian context, Uzukwu similarly states, "Because worship is concerned with body motions or gestures, African Christians see worship as a channel to display their deep experience of the mystery revealed in the Christian story. And since African sociocultural groups have successfully integrated body and spirit into interactional gestures, a healthy expression of the incarnate human in African Christian liturgy should constitute the intent of the inculturation of worship in African Christian communities. Here inculturation is understood as the experience and expression by African Christians of the mutual impact of gospel and culture in their respective sociocultural area." Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 15. Similarly, the inculturation of worship in American Christian communities would benefit from employing its own

and gestures that are used to aid in preserving the intention of the liturgical element they are paired with are employed in a way that "translat[es] tradition in to the living culture of the people."[13] When liturgy[14] and culture come together, "a common order for public worship breaks through the barriers of social, economic, geographic, and to a great degree, even linguistic differences, to form a unified community before the altar."[15] Unity within community is essential to inculturation. Inculturation and the physical practices that flow from it are essential to unity within community.[16]

While the consideration for and incorporation of culture into the worship of the church can and does enhance and edify, an important question that Geoffrey Wainwright raises is, "How far should the Christian liturgy accommodate itself to the varying socio-psychological patterns of communication and behavior which are observable in different human contexts?"[17] It's a

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contextually specific interactional gestures to proclaim the same Christian story.

[13] Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 77. Pell makes a clarifying point, "Liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter cultural." Arinze, George, Estévez, and Pell, *Cardinal Reflections*, 10. By "must," Pell is reflecting the notion that the culture is never going to reflect the work of Jesus for His people. Therefore, counter-cultural liturgy and worship is a necessity if it is at the same time, Christ centered.

[14] In this thesis, *liturgy* is defined as "the means of grace contents of the divine service." Winger, *Theology of Worship*, 12.

[15] Ernest B. Koenker, *Worship in Word and Sacrament* (St. Louis, Concordia, 1959), 98.

[16] Bruce Kapferer posits that our experiences are rarely individualized and may be experienced in community within a culture. "The structuring of social action and relationships constituted as these are by and within culture limits the likelihood of individuals sharing the same experience. Culture, as it relates to the ordering of life in mundane situations, is both particularizing *and* universalizing. It mediates the relations of individuals both to their material terms of existence and to each other. It is particularizing in the sense that the structuring of relations between individuals in terms of a framework of cultural understandings variously locates individuals in the mundane orderings of everyday life. It differentiates them and makes possible a variety of individual perspectives and standpoints on the everyday world. Individuals experience themselves—they experience their experience and reflect on it—both from their own standpoint and from the standpoint of others within their culture. This is what gives to the practical activity of everyday life some of its movement and process. Further, I do not experience your experience. Paradoxically, your experience is *made* mine; I experience my experience of you. The expressions revealed on your face, in the gestural organization of your body, through the meeting of our glances, are experienced through my body and my situation." Bruce Kapferer, "Performance and the Structuring of Meaning and Experience," in *The Anthropology of Experience*, ed. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 188–203.

[17] Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Understanding of Liturgy in the Light of Its History," in *The Study of Liturgy*,

complicated question that has no clear answer. Kavanagh's point of view offers a possible answer:

> The tradition has talked and acted more in terms of a God-Man who infests human culture as inmate of it. Only thus could he be transcender, critic, and exorcist of it. He does not transform culture as such. He recreates the World, not by making new things but my making all things new. He does his by divine power working upon all that is through the agency of a human nature he holds in solidarity with us. He summons all into a restored communion with the Father, not in spite of matter but through matter, even spit and dirt, thereby clarifying the true meaning of the material world itself. . . . He addresses all people not only in mind and soul but in body as well, thereby renewing the human person in his and her relation to matter, to time and space, and to the whole created world.[18]

With the idea of contextualizing the liturgical rite, any response to Wainwright's question should have the same goal that Kavanagh presents, to proclaim Jesus Christ, the God-Man, bringing about the restoration of all things through His death and resurrection. Care will need to be taken in any local community to shape, adapt, and create rites and incorporate movement in the liturgy that clearly accomplish this goal. As the church appropriates, uses, dismisses, and even exists within culture, she will always do so in order to proclaim the gospel.

Consideration of the ritual actions the church adapts cannot occur in a vacuum. Given cultural context and inculturation, the useful and edifying embodiment of the gospel may look different among various congregations and cultures. In order to best proclaim the gospel of our creator, the church must do so with consideration of the creaturely context in which the church finds itself.

The Importance of Ritual

While the context and ceremonies of worship will be different among different worshiping

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ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 507.

[18] Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), 50.

bodies, the gospel proclamation must remain the same. Ritual is vital to this end. It unifies the body of Christ in order to communicate the message of the gospel. Each ritual is "a medium of communication within a particular group. It is a programmed way of acting that characterizes an ethnic group so that participants express their being part of the group through ritual gesture."[19] Ritual becomes symbol or code that is contextualized to the local community, and, as Uzukwu says, lays down "patterns of action that are creative and normative for existence."[20]

Uzukwu expounds upon ritual with his discussion of our reality as "acting beings."[21] We speak and act using gesture, our hands, to convey our speech. However, various ethnicities and cultures incorporate gestures uniquely, and the repetition of gesture denotes and establishes one's identity within a group.[22] Uzukwu provides an interpretive framework in which to understand the movements that the assembly gathers to use in corporate worship. The movements that we make in worship are judged by how well they match the group's established identity. Francis Cardinal Arinze supports Usukwu in positing the importance of creating and participating in gestures communally over their use individually, "Unity in postures by the congregation is a good thing. All things being equal, it should take precedence over private inclination and arbitrary choice."[23] Making sure that the pendulum doesn't swing to far the other way, Jorge A. Cardinal Medina Estévez says, "Nor is it right to impose certain external attitudes too strictly, for fear of turning the liturgical celebration into a sequence of mechanical, hence, in a certain way, soulless

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[19] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 41.

[20] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 42. Uzukwu references P. Oliveiero and T. Orel, "L'Expérience Rituel," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 78/3:1990, 329–72, esp. 334–35.

[21] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 2.

[22] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 2–10.

[23] Francis Cardinal Arinze, Jorge Cardinal Medina Estévez, Francis Cardinal George, and George Cardinal Pell, *Cardinal Reflections: Active Participation and the Liturgy* (Chicago: Hillenbrand, 2005), 23.

gestures."[24] The balance is found in allowing for personal piety to be practiced by individual members of a congregation, while also emphasizing and commending the movements and gestures that the assembly will participate in collectively.

When understood properly, these rituals create and re-create community. Gestures reflect both the beliefs and the culturally contextual meaning within a community.[25] Frank Senn writes that, "Myth, ritual, and symbol are the basic languages of religious reality and of faith."[26] Thus, when a faith group gathers together, they do so with their own culturally contextual language that speaks the truths of its faith. Part of this language is the language of body movements that aligns with the community's unique cultural identity.[27] As the bodily movements are practiced, they work to convey the community's character and are enacted with an intentional meaning behind each gesture.

Kavanagh argues that this behavior, practiced by a body of Christians, is called rite. As the people of God gather and worship together in this rite, they are ultimately bound up in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[28] The rite of the assembly matters, because it is not simply about

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[24] Arinze, Estévez, George, and Pell, *Cardinal Reflections*, 37.

[25] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, ix, 43–50.

[26] Frank C. Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical Worldview* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 5.

[27] One example of this is seen in the development of worship in the New Testament church. Fully rooted in Jewish thought and practice, this church also was surrounded by Greco-Roman influences. A prayer posture that was common to the Greco-Roman culture, the orans position was implemented into early Christian worship. It is within this cultural context that we can begin to interpret ritual action in the New Testament church. Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 60–78. Theodor Filthaut writes about the early use of the orans position in Theodor Filthaut, *Learning to Worship*, trans. Ronald Walls (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1965), 138.

[28] "Rite involves creeds and prayers and worship, but it is not any one of these things, nor all of these things together, and it orchestrates more than these things. Rite can be called a whole style of Christian living found in the myriad particularities of worship, of laws called 'canonical,' of ascetical and monastic structures, of evangelical and catechetical endeavors, and in particular ways of doing secondary theological reflection. A liturgical act concretizes all these and in doing so makes them accessible to the community assembled in a given time and place before the living God for the life of the world. Rite in this Christian sense is generated and sustained in this regular meeting of faithful people in whose presence and through whose deeds the vertiginous Source of the cosmos itself is pleased to settle down freely and abide as among friends. A liturgy of Christians is thus nothing less than the way a redeemed world is, so to speak, done. The liturgical act of rite and the assembly which does it are coterminous, one thing: the

God, it is of God.[29] The rite is his word proclaimed, received, sung, heard, and embodied.

Through ritual we can engage in both the particular and the universal aspects of those rituals within a cultural context. Kapferer refers to these rituals as *performance*, understanding performance as a "unity of text and enactment, neither being reducible to the other."[30] This irreducibility of enactment and text shows the link that exists between Word and Sacrament, speech and gesture, soul and body. One cannot be divorced from the other. In worship, we see the same thing as we embody the gospel of Jesus Christ. In worship, our faith acts out our reception of God's Word and our faith responds through motion. In community, these ritual movements act as shared experiences that reflect the unique context of an individual Christian congregation.

Embodied ritual is still always locally influenced by a specific context. Catherine M. Bell points out, "Ritualization as the production of a ritualized agent via the interaction of a body within a structured and structuring environment, always takes place within a larger and very immediate sociocultural situation."[31] How that appears in a local context will vary, but that does not change the fact that it is the work of God coming down to dwell with His people, and His people gathering together with Him.

Not only does ritual unite the church in space, but also across time. Ritual and embodiment

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incorporation under grace of Christ dying and rising still, restoring the communion all things and persons have been gifted with in Spirit and in truth. A liturgy is even more than an act of faith, prayer, or worship. It is an act of rite." Kavanagh, *On Liturgical* Theology, 100–101; also referenced in Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012), 71.

[29] See Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 96–121.

[30] Kapferer, *Performance and the Structuring of Meaning*, 191–92. He further states, "I isolate two aspects of performance: as the structuring of standpoint and the structuring of context through the medium of presentation. The analysis of both aspects is critical to an understanding of how ritual establishes and transforms meaning and experience for participants, and for understanding how ritual might create the potential for engaging participants in the one experience as well as enabling their reflection on that experience."

[31] Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 100.

were important in the New Testament church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 14:26-31; Rom. 16:16) and they have continued to be throughout her history. In the fourth and fifth centuries Christians began to gather in public (instead of private) worship spaces which led to further development of rituals of bodily movement. This, brought together larger gatherings of people in one worship space all participating in the same liturgical functions. Bradshaw and Johnson note that "the rites themselves expanded precisely at those points where greater order in the assembly was needed—largely moments of processional movement—with the result that diaconal directions (e.g., 'let us stand,' 'let us kneel,' etc.), litanies, psalmody, chants, and prayers become regular elements."[32] Even in this early formation of the liturgical rite, contextual communities participated in and encouraged physical movements that were common to a local congregation.

As the church started to gather in larger settings, these rituals developed so that the worshiping body could express themselves together. David Power reflects on the importance of ritual and physical movement as it creates a form of communication among members of a community:

> In the body and through the body, human persons find and express themselves in relation to environment, to other persons, to society, and to history. In and through the body they have the initial experience associated with the sacred, experiences formulated interpretatively in some bodily ritual. Before any of the relationships are brought to language, they are given in some rudimentary form through bodily experience. The initial appropriation of relations to others and to self is in bodily reaction, gesture, and disposition. "Initial" does not have simply a chronological sense—attempts to write the prehistory of human expression have little success—but indicates that throughout life and in all forms of social interaction the bodily remains the fundamental mode whereby experience is received and given structure and articulation.[33]

This key point in understanding ritual echoes the statements of Rokeach, Yardley, and Shilling

[32] Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 71.

[33] David N. Power, *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), 84.

above. The body-and soul person both receives and expresses the sacred through bodily movement. Our common worship is made more common through the repetition of these rituals, and as Paul D. Jones states, also assists in our communication with God:

> Ritual action, which is grounded in the way man embodies—symbolizes his relation to a transcendent, is a deeply personal and communal action which reveals man to himself, man to the transcendent and man to others. In the words, gestures and movements that comprise ritual action, man acts on a level that exceeds everydayness. His action, which is rooted in his belief/faith and which is expressed in symbolism, is truly sacred.[34]

Through our communication with God we learn more about our relationship with him and communicate that relationship. Further expressing our relationship with God, the story of faith is enacted through ritual movements that enact an individual's and a community's belief. Annemarie de Waal Malefijt makes the point that "Ritual is a social act in which the participants re-enact their relationship to sacred objects and beliefs. Both ritual and myth are thus not only founded in dogma, but they make sacred beliefs intelligible by rendering them in terms of human action and human language."[35]

In his discussion on ritual and myth, Uzukwu argues that these two elements of culture are co-dependent. "It is important to insist that adequate gestures accompany storytelling in assemblies (even if such a gesture is immobility or intense listening). Such gestures (body movement) and the story belong together. The style of the body movement assumes more or less regularity (consistency) depending on the type of story and kind of gathering."[36] As the salvation

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[34] Paul D. Jones, *Rediscovering Ritual* (New York: Newman, 1973), 71

[35] Annemarie de Waal Malefijt, *Religion and Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Religion* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1968), 195. Arthur Just agrees in saying, "*Rituals to not reflect reality, they enact reality*. . . . Rituals are not a mirror to show us what reality might look like; *rituals are reality*, and by our participating in those rituals we enact reality." Arthur A. Just, *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), 38–39. Emphasis original.

[36] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 90. Chupungco writes about the difficulty that can exist in deciding which ritual actions to use within a culture. "Another challenge is the way to pronounce the Eucharistic prayer and

story and the work of Jesus Christ are shared through the divine service, bodily movement comes alongside this story to enact in the individual and the community the reality of the work of Jesus for her.

Because God's gift of ritual allows the church to communicate His story, and because she has the blessings of sharing ritual with the saints of previous generations, she also has the mandate to share with those in future generations (Deut. 6:4–9.) Ritual and ritualized experience is essential in passing down the faith to the next generation. Children have a high capacity for learning new information, and faith in God's work through Jesus is best taught in an embodied way. Shirley Morgenthaler makes this clear:

> Children learn most powerfully and effectively when adults provide experiences which take the child's capacity to comprehend into account. For children, this means that there are regular patterns of participation which can be remembered and understood.[37]

For children learning the faith (and also for new converts to Christianity), repeated action in worship becomes a key avenue for embodiment:

> Liturgy is ritual. It is the repeated and repetitious telling of the faith story so that all understand. For children, this means the predictable points of participation to which they can look forward from Sunday to Sunday are important. For all Christians, this shared ritual is powerful beyond immediate experience as a way of communicating their membership in the church universal. . . .
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> . . . For children, the opportunity to participate in prayers by folding hands and kneeling is a powerful point of entry into liturgy. So too, the exchange of peace and

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the rites that should accompany it. How are solemn orations proclaimed by a leader in a given culture and what are the traditional gestures or postures assumed by the assembly to express the attitude of reverence and communion with the leader – bowed heads, hands lifted up, standing, sitting, or kneeling? The rite of communion has much community spirit." Chupungco, "Reenvisioning," 80. Chupungco is asking an important question. Contextually, what fits with this culture of believers? Is that ritual action going to help or hinder the proclamation of Christ? When we begin to answer these questions, we begin to understand how to employ ritual actions within a particular cultural context.

[37] Shirley K. Morganthaler, Peter M. Becker and Gary L. Bertels, *Children in Worship: Lessons from Research* (River Forest, IL: Pillars, 1999), 52–53.

making the sign of the cross. These acts become children's early entry into the liturgy of the Church.[38]

With this pedagogy in mind, it is essential to engage worshiping Christians, especially children, in a holistic way when teaching them about the work of God through Jesus. The ritual of a community allows one to be formed by the teachings of a local congregation and shapes them to further express their faith within that community.[39] As the Word of God through liturgy is passed down from generation to generation, Morgenthaler clearly shows the importance of accompanying this teaching with ritual movement.

In a helpful summary of these thoughts on ritual, Power says, "Ritual's capacity to encompass explorations of fresh insight, even in bodily movement, gives it a place among the factors of social and cultural change or common meaning."[40] Ritualized behavior, then, becomes a defining characteristic of a worshiping community as it strives to express faith in Christ in its local context. As we seek to explore the use of embodied ritual in the Divine Service, it will be beneficial to explore the American cultural context in which this would be employed in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Nairobi Statement

There is tension in being in the world and not of it (John 17:6–19.) Ritual action couched in cultural context and inculturation are tools of the church to proclaim the gospel in a relevant and transcendent way. However, the culture is often not in step with the message of the church. What happens when the two are not aligned or are even hostile toward one another? At times the

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[38] Morganthaler, Becker and Bertels, *Children in Worship*, 53.

[39] Just's position is, "Rituals cause communities to cohere as a group, and in many cases, that cohesion is the means by which the group is able to survive with its identity intact. . . . Religious communities . . . depend on ritual not merely to establish identity but also to hand down faith to new hearers and succeeding generations." Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 35.

[40] Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 86.

church can appropriate or tolerate culture; at times it must work to change or reject it. The Nairobi Statement is one tool for providing guidance in navigating the sometimes-complex intersection of embodied worship and culture. This fundamental document discussing worship and culture came out of the third international consultation of the Lutheran World Federation's Study Team on Worship and Culture in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1996. It seeks to understand the dynamics between worship and the world's many local cultures.[41] This statement draws four conclusions about worship and culture: worship is transcultural, worship is contextual, worship is counter-cultural, and worship is cross-cultural.

Worship of the Triune God is *transcultural*, in that elements of it transcend all culture. Elements of worship such as reading from the Bible and confessing the ecumenical creeds can be accessed and practiced by any culture. The same substance of worship is universally shared "across time, space, culture, and confession."[42] Liturgy is transcultural in that it delivers the gifts of God to all people regardless of time or place. Worshipers can travel across the world and still receive the same gifts of Word and Sacrament. So, the worshipper, regardless of their background or bearings, can embrace the liturgy. It matters not if one congregation's ritual is identical to another's so long as the movement is faithful to the God-given liturgy of Word and sacraments.

We understand that worship is *contextual* in and through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Through His contextual ministry and presence, we know that "God can be and is encountered in the local cultures of our world" through the proclaimed Word.[43] Through the methods of

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[41] Lutheran World Federation, "The Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture: 1996," in *Worship and Culture: Foreign Country or Homeland?* ed. Gláucia Vasconcelos Wilkey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 137–42.

[42] Lutheran World Federation, "Nairobi Statement," 139.

[43] Lutheran World Federation, "Nairobi Statement," 139.

dynamic equivalence[44] and creative assimilation[45], contextualization of liturgical ceremony[46] takes place, while respecting both Christianity and local cultures. For example, offering a handshake at the time of passing the peace or the clapping of hands during a song are the assimilation of American gestures into the liturgical rite. Elements from the culture "should always undergo critique and purification"[47] to make sure they clearly proclaim Christ before being used in worship.

Worship is *countercultural.* A worshiping congregation does not conform to the world/culture around it. There are aspects of culture that will be completely rejected by the church because they contradict God's Word. Since the church presents a Christ-centered view of reality, it will necessarily present an antithesis to culture, which of itself, does not present the centrality of Christ. Ritual action can be countercultural in order to highlight the transcendence of God: an individual may bow before the altar when approaching the Lord's Table or lift up hands in prayer. These ritual actions, while appropriate in the midst of the liturgical rite, would not be commonly used outside of worship.

Finally, worship is *cross-cultural.* This is especially necessary to remember in the multicultural mix that exists in American congregations. Jesus came to bring salvation to all people (objective justification,) and there exists one invisible church that includes people of all tribes and nations (Rev. 7:9). Cultural elements may be shared across cultural contexts, further

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[44] *Dynamic equivalence* is the "intelligibility of the translation" in terms of the audience. "Such intelligibility is . . . to be measured . . . in terms of the total impact the message has on the one who receives it." See Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 22.

[45] *Creative assimilation* is a form of inculturation where cultural rites and linguistic expressions are assimilated to be used in liturgical rites. See Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 44–47.

[46] In this thesis, *liturgical ceremony* is defined as the embellishments of worship: vestments and paraments, liturgical colors, processions, incense, music, postures, and gestures. Winger, *Theology of Worship*, 13.

[47] Lutheran World Federation, "Nairobi Statement," 140.

expressing the universality of the gospel. Within a multicultural congregation, ritual action can unite where culture and language fail. The very use of liturgical rite can be familiar and connect believers of different backgrounds to one another and their Lord.

From these four worship and culture conclusions, we gain a clarity of how the worship of God relates to His people in every time and place. His Word is universal and speaks to every tribe and language. And while applying that word to specific cultural contexts, one is careful to contextualize in a way that clearly communicates the central reality of the Bible – Jesus Christ crucified and risen to bring His people forgiveness and life. When this is communicated clearly, the congregation can actively receive the truth of this message.

The Nairobi Statement offers a perspective from which to approach embodied worship. It is clear that worship is most helpful when performed within its actual cultural context. It is also undeniable that ritual is a gift that unites Christ's church and proclaims the gospel. This document offers an understanding of how the intersection of the two can be joyful, and yet, their discord not insurmountable. Worship's contextual and cross-cultural properties lead a believer to more easily engage in and fellowship through the accompanying ritual. Its transcultural and cross-cultural aspects allow a congregation the comfort that not all ritual must be cohesive within the body of believers or even with the outside world. Such guidance is useful as worshippers identify, create, and assess ritual within their own cultural context.

The American Worship Context

As an LCMS believer desires to employ the embodiment of worship into the Divine Service, he will need to understand the dynamics of doing so in the American worship context. What makes contextualizing worship to American churches unique? As with all cultures, the American one exists in a fallen world and is rife with challenges. The Nairobi Statement's

reminders that worship is transcultural and countercultural can be useful when addressing some of the defining characteristics of American culture: namely consumerism, individualism, and passivism.

In speaking of the counter-cultural aspect of worship, S. Anita Stauffer writes, "In my own culture of North America, for example, the narcissism and overwhelming consumerism are contradictory to the fabric of Christian faith and worship. Worship is inherently both corporate and participatory; therefore, it cannot be planned primarily for consumption or entertainment."[48] A recent development in American Christianity has been the rise of the "Mega-church." While these churches are often aware of culture and strive to make worship contextual and relevant to current culture, this sometimes leads to a presentation of the gospel purely as entertainment, resulting in a stripped-down, basicrite. It caters to the individualistic American worshiper who is seeking the fulfillment of felt needs through "entertainment evangelism" and often allows for very little congregational movement.[49] However, the "mega-church" is not the only one that wrestles with this challenge. As one looks around the American church landscape, the desire for entertainment in worship is rampant and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is not immune to these trends. While employing embodiment into worship will not stem the insatiable desire for Americans to be entertained, it will provide them with another avenue of being engaged in the communicated gospel that is proclaimed in the Divine Service. Ritual and ceremonial rite point to Christ in a tangible way and demonstrate that the participants are involved in something greater than themselves.

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[48] S. Anita Stauffer, "Worship: Ecumenical Core and Cultural Context," in *Worship and Culture: Foreign Country or Homeland* ed. Gláucia Vasconcelos Wilkey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 211.

[49] James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America: A Retrospective: 1955–1995* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1997), 132.

So, how does the American individual participating with their body-and-soul in worship find further fulfillment in community instead of feeling secure in their own narcissistic reality? Timothy D. Son looks at the challenges of individualism in American society, highlighting the value placed on independence and self-reliance.[50] The corrective would be to consider the biblical and even civic republic notions that individual personhood does not mean fleeing into solitary reliance, but instead looking to the societal need of relationship for the benefit of the other. However, this has not been the dominant practice in general American culture. Individualism lived out thorough individual thought and preference has undermined societal relationships. This type of society makes it difficult for churches to find their niche. Son writes,

> On the practical side, today's congregations experience many difficulties in establishing meaningful relationships with the general public. Today, joining a local faith community no longer has the necessity it once had. In the vastly increased pluralism of American society, a local congregation no longer stands as a community of moral authority but as one of the various competing sociocultural groups. As the number of competing groups (including other religious groups) increases, so the relative status of each group equalizes. Consequently, the relation of an individual to another individual, or to any given religious group becomes less a matter of necessity and more a matter of personal choice. Communal membership in a congregation becomes an individual preference not a matter of societal or family destiny.[51]

The dominant solution to this dilemma in the United States has been to cater to the culture in a way that meets felt needs of the individual, furthering the perceived individualistic reality of one's nature. As such, a worshipper feels no need to engage in worship. He can interact with the liturgical rite as he likes without any consideration for how his action or inaction impacts his fellow believer. If one does not value the community, there is little impetus to join in the ritual that unites the family of believers. As a corrective to individualism in the American church, Son

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[50] Timothy D. Son, *Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2014), 155–58.

[51] Son, *Ritual Practices*, 157.

asks probing questions, "Can an individualism in which the self has become the main form of reality really be sustained? . . . How can congregations help them to realize the importance of community where their moral and ethical responsibilities are shared and to be accountable to one another, while benefiting from its genuine support and meaningful relationships?"[52] The first question is phrased in a way to demand the answer, "No," but it is not clear that individualistic Americans are looking for a change anytime soon. However, by answering the second question, the Christian church in the United States will not simply negate the notion of individualism but find ways to incorporate the individual into the communal.

Passivism is another obstacle to full and embodied worship that likely stems from a lack of full manifestation of reformation ideals. Senn provides a proper grievance of what led to a lack of lay participation in the divine service: "Unfortunately, the role of the laity has often been usurped by the clergy in the Western churches, both Catholic and Protestant. While the Protestant Reformation recovered the doctrine of the priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:9), Protestant churches have not always fully implemented the liturgical expression of the lay priesthood."[53] The priesthood of all believers is a seminal teaching that arises from Martin Luther's writing and has had major implications into how the church is run and governed; yet when it comes to worship, lay participation has continued to be stagnant and was never fully recovered. In his assessment, Senn gives examples that involve action of the congregation. The offering and spoken intercessory prayer have allowed for intentional congregational expression, but often the examples of the assembly's involvement in worship end there.[54] Due to the lack of recent precedent, there is little reason for the laity to expect or pursue a deeper participation.

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[52] Son, *Ritual Practices*, 156–57.

[53] Senn, *New Creation*, 43–44.

[54] Senn, *New Creation*, 43–44.

Sadly, the people sitting in the pews are deeply steeped in the pitfalls of the American culture. Worship, and especially embodied worship, allow one to find a corrective to consumerism, individualism, and passivism, that provides a richer and fuller existence within the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is proclaimed and received in community. As one desires further embodied worship within their own American church, one must look at their own theological context to determine how this can be best taught and employed.

Martin Luther's Theology of Worship

While a study of cultural context is vital to the adaptation of embodied worship, a theological context is similarly important for accomplishing that in a faithful way. A look at a theology of worship, as clarified at the time of the Reformation, has foundational elements for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Martin Luther's theology of worship is based on "his teaching on creation, the atonement, the church, and justification."[55] For Luther, these are all acts of God for his people, and in light of those acts, which God has worked for our blessing and benefit, we understand our relationship to Him. God gives in a tangible way, and we actively receive. Therefore, Luther brought worship into its new status. As Timothy Maschke states, "Worship was no longer a burdensome drudgery, an obligation; instead, it was a joyous privilege and an opportunity to receive generous blessings from God and to respond to His gracious presence."[56] Worship reflects those truths of our unique creation by God as body-and-soul people and acknowledgement of our new creation in Baptism, the reconciliation of God with His people through the meritorious work of Jesus Christ, the establishment of His church as the gathering of

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[55] Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958), xii.

[56] Timothy H. Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), 107.

His people united by Him, and the pronouncement of our forgiveness and righteousness in Jesus. These elements of worship were foundational for Luther in a return to the proclamation of the gospel through worship. Maschke reminds us, "Luther did not desire to leave the Roman Church. Although excommunicated, he continued to seek to reform the Roman Church to an earlier, more pure, state, not to establish a new 'religion.' . . . Lutherans continue to respect with a critical eye the traditional elements received from the larger Church."[57] Maschke later notes that when Luther worked in the realm of worship, he retained the elements in the mass that were not "contrary or destructive to the Gospel."[58] This aids us in creating a framework for establishing embodied worship in the divine service. The movements that aid in the proclamation and reception of the gospel should be retained or may be implemented. Those that distract the congregation from the worship of Jesus should remain unused. This determination will be best made with consideration for both the theology and culture of the congregation.

It is important for us, in speaking of embodied worship, to note that we are not referring to any type of infused grace of *habitus* that is spoken of by the scholastics. Vilmos Vajta notes that "Faith was to them a *qualitas haerens in corde, excluso Christo*, and so a rather static condition."[59] He counters that Martin Luther's dynamic concept of faith cannot exist unless Christ himself comes, fights and vanquishes. This will affect the way that we speak about the body. We are not the primary actors in worship, and our bodies are not reaching out to God.[60] We

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[57] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 48.

[58] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 51.

[59] Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, 8.

[60] Lathrop wisely warns against the pride of worship practices. "Those practices do ask of us a certain caution, lest they become the way we think we are climbing up to the top of the pile of humanity. When the liturgical things we do are conceived as our ladder to God, our way to compel God, our marks of excellence distinguishing us from other wretches, they become part of our self-deception. Still, none of the core matters—the practices—of Christian worship can be appropriately used in such a way when they are understood according to their origin and their deepest intention. Their meaning will ultimately explode in the face of such stances of self-

are instead enlivened with faith by the work of Jesus who has sent His Holy Spirit – the Spirit who has "called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."[61] And for Luther, this faith is realized in worship[62] and receives all that Christ gives, since Christ is present in faith. Thus, faith and worship are not simply psychological acts because these are both fully works of Christ for, in, and through us.[63] To summarize, Vajta concludes that Luther's view of worship contains two parts: Worship is "the work of God in the church," and worship is "the work of faith."[64] These are then seen in the way that we embody worship. God has worked faith into us through His Word. In the divine service we hear and receive that word once again. With this faith in our hearts and on our lips, the Holy Spirit brings about the fruit of faith in our lives and in our worship. The liturgical rite, then, is a beautiful picture of the daily Christian life. The believer receives God's gifts as He acts in her life; then she reacts to that great love. Embodied worship is, in essence, practice for our everyday life. When the incarnate Lord gives himself to his people, they respond in active, tangible ways. How can they do otherwise?

As we apply embodied ritual to individual worshiping communities and cultural contexts, we do so keeping in mind the words of the Formula of Concord:

> We believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the good right, power, and authority [in matters truly adiaphora] to change, to diminish, and to increase (ceremonies), without thoughtlessness and offense, in an orderly and becoming way, as at any time it may be regarded most profitable, most beneficial, and best for [preserving] good order, [maintaining] Christian discipline [and for εὐταξία worthy of the profession of the gospel], and the edification of the Church. . . .

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righteousness." Lathrop, *Holy People*, 75.

[61] Bente and Dau, "The Small Catechism II," 545.

[62] Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, 12.

[63] Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, 19.

[64] Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, 25.

> . . . Thus [According to this doctrine] the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: *Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei;* "Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith."[65]

Not every congregation is going to look the same in worship and practice because of the differences in what will be profitable and beneficial for each community. Embodied rituals that edify the church will be a benefit to any Christian community that wishes to add them to its worship.

Worship in the Divine Service

As the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are familiar with the Divine Service, they may more fully and faithfully participate in it. The influence of culture and ritual within such worship is undeniable, and the Nairobi statement offers guidance on the relationship between the two in worship. Further, the cultural context within the United States and the theological context as set forth by Luther offer insight on why best practices exist. With this setting constructed, an inspection of the actual liturgical rite follows. What is the essence and nature of the service, and how does that inform the believer's participation?

There are certain elements that make the Divine Service in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod distinctive. It will necessarily be unique, since "the Church itself differs from every other human society. It is a universal and permanent institution in a world of change."[66] It is also not a "nondescript collection of devotional forms. It has but one theme, and that the

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[65] Bente and Dau, "The Formula of Concord: Thorough Declaration X: Of Church Rites," in *Concordia Triglotta*, 1053–61. A similar quote appears in Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 255.

[66] Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Service of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947), 2.

loftiest. It loves to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and through that, to reveal God to the world.[67] In the introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, Norman Nagel so beautifully clarifies what Christ centered worship looks like:

> Our Lord speaks, and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledge the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. . . .
> . . . Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. . . . Before him we acknowledge that we are sinners, and we plead for forgiveness. His forgiveness is given us, and we, freed and forgiven, acclaim him as our great and gracious God as we apply to ourselves the words he has used to make himself known to us. 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 them.[68]

This rhythm is beautiful in its simplicity and takes the focus off us. If God is the gracious giver, then our affect is to receive. And since He even leads our response, our affect is to respond and embody all that He works through us. Frank Senn also summarizes the idea that Nagel presents.

> The liturgy has also been called 'the divine service,' implying that it is the work of God. There is no dichotomy between the work of the church and the work of God if we recall that the church is 'called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified' by the Holy Spirit. By means of the Spirit the work of God and the work of the church are ontologically one.[69]

This helps us understand physical participation of the individual in the divine service. As the Spirit works in the hearts of His people, those gathered as church participate in ritual postures and movement in the divine service only because that Spirit is at work in them and is bringing about transformation through His Word.[70] Peter Brunner then comments on how this Spirit-led

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[67] Reed continues his thought in saying, "It lives to offer the Holy Sacrament for the spiritual comfort and strengthening of believers. It lives to express the faith, gratitude, and joy of Christian communities. As the Church's normal order of worship on the Lord's Day it is unique, purposeful and powerful. In its several parts and in its totality it builds up a towering majesty of thought and expression, which exceeds that of any other liturgical form in the Church's use." Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 217.

[68] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1982), 6.

[69] Senn, *New Creation*, 42.

[70] As the Holy Spirit gathers us by calling us through the gospel, Peter Brunner simply states, "The congregations assembled for worship is called and gathered by the proclamation of the apostolic Gospel of Jesus

worship is proclaimed and embodied:

> The congregation's Spirit effected response to the gift of salvation, conveyed in Word and Sacrament, is itself word. Also where this response involves a physical gesture, this gesture is not mute, but vital through the words accompanying it. This responding, confessing, thanking, and glorifying word of the congregation will always recall the great and saving deeds of God's might; it will acknowledge, laud, and glorify them prayerfully, and in this manner also proclaim and present them to others.[71]

The Holy Spirit affecting our spirit in worship is vitally important. It is the foundation and root of all movements in which we may participate. Completely and fully, we are engaged in worship, body-and-soul. It would be to our benefit as Christians to worship in this way whenever we gather as a congregation in Christ's name.

The Divine Service is also built around the understanding that "worship is not what we like to do, but what God has chosen to do for our benefit. Worship is primarily His action in our lives through Word and Sacraments, and only secondarily our action in response to that as prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.[72] God's action comes through His means of grace that the church ritually enacts—The Word of God, Holy Baptism, The Lord's Supper, and Confession/Absolution. Our Holy Spirit led response comes through our prayers, canticles, hymns, songs and movements.

Similarly, we remember that our worship is primarily Christocentric, and as Christ comes to us it becomes anthropocentric and embodied. It is shaped by applying the gospel to people with an emphasis on the cross and the risen, incarnate Lord. As movement is introduced into the worship service, it is always wise to analyze the motion in light of the Christo-centricity of

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Christ." We do not gather ourselves in worship, through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit gathers us. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, trans. M. H. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 143.

[71] Brunner, *Worship*, 124.

[72] Richard C. Eyer, *They Will See His Face* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002), 9.

worship so that the clear message of the rite is "Jesus for me." In this way a worshiping community can begin to prudently add ritual gesture and posture to their participation in the Divine Service.[73]

Describing our proper relationship to the various elements of the Divine Service, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession offers this clarification:

> Theologians are rightly accustomed to distinguish between a Sacrament and a sacrifice. Therefore let the genus comprehending both of these be either a ceremony or a sacred work. A Sacrament is a ceremony or work in which the promise annexed to the ceremony offers; as, Baptism is a work, not which we offer to God, but in which God baptizes us, i.e., a minister in the place of God; and God here offers and presents the remission of sins, etc., according to the promise, Mark 16:16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. A sacrifice, on the contrary, is a ceremony or work which we render God in order to afford Him honor.[74]

The sacramental elements in worship are "God's gifts and signs to us of His will," and the sacrificial elements are "our responses of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving."[75] Luther's personal note, echoing this idea, is that "The only thing believers can give to God is a 'sacrifice of praise' because the greatest sacrifice was Christ Himself, given once and for all."[76]

Finally, as we look to incorporate embodied ritual into the Divine Service, we remember that it is naturally eschatological in nature. The congregation gathers in part to look forward to the time when we will have full unity with our triune God. Glimpses of this union are seen in baptismal identity, in being drawn together around the altar to receive the body and blood of

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[73] See A. L. Barry, *The Unchanging Feast: The Nature and Basis of Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1995), 37–48, esp. pg. 40.

[74] Bente and Dau, "Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Article XXIV: Of the Mass," in *Concordia Triglotta*, 389.

[75] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 8. To aid in the congregation's understanding of these elements, the presider either faces toward the congregation to demonstrate God's work towards us, or turns toward the altar to demonstrate our offering before Him. See Brown, *Living the Liturgy*, 42.

[76] Maschke, *Gathered* Guests, 103. Maschke is quoting Luther, "*On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*," AE 36:3–126.

Jesus in communion with Him, and in songs such as the Sanctus that anticipate being in His presence. This eschatology also looks forward to the day when we will be renewed body-and-soul and be united as one people around God's throne. As we worship, we anticipate what He is doing today in us, and what He promises to do on the day that Jesus returns.[77]

The essence and nature of the Divine Service is the transmission of the gifts of God to His people. This liturgical rite shows the Spirit-led work of God and proclaims what God has done and will do for His people through His Christ. The focus is on Jesus who has fulfilled and will fulfill all things. This is the focus as the worshiper participates in the rite. The actions of God's people reflect Him rather than elevate self. And finally, as God's people are transformed by His Word and sacraments, they are enlivened to daily live out the very faith that they receive.

Conclusion

The cultural context of a congregation will naturally influence its worship and practice. Contextualizing worship will allow a congregation to use movement in worship to add a dynamic to their liturgy that is culturally significant without being culturally dissonant to the gospel. Movement and gesture with little consideration for their setting are ineffective at best. With this in mind, ritual should be practiced intentionally, especially considering the transcultural, contextual, countercultural, and cross-cultural properties of worship. As such The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States must consider American tendencies and attitudes toward worship and address these in light of the theology behind and the substance of the Divine

[77] See Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 19–21. Kavanagh also argues for the eschatological focus of worship. "Due to its eschatological intent, liturgy is about nothing less than ultimate, rather than immediate, survival. It is about life forever by grace and promise. Liturgy regards anything less as a trap and a delusion hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like the Sabbath, liturgy is for us rather than we for it. But also like the Sabbath, liturgy is for us in that it summons us by revealed Good News home to a Presence, to a life even now of communion with that Presence. To commune with that Presence is to be in at the end and at the center where the world is whole, fresh, and always issuing new from the Father's hand through Christ in the Spirit." Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* 153–54.

Service.

The believer is in the world, not of it. Therefore, worship, while embedded in our context and not totally foreign to us, will most faithfully reflect the Creator and his design. As He reigns over all, He calls us to himself in a way that draws his people together and brings us to himself – body-and-soul.

CHAPTER THREE

MOVEMENT, POSTUES, AND GESTURES FOR THE DIVINE SERIVCE

As we have explored, since we are body-and-soul people, the body is unambiguously connected to all that happens in Christian worship.[1] The movements of our bodies in worship enable us to further participate in the Word of God and respond to it. This aspect of movement is never divorced from cultural norms, through which movements are interpreted. In the American culture where The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod resides, there are movements that are helpful and beneficial to the formation of those present in worship.

In this final section, we will explore movements, postures, and gestures that have been employed in Christian churches within varying cultural contexts. From there we can walk through the Divine Service, *Setting One* from the *Lutheran Service Book*[2] and make an argument for the benefits of incorporating various movements into this service in LCMS congregations.[3] As we do so, ritual actions should be evaluated based on the guidance gleaned from psychology, sociology, proprioception, and context. These actions should be engaging and repeatable. They should also be practiced with an awareness of the physical capabilities of the congregation. A congregation should take care that their ritual actions are not culturally dissonant or crude. Ritual should also be corporate in nature, when practical, being practiced by an assembly as a whole

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[1] "Worship involves motion" is Uzukwu's opening line in his introduction to *Worship as Body Language*.

[2] Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Service Book*, 151–66.

[3] While Divine Service, *Setting One* from the *Lutheran Service Book* and its use in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod acts as the foil through which ritual actions are examined, the content and study here could be of benefit to any congregation or church body that may desire to further explore the incorporation of ritual action into its liturgical rite.

and bringing unity to a motion's meaning. Movements should be intentional in order to align with the liturgy and proclaim its message. Finally, the ritual action must be Christocentric and assist in proclaiming the work of Christ for His people.

With this in mind, some movements will be completely relevant, while others will be unusable because they do not coincide with the message of the liturgy, the pattern of worship, or even constraints of the worship space. The following elements will be suggestions for congregational use so that the laity in the congregational assembly will have greater opportunity to embody the elements of the divine service. While this thesis employs embodiment in worship according to the Divine Service, *Setting One* in *The Lutheran Service Book*, it is not arguing that this is the only means by which one can truly worship, nor are the movements and postures mentioned here the only motions that can be used within the Divine Service.[4]

A Renewed Participation

Participation in worship has been a continual goal of the Lutheran Church. In 1969, the established practices of ritual action which had been used among LCMS congregations were standardized in the *Worship Supplement,* which was published by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.[5] The Divine Service was printed with figures either

[4] Kavanagh warns against making a hard and fast rule as well. "*Beware of liturgical fundamentalism.* Fundamentalism of whatever sort is a mindless regression into fantasy undertaken out of an obsessive fear of risk and ambiguity. Fundamentalists produce not poetry but propaganda, not liturgy but self-serving bible study groups. The liturgy, on the other hand, like a language system, is shot through with the rich ambiguity of metaphor, symbol, sacrament, and it is always changing even when it appears not to be. No more than the liturgy can afford to be celebrated in nothing but third, thirteenth, or sixteenth century ceremonial forms can a modern poet afford to write in nothing but Chaucerian English. One must not confuse liturgical archaism, which is native to times of high religious significance, with liturgical fundamentalism, which is constant and obsessive." Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite* (New York: Pueblo, 1966), 98–99.

[5] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Worship Supplement* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1969).

standing, sitting, or kneeling at various points in the liturgical rite to direct the congregation in these postures. While rubrics from previous hymnals regularly indicated these postures, this service did away with the often used "may" or "shall" attitudes directing such rubrics. In this way, the standard practices and postures which had been used for decades in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were reflected in a concrete way. Then, *Lutheran Worship*, published in 1982, offered further direction on postures of worship. Prime examples are the notes on the liturgy presented for Divine Service I and II offered in the *Lutheran Worship: Altar Book*.[6] However, the Commission on Worship has not offered further exhortation or description of posture or gesture in recent years.

Since the mid nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church has also worked to involve the laity in the church's worship, including their bodily movements. In *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* Adrian Fortescue and J.B. O'Connell include an appendix of *Rules for the Laity at Mass*. "For a solemn or sung Mass the General Rubrics give no rules for the laity present. They are supposed to take an *active* part in the ceremony with the sacred ministers and clergy, and so the rubrics assume that, as far as possible, the laity will conform to the rules laid down for the clergy."[7]

Pius XII was also instrumental in including more lay involvement in the Roman Catholic Mass:

> Pius XII . . . legislated specific liturgical reforms . . . In particular, this instruction gave attention to various levels of active participation on the part of the faithful in both sung and recited ("High" and "Low") Masses and the way in which such participation can be facilitated. It insisted that interior attention should be joined to an

[6] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship: Altar Book* (St. Louis, Concordia: 1982), 26–32.

[7] Adrian Fortescue and J.B. O'Connell, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1958), 94.

> "outward participation manifested by external acts, such as the position of the body (kneeling, standing, sitting), ceremonial gestures, and above all, by the responses, prayers and singing"[8]

Additionally, this reform included the opportunity for the singing of hymns in the vernacular at both High and Low masses. This led to a discussion at the Second Vatican Council that addressed the question of a vernacular liturgical rite. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* concluded that the Latin Mass could be translated into a parish's mother tongue after the review of a territorial ecclesial authority.[9] The *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy* also contained a statement that seemed to propel the discussion of lay involvement in worship forward at a rapid rate: "By way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe reverent silence."[10] This statement has been taken to heart and has led to the encouragement of more lay posture and gesture in the Mass. For instance, *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* includes instructions for movements and posture, including times of standing, siting, kneeling, and bowing.[11] The wide incorporation of this movement can be seen in the Mass at Roman Catholic

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[8] Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 302. See Sacred Congregation Rites, *De Musica Sacra* (September 3, 1958), AAS 50 (1958): 630–33.

[9] Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 302–3. See "Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy: 36:4," in The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Authorities, ed. Walter M. Abbott, trans. Joseph Gallagher (New York: American, 1966), 151.

[10] "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: 30," 148. Reflecting on this statement made at the Second Vatican Council, Francis Cardinal Arinze says, "While the Second Vatican Council ordered fuller, more conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, it is of vital importance that we accept that the liturgy is primarily something that Christ does, not something that we put together. It is something that we receive, not something that we invent. Arinze, George, Estévez, and Pell, *Cardinal Reflections*, 20. Yes, the liturgy is the gifts of God for the people of God, but the ritual actions and "fuller participation" that are incorporated into any liturgical rite will be generated and influenced by the culture and are something that congregations "put together."

[11] *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 25–27.

Churches in the United States today.

As the priesthood of all believers gathers together as the body of Christ, we participate in the act of incarnating the gospel of Jesus Christ.[12] Worship is a form of proclamation[13] and acclamation of how God has worked in this world, and how He continues to work through His Word in our lives. Uzukwu further explains this thought:

> There is a historical core to the story of Jesus the Christ as lived and narrated by Christians, but it is a story in which as narrators we are involved, bow in worship, and sing songs of prayer, and as listeners we are provoked to commitment. It is not therefore a detached historical documentary. It is not a discourse about Jesus as the Christ. It is a talking to our Lord. The story becomes the vehicle of the meaning of our life as Christians.[14]

This narration is enacted through speech, song, and movement of the assembly engaging in dialogue with the triune God. In the Divine Service, we reflect the entire reality of life: We are fallen body-and-soul creatures who have been redeemed by the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. All movement in worship then reflects the truth and reality of this narrative. Bernard J. Cooke reflects on the body of Christ's worship:

> Somehow they must experience Christ being present to them, which is the "flip-side" of their experiencing the body of Christ. Admittedly, this introduces a note of great difficulty into liturgical planning and execution. People's awareness of their bodiliness in relating to one another is a factor in this ritual participation, so in any given situation people's cultural attitude toward bodiliness (for example, the normality of greeting one another with an embrace rather than a hand-shake) needs to be sensitively considered. Yet without a certain ease in dealing with one another bodily, the kind of familiarity and intimacy that should characterize an assembly of Christians cannot exist.[15]

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[12] "The incarnation is God's self-communication in the mode of human bodiliness, and Christ is thus called the primary sacrament of God's self-giving revelation. To continue as mediator after the resurrection, Jesus Christ must remain bodily present to the world, and he does this in and through the church." Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 197.

[13] Brunner makes the statement that Holy Communion acts as a form of proclamation. Brunner, *Worship*, 167.

[14] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 174.

[15] Bernard J. Cooke, "Body and Mystical Body: The Church as *Communio*," in *Bodies of Worship:*

All worship in the Divine Service is communal, and many unique individuals make up this community. With cultural norms in mind, the congregation will develop ritual actions that not only express faith but also enhance the unity of the body in worship.

The Danger in Prescribing Ritual Action

Martin Luther was wary to prescribe any ritual practices with the fear that others would employ them as the sole form of worship.[16] In his introduction to the German Mass, "Do not make it a rigid law to bind or entangle anyone's conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where, and how you find it to be practical and useful."[17] Yet, this is what many did and continue to do. To be clear, this thesis is offered in the spirit of Luther. It is not arguing that the ritual actions described here within the Divine Service are the only movements and postures that can be used in worship. However, there are many beneficial reasons for employing ritual action into liturgical rite that have been argued above. Thus, to suggest possible employments of bodily movement in worship in the Divine Service, the material below is presented for consideration.

Gestures and Postures

We are eager as God's people to worship in body-and-soul, and we join in worship to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, not being conformed to this

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Explorations in Theory and Practice, ed. Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 49.

[16] See Dirk G. Lange, "Worship: Translating the Untranslatable," in *Worship and Culture: Foreign Country or Homeland*, ed. Gláucia Vasconcelos Wilkey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 168.

[17] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: American Edition: Volume 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (St. Louis, Concordia, 1965), 61. Dirk G. Lange, also cites Luther's thought, saying, "The liturgy is translated in such a way that the Spirit is continually interpreting context and culture and pushing it toward the gospel, that is, disrupting it in what we might call a countercultural move." Lange, "Worship: Translating the Untranslatable," 170.

world, but transformed by the renewal of our minds to discern what is good and acceptable and perfect as the will of God (Rom. 12:1–2). Edgar Brown states, "Along with the words and music which are the rite, there are also certain *ceremonial* provisions. Words are not enough, for there have to be movement and action. Worship would be rather dull if people assembled and just sat for the whole time, but even that too is action. We are doing something."[18]

Ritual actions reflect our liturgy of word and sacrament. They reflect our reception of God's sacramental gifts through the Divine Service and reflect our sacrificial response to Him in prayer and praise. They reflect His call to us to worship him in various ways. Ps. 95:6 calls us to "worship, bow down and kneel before the LORD our Maker." These three postures have the connotation of prostration or lying face down on the ground, of bowing or bending a knee down, and of going down on both knees before God. These three physical manifestations of our body-and-soul worship show our attitude that exists as we come into His presence.[19] The Psalmist reflects an embodied worship, where physical posture reveals spiritual attitude.

There are also movements that may be made individually or corporately that include the form of dance. Depending on a congregation's context, moving or swaying in joyful response to God's work may be highly appropriate at certain points of the liturgical rite. Sometimes the tone of music used in the service will aid this addition. Additionally, clapping can be added alongside music that has a meter that allows for this. As with all movement of posture and gesture, elements that clearly communicate the Gospel of Christ's work for his people and our joyful response to that work are both appropriate and desirable (Ps. 149:2–3.)

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[18] Edgar S. Brown, *Living the Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), 8.

[19] Because of likely difficulties of space, the latter two are the most likely to be used in the Divine Service. For a brief study of these scriptural postures, see William J. Schmelder, *Oh, Come, Let us Worship. . . . Study Guide for Adults* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1981), 6–10.

When incorporating ritual action, it is important that we are intentional and considerate in the use of movement in the Divine Service. John F. Baldovin, speaking from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, asks the question, "Is merely standing during the Eucharistic prayer sufficient to communicate participation in this sacred act of thanksgiving that articulates the church's faith and transforms the simple gifts of bread and wine, in the power of the Spirit, into the life of the world? The real question to ask here is: How will standing be embodied *as prayer*?"[20] This question highlights the need to educate the congregation on possible meanings that exist for various postures and gestures and instructs a community toward intentionally in their use of corporate postures and gestures. Baldovin also states,

> We must be attentive, both to how our theology and piety will shape our postures and gestures in the liturgy as well as . . . to how bodily attitudes at worship will shape our theology and piety. What we do with our bodies at worship has far more effect on our experience than we usually think. The question before the church today is not *whether* our liturgical prayer will be embodied, but *how*.[21]

It is the position of this paper to agree that both axioms, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, and *lex credendi, lex orandi*, need to be applied to our understanding of the body in worship.[22] The body-and-soul person reflects faith in God's Word through posture and gesture, and posture and gesture will continue to be formative to our faith and belief in His Word.

As we move into describing some of the different movements that are used in worship, the

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[20] John F. Baldovin, "An Embodied Eucharistic Prayer," in *The Postures of the Assembly During the Eucharistic Prayer*, by John K. Leonard and Nathan D. Mitchell (Chicago: Liturgy Training, 1994), 9–10. Emphasis original.

[21] Baldovin, "An Embodied Eucharistic Prayer," 11. Emphasis original. Maschke similarly says, "Our form of worship communicates our doctrinal content and functions as a means to express our formal teachings. Form follows function and function follows form, and the liturgy provides both." Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 124.

[22] For a documentation of the historical use and a modern take on this axiom see Paul De Clerck, "'Lex Orandi, lex credendi': The Original Sense and Historical Avatars of an Equivocal Adage," trans. Thomas M. Winger, *Studia Liturgica* 24.2 (1994): 178–200. For a discussion of the reciprocity of the phrase, see Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Praise of God in the Theological Reflection of the Church," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (January 1995): 34–45.

simple definition to distinguish between gestures and postures is that gestures have to do with the movement of one's hands and head, and postures are a movement of one's entire body. Both are communicative movements in worship. Whichever movements are used, "They should have the naturalness appropriate to such communication and avoid seeming bizarre, overwrought, precious, or humdrum."[23] Instead they should be innate and genuine. As Leonard and Mitchell state, "Just as the body is the real 'symbol' of the soul, so physical gestures are the real symbols of those attitudes that flow from a human being's soul."[24] Thus, the postures and gestures that are used in worship would be misunderstood if they were simply performed according to personal taste or preference, but truly, these motions communicate a reality of our relationship to God and to one another in the Divine Service. Our communal movements will then speak the truth of the gospel to ourselves and to the others gathered with us in worship.

Gathering

Simply, presence in worship is itself a form of movement. By gathering with others, our bodies are physically present and active in a way that is unique. We gather to receive gifts from God that He promises to uniquely give through His Word and Sacrament.[25] At a purely basic level, we have made it a point to be in a particular place at a particular time to worship, and this worshipful action is the primary movement that opens the opportunity to all other movement in worship. We gather as the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4), and James White comments, that "as we gather to recognize the Lord's body, we also learn what it is to be fully

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[23] Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite*, 52.

[24] Leonard and Mitchell, *Postures of the Assembly*, 15.

[25] Arthur A. Just says that "our worship must immediately proclaim to our unbelieving neighbors that something is happening in the liturgy that happens nowhere else in all of creation. God, who is everywhere, chooses to locate Himself in the liturgy in Word and Sacrament." Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 26.

human. The body that takes shape on Sunday morning is a body already discerning the presence of the Lord in the flesh even as it gathers for worship. . . . Meeting is important; assembling is part of Christ's work among us."[26] As body-and-soul creatures, we gather presently in worship with others in the presence of our creator, who has created us to worship him in body-and-soul and to join with others in doing the same. White mentions that in this we "learn what it is to be fully human" because it is what God has created humanity to do, to live in a perfect loving relationship with Him and one another. When we gather together in worship, we are participating in this beautiful and basic act that expresses who and whose we are.

Standing and Sitting

Standing in worship has acted as a cultural sign of reverence and respect.[27] The congregation stood in synagogue worship whenever the law was read[28] and standing is the regularly prescribed posture for daily prayers in the *Mishnah*.[29] It is the assumed posture in the New Testament (Mark 11:25; Matt. 6:5; Luke 18:11, 13), even in reflecting repentance.[30] Standing continues to be used by Christians in worship at times of highlighted action, or when the congregation is expected to actively participate. Maschke states, "As gathered guests, we acknowledge our Host and His words to us. Standing also reminds the gathered guests that the Word, Jesus Christ, is truly present."[31]

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[26] White, *Christian Worship*, 301.

[27] Leonard and Mitchell point out that standing, "was the posture associated with service" in the ancient Greco-Roman world, "and hence signaled the status of servantship, subservience or even slavery." Leonard and Mitchell, *Postures of the Assembly*, 22.

[28] F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church* (New York: AMS, 1912), 209.

[29] See *Mishnah* Berakoth, 1:3; 3.5; 4.5; 5.1; in Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) cited in Leonard and Mitchell, *Postures of the Assembly*, 13

[30] Leonard and Mitchell, *Postures of the Assembly*, 23.

[31] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 151.

Sitting, on the other hand, is often used for elements in the service that are lengthier, such as during longer hymns or the sermon, and "helps to focus our attention."[32] Sitting also allows for times of quiet reflection, contemplation, and personal prayer during various elements of the Divine Service. While some cultures may be comfortable with standing for long periods, others would see extended periods of standing as an undue burden in worship. Therefore, the opportunity for one to sit may be highly valued in many settings. Standing, paired with sitting, have been used as default postures in the assembly, and sadly, the intentionality of congregational movement often goes no further than the congregation responding to prompts to sit or stand for various elements.

Bowing

The bowing of the head in worship is as ancient as worship itself, and is a thoroughly Biblical worship posture.[33] Abraham's servant worshipped the LORD by bowing his head when he was brought to Rebekah (Gen. 24:26, 48),[34] Israel bowed their heads when Aaron and Moses proclaimed God's plan to deliver them from Egypt (Exod. 4:31), and King David bowed his head

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[32] James L. Brauer, *Meaningful Worship: A Guide to the Lutheran Service* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1994), 20.

[33] Craig Douglas Erickson attests to its wide use by God's people: "Bowing is one of the body's antidotes for pride, a means of humbling one's spirit before God. All the proud men of the earth bow down before the Lord (Ps. 21[22]:29). Bowing can also be an expression of thankfulness (Ps. 137[138]:2), an acknowledgment of the presence of the Holy (Pss. 21[22]:9; 44[45]:11), an attitude for worship and adoration (Gen. 24:26; Exod. 12:27; 34:8; 1 Chron. 29:20; 2 Chron. 29:29; Neh. 8:6), a posture of lament (Ps. 34[35]:14), a gesture of supplication (Exod. 11:8), or a reverential greeting exchanged between human beings (Gen. 33:3, 7; 43:28). Bowing can also express subordination. Subjects bow before a monarch (Esther 3:2, 5); God's vanquished enemies will bow down before Israel (Gen 27:29) and before Yahweh (Ps. 71[72]:9); even their gods will bow before the Lord (Ps. 96[97]:7). All the peoples of the earth, in recognition of the universal lordship of God, will glorify the Lord by bowing (Ps. 85[86]:9). Bowing is also a sign of ultimate allegiance, which is why the Bible expressly forbids bowing before any other deity (Exod. 20:5; 23:24; 1 Kings 19:18; Ps. 80[81]:9; Mic. 5:13; Rom. 11:4). Jesus expresses his acceptance of God's will when, at the moment of his glorification upon the cross, he bows his head (John 19:30)." Craig Douglas Erickson, *Participating in Worship: History, Theory, and Practice* (Louisville: Westminister/John Knox, 1989), 164–65.

[34] Noted in Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 2.

in prayer (Ps. 35:13). It is a sign of respect and is an act of acknowledging Him as holy and righteous as we come into his presence or call upon His name.

In *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described,* Fortescue and O'Connell provide a description from the church's medieval tradition and culture of what a physical bow looks like: "In bowing, always keep the hands joined before the breast, unless they hold something. . . . The head is bowed deeply when certain words are said, for instance, at the holy name; when the three Divine Persons are named *Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus*; at *Oremus*; and during the *Gloria in excelsis*, and the Creed."[35] Even simply bowing one's head at the name of the Jesus is also an option. However, this practice could also become a distraction for one paying attention to the liturgical rite as one waits for every mention of Jesus in order to perform a perceived correct action that accompanies the speaking of His name.

Further describing the bow, Fortescue and O'Connell distinguish between three separate types of bows that a lay member could also use in their embodied worship:

> The rubrics prescribe several kinds of BOWS (*reverential, inclinatio*). Thus sometimes they say that the person is *profunde inclinatus*, sometimes that he is *aliquantulum inclinatus*, sometimes merely *inclinatus*; or they say *caput inclinat*. Generally, three bows are distinguished. A LOW BOW (*profunda inclinatio*) is made by bending the head and body so that the hands might touch the knees if they hung down; though, as a matter of fact, they are kept joined before the breast. The MEDIUM or MODERATE BOW (*media inclinatio*) is made by bending the head and shoulders less low than before. The SIMPLE BOW is made by bending the head either in a marked way (this is called a deep bow of the head and involves a slight bending of the shoulders), or not so deeply (a bow of the head alone).[36]

The incorporation of the bow into worship, especially corporately, connected with specific portions of the liturgical rite in the Divine Service may be a difficult cultural shift as anyone

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[35] Fortescue and O'Connell, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, 41.

[36] Fortescue and O'Connell, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, 41.

steeped in American culture is not quite accustomed to bowing.[37] However, depending on liturgical context, such as when one approaches the altar for the distribution, a bow may be appropriate. If a congregation wants to begin implementing bow postures into their worship, it may be prudent to begin by teaching a simple bow first. It will also be necessary to teach a community the significance behind a bow. Because of the biblical significance of bowing, teaching, and incorporating this posture into a body-and-soul engagement with the Divine Service would likely have a profound impact on the embodiment of certain elements in the liturgical rite. An argument for the incorporation of a bow at certain points of the Divine Service will be given below.

Sign of the Cross

It is possible that there has not been a more beloved gesture in the church than the sign of the cross. Its simplicity and depth of meaning make it a beautiful witness of the Christian's identity in Christ. Making the sign of the cross is a sign that we place over ourselves, remembering our baptism, in which we are marked and redeemed by the cross of Jesus Christ.[38] Even though Martin Luther commends making the sign of the cross during morning and evening prayer, the sign of the cross has grown out of use in the Lutheran church, with some disdaining the practice as "too Catholic." One could understand the confusion, since it is a regularly practiced gesture among Roman Catholics. However, given its history, it may better be understood as a "small c" catholic gesture.

The association of this gesture with the Roman Catholic Church is understandable since it

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[37] Bowing in American culture is actually more commonly associated with acknowledgement of accolades. Therefore, bowing may be thought of as drawing attention to one's self instead of embodying reference to God. The incorporation of this posture would therefore present an intentionally counter-cultural ritual action.

[38] Brauer, *Meaningful Worship*, 20–21.

is regularly used in the Roman Catholic Mass. Fortescue and O'Connell describe the way that the sign of the cross is made in the Roman rite:

> In the Roman rite the sign of the cross is made thus: Place the left hand extended under the breast. Hold the right hand extended also. At the word *Patris* raise it and touch the forehead; at *Filii* touch the breast at a sufficient distance down, but above the left hand; at *Spiritus Sancti* touch the left and right shoulders; at *amen* join the hands if they are to be joined. When the sign is made with other words the same order is kept. In making the small sign of the cross, the left hand is laid flat under the breast, the right, fully extended (palm inwards) and pointed towards the left, is carried to the forehead and with the left corner of the fleshy part of the thumb (separated from the fingers) a small sign of the cross with equal arms (+) is traced on the forehead, touching the skin. The same action is repeated on the closed lips and in the middle of the breast.[39]

Another option is to bring together the "thumb and first two fingers of the right hand together" as a reminder of the Trinity. Then touch the forehead, breast, and each shoulder to make the sign of the cross. While different church bodies have their preference of which shoulder is touched first, the order certainly does not matter. The *Lutheran Worship: Altar Book* denotes that the sign of the cross is made "by touching with the tips of the fingers the forehead ('My Lord Jesus Christ, came down from heaven'), then the breast ('and was incarnate for me'), the right shoulder ('and was crucified for me'), and finally the left shoulder ('and entered into my heart')."[40] This was a ubiquitous action for early Christians, which can be seen in writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. F. E. Warren cites Tertullian's description of the sign of the cross as a gesture used "in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross."[41] Summarizing thoughts of Tertullian, Hippolytus and Justin Martyr, Uzukwu says, "The gesture

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[39] Fortescue and O'Connell, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, 42.

[40] Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Worship: Altar Book*, 26–27.

[41] Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 87. He is citing Tertullian, *De Corona Militis*, cap. iii, ; *P.L.*, ii. 80.

of making the sign of the cross, tracing it on the forehead and other members, is in itself Christian prayer. It demarcates the recipient as a possession of the Christ and ensures protection against satanic powers."[42] This "possession of the Christ" is a reality that occurs at one's baptism. When we make the sign of the cross on ourselves, we recall our immersion into the death of Christ (6:4) which eternally marks us with His cross.[43] We make the sign of the cross as a sign of removing anger and false passions from our lives which leads to having a cross engraved heart of faith in the work of Jesus. [44] We make the sign of the cross to declare our faith alongside other Christians as we together remember and proclaim that we are God's baptized people.[45]

Kneeling

Kneeling acts as a posture of humility and "enacts adoration, supplication, contrition, or repentance."[46] In American culture today people rarely kneel for any reason, so one can consider this action quite counter-cultural. Brauer reflects our depravity in this posture, noting, "It helps us express our reliance on God."[47] It is the posture of the beggar, the one who is in need and desires something from the one before whom they kneel. When we kneel before God, we show that we are in need of His gifts that we cannot receive anywhere else. Kneeling became more popular as a posture in the Middle Ages and indicated one's personal penitence and humility,

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[42] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 22.

[43] Lorraine S. Brugh and Gordon W. Lathrop, *The Sunday Assembly: Using Evangelical Worship, Volume One* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2008), 117.

[44] Reed quotes Chrysostom on St. Matt. *Hom. liv.*, pp. 735–37, Oxf. Trans. Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 242.

[45] Brugh and Lathrop, *Sunday Assembly*, 1:117.

[46] Leonard and Mitchell, *Postures of the Assembly*, 16.

[47] Brauer, *Meaningful Worship*, 20.

more so than standing. Uzukwu states, "When kneeling asserted its dominance, standing became identified with lukewarmness."[48] So, instead of praying in an open (orans/orante) position, now a closed (kneeling "with the gesture of folded hands resting at the breast"[49]) position became the more common practice. Today, though kneeling is not often practiced, it remains a faithful biblical posture. It reminds us that on the Last Day we will certainly bow before our Savior, Jesus Christ. Bowing before God in worship reflects our eschatological expectation of the one who has come to us and is coming again (Phil. 2:9–10).[50]

Prayer Postures

Prayer is not just thinking or speaking words. It is commonly accompanied by a bodily representation of that prayer.[51] In quoting the Apostle Paul from his letter to Timothy, Ambrose says, "*I would that men,* that is, those who can observe the precept, *should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands.* What is meant by *lifting up pure hands*? Oughtest thou in thy prayer to show forth the cross of the Lord to all and sundry?"[52] The orans/orante posture is an ancient prayer posture where one is standing and "the hands are raised and held apart."[53] Uzukwu reflects the origin of the orante posture:

> This is the oldest and most persistent Christian gesture at prayer. It is an attitude inherited from the Greeks and Romans who normally prayed standing with arms lifted up and the palms facing heaven. It is a gesture representing piety; according to Clement of Alexandria, it symbolizes the motion of the soul toward the spiritual

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[48] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 21. Uzukwu is summarizing the work of J.-C. Schmitt, *La Raison des Gestes dans l'Occident Médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 299–300, 303–14.

[49] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 22.

[50] Erickson, *Participating in Worship*, 162

[51] Friedrich Heiler, *Das Gebet: Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Und Religionspsychologische Untersuchung*. (München: Verlag Von Ernst Reinhardt, 1923), 98.

[52] Ambrose, *On the Sacraments and On the Mysteries*, ed. J.H. Srawley, trans. T. Thompson (London: SPCK, 1950), 115. Ambrose is referencing 1 Tim. 2:8. Emphasis original.

[53] Theodor Filthaut, *Learning to Worship*, 138.

> realm. . . . Tertullian testifies to its predominance in Sunday worship and the paschal season. The posture, according to him, reflects the resurrection of Christ from the tomb on Easter day. . . .
>
> . . . The arms were also extended in the form of a *cross* to portray both the imitation and confession of the Christ. For Tertullian, the cruciform pattern is reflected in the prayer of Moses (Exod. 17:11), in the sculpture of the human structure, and in the motion of flying birds."[54]

This prolific posture beautifully reflects an array of messages. Through it, we see the figure of Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection, his complete work on our behalf. In his likeness, we are able to now come to our Father in prayer and, standing in his presence, freely request his mercy and grace.

In writing about this posture and its commendation by Paul to Timothy, Theodor Filthaut is amazed that it has been so neglected in Christian piety, since it is a perfect picture of the reality of prayer.[55] With hands open and lifted[56], or even open but kept in front of the body, we confess that in prayer we have nothing to bring to God. We are acknowledging His goodness and with open hands awaiting the gifts and blessings He graciously gives.

The hands clasped in prayer is the prayer posture that is commonly used in American Christian churches today and expresses "earnestness, concentration, and freedom from secular things."[57] It is both a posture of supplication, and an act of submission to and adoration of the creator of all things.[58]

A common element of prayer is closing one's eyes. This action could have a connection to

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[54] Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language*, 20–21. See Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, 7.7.43.6–7; Tertullian, *On Prayer*, 23, 29.

[55] Filthaut, *Learning to Worship*, 139.

[56] The Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book describes this gesture: "[It] is made by allowing the arms to hang at the side and then raising the forearms, with palms facing upward." The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book* (St. Louis, Concordia, 2006), x.

[57] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 272.

[58] Filthaut, *Learning to Worship*, 139–40.

the tax collector in Luke 18 who would not even raise his eyes as he prayed to God. It could also simply be an action of focus, meditating on the words of the prayer that is either being offered on behalf of the congregation, or the silent prayer that one offers during the time of Confession in the Divine Service.

The Divine Service

As argued above, there is significant reason for one to incorporate bodily posture and gesture into worship within the Divine Service. The gestures and postures associated with different elements below are not meant to be prescriptive, but simply descriptive, allowing a community a wide variety of options in determining how they could best introduce or employ them in their own worship setting.

The Invocation

As an entry into worship, we recognize the God whose name in which we are gathered by saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." This name was placed upon us in our baptism, and it is His name that is continually attached to ours, and in this reality we abide in Him (John 15:1–8.) Our identity is as baptized children of God, and our worship is only acceptable and possible because of the meritorious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, we are redeemed and able to enter into the presence of God. Because the sign of the cross is indicative of that baptismal identity, the assembly is welcome to make the sign of the cross in connection with the Invocation.

Confession and Absolution

Edgar Brown says, "The act of kneeling suggests humility, and where ought we to be more humble than when we confess our sins before God? Some say that to kneel will not make even

the proudest man any more humble, so why kneel? Still the thought that I get down on my knees indicates to me, if to no one else, that I must humble myself before God. . . . I kneel in the presence of God and beseech his forgiveness."[59] In an act of Confession, our attitude is one of lowliness, seeking mercy from God. It may be fitting for a congregation with kneelers to kneel during the corporate Confession through the Absolution.[60] However, this is not an option for many congregations, and therefore standing would also be a very fitting communal gesture as we respect our Father in whose presence we confess our sins.

Another posture that exists inside of Confession and Absolution is the posture of silence. It is unique to sit in a room full of people who are sitting together in complete silence. Between our time of corporate Confession and our reception of the Absolution is an opportunity for the congregation to confess in prayer to God. This becomes both an individualistic and communal act since it takes the whole gathering to be united for the silence to take place. Moreover, this is more than just the absence of sound; it is the opportunity for a "moment of awe, of being overwhelmed by transcendence."[61] Maschke notes that "a time for silent reflection [is] a nearly lost art in Christian corporate worship. Especially among North Americans, silence is rare."[62] The opportunity for silence is also an aspect of the Divine Service that is counter-cultural. Silence like this, when one is not used to it, can feel rather long. However, it may become a welcome part of a congregation's practice of Confession if practiced over time.

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[59] Brown, *Living the Liturgy*, 25.

[60] Kneeling for the Confession is the prescribed posture in the Communion Service written by William Loehe. William Loehe, *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*, ed. J. Deinzer, trans. F.C. Longaker (Newport, KY: 1902), 14. Likewise, Arthur Carl Piepkorn speaks of kneeling during the Confession and the Declaration of Grace. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Conduct of the Service* (Fort Wayne, IN: Redeemer, 2006), 9.

[61] Erickson, *Participating in Worship*, 49. For a full discussion on silence in worship, see Erickson, *Participating in Worship*, 40–53.

[62] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 139.

After confessing one's sins, an individual could either bow her head in receiving Absolution, possibly indicating an attitude of thankfulness, or lift her head and eyes to focus on the pastor as he stands in the place of Christ to speak the forgiveness that Jesus gives. Brown says that after Confession and receiving God's forgiveness through Christ, "I can lift my head again,"[63] acknowledging the new standing one has in being forgiven by her King. This does not need to be a communal posture, since either posture can have significant meaning for the individual. It would also be appropriate for a worshiper to vary this posture from week to week, depending how the reality of God's forgiveness affects them in that service. Then, as the pastor pronounces the Absolution over the congregation, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," it would again be appropriate to make the sign of the cross, reminding oneself, "Jesus Christ has brought me forgiveness by His death and resurrection *for me.*" As this gesture is made by many in the community, we acknowledge that Jesus is indeed crucified for all of us, and for the sins of the world.

An additional liturgical option is for the confessional service to take place at the entrance of the church. If this is the case, the congregation would face the back of the church until the procession brings their eyes forward to the chancel.[64] If with the procession there is a processional cross, the individual may elect to bow the head or bow at the waist as the cross passes by them out of remembrance of and reverence for Jesus' sacrifice.

The Introit of the Day

It has been a regular custom in the church that if the congregation knelt for Confession,

[63] Brown, *Living the Liturgy*, 27.

[64] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 137.

they would then stand for the next portion of the service.[65] We have been forgiven by Jesus Himself though His Absolution, and now we continue to worship in His presence, confident of our justification and sanctification in His name. The Introit now speaks a Psalm verse appropriate for the day, which concludes with the words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit." Reed records that "In old Lutheran circles the custom has been maintained to the present time of bowing the head in 'due and lowly reverence' at the Gloria Patri and at the name of Jesus throughout the service."[66] While often practiced individually, a congregation may collectively develop a pattern of bowing in one of the forms described by Fortescue and O'Connell above. Whatever form it takes, it speaks of the respect shown to God's name, which is holy. While there is no Biblical mandate that we bow at every utterance of God's name, it is fitting for worship as we seek to honor Him and keep His second commandment as we gather in His presence and in His name.

Kyrie Eleison

The Kyrie acts as a request for God to mercifully give His people His grace and peace.[67] It is a time of prayer and therefore a prayer posture, such as the orans position with hands held out in front or to the side of one's body, would be appropriately used by the congregation here. It would also be fitting, due to the plural pronouns in the prayer, for the congregation to join hands as they pray "in peace," since we are praying for one another and, in one voice, for the world. The decision of when to break hands could be taught or it could simply develop naturally, since a group would likely not desire to sing the hymn of praise in the same posture.

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[65] Piepkorn, *Conduct of the Service*, 10.

[66] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 252.

[67] Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 189–90.

Hymn of Praise: Gloria in Excelsis or This Is the Feast

This hymn of praise is an opportunity for the congregation to rejoice as they worship in the presence of their savior. Both the Gloria and This is the Feast are joyful in nature. Therefore, singing, swaying, dancing, smiling, and lifting up hands in the orans posture could each be used in various contexts. These simple acts aid in forming a positive response to the text and create further engagement with the beauty of God's Word sung in these songs.

Gloria in Excelsis

Along with the angels, we sing, "Glory to God in the Highest." This is not a quiet somber song since it proclaims the glory of God. As a result, our bodily singing will not be muted either. It is also another request for God's mercy that we just asked for in the Kyrie. One could find himself beating his breast, bowing, or lifting up his hands in the orans posture as he sings this song of praise. Fortescue and O'Connell describe the actions of the presider, many of which can be reflected by the congregation:

> As he says the first words, he separates the hands, extends them, elevates them to about the heights of the shoulders, joins them and bows his head at the word *Deo*. With joined hands he continues the *Gloria in excelsis*, reading it (if necessary) from the altar-card in the middle. He bows his head at the words *adoramus te, gratias agimus tibi, Iesu Christe, suscipe deprecationem nostrum*. At the last words, *cum Sancto Spiritu*, he makes the sign of the cross on himself.[68]

This Is the Feast

The other hymn of praise in the Divine Service, This is the Feast, sings the song of the saints around God's throne in Revelation (Rev. 5:6–13; 19:5–9). In Revelation 5, those gathered around the throne fall down before the Lamb and sing this song. One posture option for this hymn is to bow during the singing of the verses, reflecting the posture of the elders around Jesus'

[68] Fortescue and O'Connell, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, 61.

throne. We sing acknowledging that in worship we are also in God's presence at the feast of His victory, anticipating our future in which all of God's people will be gathered around His throne to worship Him. Another appropriate posture would be the orans position. With hands raised, we join with those around the throne, acknowledging the majesty of Jesus with shouts of "Alleluia."

The Salutation and Collect of the Day

The Salutation is an ancient greeting that has Biblical origins. [69] This call and response reflects our communal reality in the presence of God. The ancient movement that is associated with the salutation is that "the presiding minister 'may extend his hands in greeting.' This gesture is achieved by extending one's arms forward slightly, a little more than shoulder' width apart, with palms facing upward," as he says, "The Lord be with you."[70] Nicholas Gihr explains, 'The extending of the hands expresses the ardent longing and the earnest desire of the priest that the blessing he invokes may be bestowed."[71] As the presider performs this gesture, he shows that his words are to be received by the entire assembly. The congregation is welcome to reflect the gesture by opening up their folded hands in front of them and then returning them together. This gesture embodies both the reception of blessing and the return of the blessing to the presider.

In between the Salutation and the Collect of the Day is another opportunity for silence. Whether the silence is brief or extended, it allows one to pray silently for a moment before the presider offers a prayer for God's people. It can also act as a time of preparation as the

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[69] Joseph Jungmann describes its background. "Both the greeting and the reply are ancient, their origins hid in pre-Christian times. In the Book of Ruth (2:4) Boaz greets his reapers with *Dominus Vobiscum*. The Salutation was thus part of everyday life. It is met with several times in Holy Scripture (Luke 1:28, cf. Judges 6:12, 2 Chronicles 15:2, 2 Thessalonians 3:16). The reply of the reapers to Boaz's greeting was: *Benedicat tibi Dominus*. [May the Lord bless you]." Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951), 1:363.

[70] Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book*, x.

[71] Nicholas Gihr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically and Aesthetically Explained* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1903), 411, referenced in Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 263.

congregation readies itself to pray together and come before God's throne with the petitions in the Collect of the Day.

The Collect of the Day acts as the prayer of the community reflecting the theme of the appointed readings. Folded hands in prayer could help to focus one on that theme. The orans prayer posture could also be used to show a desire to receive from God in this Divine Service what he promises to give.

The First Reading, the Gradual, and the Second Reading

After many elements of congregational speech in the Divine Service, Reed says, "We now pause in reverent silence while God speaks. The thought that nothing that we say or do can compare in importance with His Word invests the reading of the liturgical Lessons with special solemnity and dignity."[72] Commonly in the Divine Service, the congregation is seated for these elements. Sitting can display an action of *resting* in the words of God that he speaks at this moment of the service.[73]

The Gradual can give the congregation an opportunity to sing, a very bodily gesture, in response to the word and theme of the day. If a choir or cantor sings the Gradual, the congregation can have an opportunity to simply listen and reflect on the Gradual that is sung according to the season of the church year.

The Alleluia and Verse and The Holy Gospel

As we sing the Alleluia (Praise the LORD), we do so in expectation of hearing from our

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[72] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 273.

[73] Erickson also mentions the act of lay reading at this moment of the service, which is another option for participation. "Public reading of God's word by nonordained persons is an ancient tradition. The use of lay readers indeed enhances liturgical participation. Moreover, the practice deepens the sense of common stewardship for God's word." Erickson, *Participating in Worship*, 136.

Savior Himself in the words of the Holy Gospel. We may again sing this while smiling, swaying, dancing, raising hands in the orans posture, and loudly proclaiming our Alleluia. Our ritual actions then reflect our joy in hearing from Him who gives us words of eternal life (John 6:68.)

Therefore in the Alleluia, "Our ceremony, our rising to stand in silence, our voices lifted in song, are the actions we perform at this point in our worship to indicate our feelings. 'Hush, this is important. It is the voice of God.'"[74] We stand for the reading of the Gospel, a practice that comes from the earliest public readings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[75] In these readings we hear the words and works of Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:14,) therefore more ritual action is afforded this reading each week. Our standing can be reverent, jubilant, and expectant, knowing that what we hear will be spoken so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in His name (John 20:31.)

A gesture that has been commonly associated with the reading of the Gospel is making a triple sign of the cross upon one's forehead, lips, and breast, often tracing these crosses with the thumb. The presider may make the gesture while proclaiming the Gospel reading's reference. Then, the people, while responding "Glory to you, Lord," may also make the same sign themselves. The meaning of the gesture is straightforward: We want the gospel to be in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts. We want it to inform everything we think, say, or do.

The Sermon

If the pastor uses the ancient tradition of beginning and ending the sermon with, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen," this is another opportunity for

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[74] Brown, *Living the Liturgy*, 63. Reed states that the "Special honor was accorded the liturgical Gospel as revealing the divine nature of our Lord as the living Word ever present in the written Word. Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 281.

[75] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, ed. Fred L. Precht (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993), 413.

the congregation to make the sign of the cross. It is a reminder that the entirety of the sermon is focused on what God has done for His people through their Savior, Jesus. One listens in His name, hearing His Word, which proclaims the gifts of His cross for her.

While listening to the sermon in the ancient church, "The congregation would participate and react more than we do, e.g., beating breasts when they heard the Law and crying out with joy when they heard the Gospel."[76] Depending on the congregation, these could become embodied responses to hearing God's Word. A congregation may engage the preacher as he preaches, responding with phrases of acclamation (e.g. "Amen," "Praise the Lord," and "Halleluiah") as part of a physical and verbal reception of that Word. However, this is not always culturally acceptable or appropriate, and verbal responses to the sermon might distract from the proclamation of the sermon or conflict with desire for silent reflection on the proclamation. Therefore, the sermon may also present an occasion in the Divine Service where there is no movement. Thus, refraining from movement during the sermon is similar to a meaningful conversation. While either standing[77] or sitting for the sermon, the assembly is given an opportunity to rest in the Word of God proclaimed for them (Matt. 11:28.)

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed is a portion of the Divine Service that is traditionally associated with both posture and gesture. Reed states, "The people stand in reciting the Creed in token of readiness to profess and of resolution to defend the Christian faith."[78] Standing, and ready to confess the Creed, the congregation may wish to follow along with the same gestures that

[76] Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 204.

[77] Before pews were introduced into churches, and even in many Orthodox churches where there are no pews, the congregation regularly stands for the sermon.

[78] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 287.

Charles McClean records for the presider:

> As [he] says, "I believe in one God," he may as at the beginning of the gloria in excelsis, open his hands and immediately rejoin them, bowing his head as he does. He may, as always, bow his head at the holy name of Jesus. He may bow from the waist at the worlds, "And was incarnate" and remain bowed through the words, "was crucified also for us." He stands erect again before the words, "under Pontius Pilate" are said. . . . The celebrant may bow his head at the words, "worshiped and glorified." At the words, "and the life of the world to come," the celebrant may sign himself with the cross.[79]

All these opportunities to perform a bow at God's name are in response to His great work on our behalf. The longer bow made in the second article of the Creed shows that we recognize the great mercy God shows to us in the incarnation of Jesus, who lowered and humbled himself to stand in our place. The note made by McClean, and the tradition of the church, to stand erect before the words "under Pontius Pilate" is due to the mock kneeling and bowing that the Roman soldiers made before Jesus' crucifixion. However, if this is not a stumbling block to the bowing posture, a community may decide to bow through the words, "and was buried," the words that end the section of Jesus' humiliation. We then raise our heads again as joyful embodiment of His exaltation that He shows in his defeat of sin, death, and the power of the devil. Finally, a bow during "worship and glorified" shows reverence for and belief in the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The congregation's orientation might also be considered during the Creed. Reed notes that the Creed has traditionally been spoken "facing the altar (presumably in the East) . . . . The usual explanation is that Paradise is in the East. St. Basil says, 'We are seeking our ancient country.' The custom also is a reminder of Baptism and of the early-Church requirements that all candidates for Baptism, when making their profession of faith, should face the East from whence the Sun of Righteousness appears."[80] The Creed spoken facing the altar is certainly a traditional

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[79] Charles McClean, ed., *Conduct of the Services* (Fort Wayne, IN: Redeemer, 2006), 41.

[80] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 287, quotes Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 67.

posture, but it may also be appropriate for members of the assembly to face one another to recite the Creed. This posture reflects commonality in faith and embodies the reality that we all hold this belief in unity, not individually, but corporately.

Finally, at the end of the Creed, one may wish to make the sign of the cross at the words, "The resurrection of the dead." McClean notes, "It is said that the sign of the cross is made at this point since it is only through the death of Christ and his subsequent resurrection that we have the hope of the resurrection. A bodily gesture at this point signifies that our bodies share in the full redemption accomplished for us by Christ."[81] We believe in Christ and are redeemed by him, body-and-soul. Our faith and hope hinges on the resurrection of Jesus, which foreshadows our resurrection to life everlasting.

The Prayer of the Church

The prayer of the church is a portion of the service where the congregation focuses outside of themselves. Reed notes that the reformation period restored the Prayer of the Church to the liturgical rite. "Here we have not only full recognition of the 'priesthood of believers,' but an expression of the church's concern for the world we live in, for the church universal, for all its institutions and operations, and for human society in all its reaches."[82] Therefore, many prayer postures could be appropriately used during this time of prayer. Hands folded can embody a group's deep plea for God to grant the petitions prayed. The orans position offers a posture of humble reception of all that God has to offer to us and others for which we pray. A congregation holding hands in prayer shows their unity in this prayer for one another and for the world.

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[81] McClean, *Conduct of the Services*, 41.

[82] Luther D. Reed, *Worship: A Study of Corporate Devotion* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959), 97–99.

The Offering and the Offertory

After receiving God's Word proclaimed, the congregation is given the opportunity to show their sacrifice of thanksgiving through the offering. More than just an opportunity for the church and her workers to be sustained, the offering is an embodied action of the congregation's desire to return to the Lord what He has so generously given to them. The offering is an external way that we demonstrate our faith and trust in the Lord working through these gifts.[83]

Following the Offering, the congregation joins in singing the Offertory, and "Together with the offerings, the vessels containing bread (pyx or ciborium) and wine (cruet or flagon) may be brought by representatives of the congregation and placed on the altar to be made ready for the consecration and Communion."[84] It has also been common for individuals to bring up gifts for the poor and to support the work of the pastor and the church.[85] Any of these actions at this point of the service would be quite appropriate as we graciously return gifts to God who has first given them to us, so that they would be further used in service to His kingdom.

The Preface and Proper Preface

The preparation of the congregation to receive the sacrament of the altar begins with the Preface, which is identical to the Salutation mentioned above, and may prompt the same open-handed greeting. Fortescue and O'Connell record an additional description of the actions associated with the presider's leading and speaking of the rest of the Preface: "Then he raises his hands to the height of the shoulders or breast. . . . So he says *Sursum corda*. He joins his hands as

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[83] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 294.

[84] Commission on Worship, *History and Practice*, 418. See also Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 160.

[85] Reed, *Worship*, 95–96.

he says *Gratias agamus*; as he says *Deo nostro* he looks up to the cross, then bows his head."[86] The congregation might similarly use these movements. "When the minister sings 'Lift up your hearts,' the hands each describe a graceful circle."[87] The congregation, by similarly lifting up their hands as a they say, "we lift them up unto the Lord," show their full embodied intention to do just what they say; they lift their hands as though receiving gifts from the One who gives all good gifts (James 1:17). As Fortescue and O'Connell commend, bowing may be a suitable movement for the attitude of thanksgiving as the assembly says, "It is right to give Him thanks and praise." They could also flatly place their palms against one another in this response, which is also a common cultural gesture of thanksgiving.

What follows these responses is the Proper Preface. Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli record, "Beginning with the Preface and throughout the Great Thanksgiving, the biblical gesture of praying with hands uplifted and outstretched—which Christianity continued from Judaism—is appropriate because it gives visual expression to the import of the words.[88] It would similarly be appropriate for the assembly to lift up their hands to God as they, listening to the presider, pray this prayer.

The Sanctus

The singing of the Sanctus flows straight from the Proper Preface. This song first recalls Isaiah's vision as he is caught up to the throne of God in the presence of His majesty. (Isaiah 6)[89] Maschke laments that some movement that was common with the Sanctus is not so common

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[86] Fortescue and O'Connell, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, 66.

[87] Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), 235.

[88] Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy*, 235.

[89] Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy*, 235.

anymore. He says, "A Lutheran tradition that has been lost in most congregations is to bow during the singing of the Sanctus and to make the sign of the cross at the Benedictus.[90] These two actions provide a physical response to the awesome awareness of God's graciousness in Christ."[91] The bow during the Sanctus reflects our awe of God, joining in the action of the angels singing this song around God's throne. Just suggests that we bow also because of the "bodily presence of Christ crucified and risen, present for us, for the forgiveness of our sins, for our salvation."[92] According to Just, the sign of the cross is made during the Benedictus "to acknowledge that we are baptized, that this same crucified and risen Christ dwells in us bodily by Baptism and faith, and that only because He is holy and gives that holiness to us bodily are we now called holy."[93] Both of these movements reflect the belief that Jesus is truly present with us in this meal, and we are humble and ready to receive what He so graciously gives to us.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Now, either standing or kneeling after singing the song of the angels around God's throne, each congregation will choose a common prayer posture that reflects their desire to take and eat the Eucharist as they pray The Prayer of Thanksgiving. If they are standing, they may want to use the orans position, to embody that we have nothing to offer God as they come to His table, and they eagerly expect to receive His grace and mercy in the body and blood of Jesus. This time

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[90] Maschke is here referring to the Sanctus as the section, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might: Heaven and earth are fully of Your glory." The Benedictus then follows with the words, "Hosanna, Hosanna. Hossana in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." The sign of the cross he references

[91] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 167. Concerning the Benedictus, Maschke says, "The people of Jerusalem sang these messianic verses as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Therese words of Jesus' first-century disciples and followers are also our hymns of praise as Jesus comes to us in the mystery and marvel of the Sacrament of the Altar. The sign of the cross may again be made at this time." Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 166.

[92] Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 218.

[93] Just, *Heaven on Earth*, 218.

of prayer is also another opportunity for the congregation to hold hands, recognizing that they all come together in need and desire for the body and blood of Jesus for their forgiveness and life. After the Prayer of Thanksgiving the congregation will keep the same prayer posture that they have had to pray the Lord's Prayer together.

The Words of Our Lord

It is common to keep one's head lifted as the pastor speaks the words of Jesus. Then, as the pastor speaks the words, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you, do this in remembrance of me," and "Drink of it all of you, this is the blood of the covenant shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me." As these words are spoken congregation may either wish to bow in reverence of Jesus presence in, with, and under the bread and wine or keep their eyes focused on the pastor and His proclamation of Jesus' words. Additionally, as the pastor makes the sign of the cross over the elements, one may likewise make the sign of the cross simply on his forehead or a full sign of the cross on himself. This action inscribes the belief that the very same Jesus that was crucified is also here and is here "for me."

The Pax Domini

The presider states the proclamation of peace, "The peace of the Lord be with you always," to which the congregation responds, "Amen." This Amen is again joyful in nature because this is a peace that we can only receive from God. Here we receive true peace in Jesus' body and blood for our forgiveness and life. We may smile as we say Amen because this peace is simply beyond our understanding.

The Pax Domini may be followed by the Kiss of Peace.[94] The Kiss of Peace 'is a liturgical

[94] Another practice is to place the sharing of the peace earlier in the service following the prayers. The

gesture which expressed agape in a visible manner, the reciprocal love of the faithful, the peace of the lord which He gives us and which we share with the brothers.'"[95] It is a sign of the "indwelling of Christ in the church" within our brothers and sisters, and "the warmth of human touch helps to dissolve divisions and to unite the body of Christ."[96] This common New Testament gesture of unity and fellowship (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14) was practiced until the thirteenth century.[97] Cyril of Jerusalem gives a beautiful attestation to its inclusion in the New Testament church:

> The deacon calls out: 'Greet one another, let us kiss one another.' Don't take this kiss to be like the kiss friends exchange when they meet in the market-place. This is something different; this kiss expresses a union of souls and is a plea for complete reconciliation. The kiss then is a sign that our souls are united and all grudges banished. This is what our Lord meant when he said: 'If you are offering your gift on the altar and remember there that your brother has a complaint against you, leave your gift on the altar and go first and be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift' (Mt. 5:23–4). Thus the kiss is reconciliation, and so is holy, as blessed Paul implied when he proclaimed: "Greet one another with a holy kiss'; and Peter: 'Greet one another with the kiss of charity.'[98]

Likewise, Senn writes about the significance of the Kiss of Peace in the context of the Lord's Supper:

Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book rubric suggests, "Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, 'Peace be with you,' as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22-24; Eph. 4:1-3.)" Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book*, 142. Either placement of this gesture is appropriate and can communicate the purpose behind it, which is the expression of unity within the congregation.

[95] P. Christophe, L. Marino, trans., *La Bellezza dei Gesti del Cristiano* (Bose: Qiqajon, 2009), 33 quoted in Christopher M.J. Zielinski, "Liturgy, Ritual and Contemporary Man – Anthropological and Psychological Connections in *The Sacred Liturgy*: *Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church: The Proceedings of the International Conference on the Sacred Liturgy Sacra Liturgia 2013,* (ed. Alcuin Reid; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 241.

[96] Erickson, *Participating in Worship*, 169.

[97] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 343–44.

[98] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Mystagogic Catechesis 5" in *Cyril of Jerusalem,* trans. Edward Yarnold, ed. Carol Harrison; (New York: Routledge, 2000), 182–83. In his translation, Yarnold also notes, "Theodore of Mopsuestia similarly instructs the communicants to apply the body of Christ to their eyes and also to kiss it (Bapt. Hom. 5 (6,16) 28; Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, p.242)."

> The church's oneness is both expressed in the liturgy and formed by the liturgy itself. The Eucharistic meal is the sacrament of unity, the expression of the church's fellowship. No one can participate in the Lord's Supper who is not one in faith and love with the other communicants. This is why the greeting or kiss of peace has been shared before the communion (actually before the offertory in the Eastern rites and in many of the revised non-Roman Catholic Western rites). The peace is not just an interpersonal gesture of good will; it is an act of reconciliation among the faithful. It is a ritual act which transforms strangers into brothers and sisters.[99]

As Christians gather around the altar to receive this most precious gift, it is godly that they do so in unity and peace with one another with a spirit of forgiveness that comes only from Jesus. (1 Cor. 11).[100] Since kissing one another is not a standard American cultural practice, a handshake or a hug can be equally significant to share the peace with one another. As with the Kiss of Peace, it is more than just a greeting. It is a profound statement of concord among all gathered in the congregation. Maschke observes, "Some feel the appearance of chaos that can result as people reach across pews or walk down the aisles disrupts the solemn flow of the liturgical rite. However, in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul expresses the need for communal forgiveness and reconciliation. . . . The sharing of the peace is an opportunity for worshipers to be reconciled and to express the great love they have for one another."[101] Because of the wonderful testimony of this action, if one is seeking to include more gesture in the divine service, the sharing of peace may be a worthy movement to introduce.

The Agnus Dei

The final element in the divine service before receiving Holy Communion is the singing of the Agnus Dei. This song reflects the same attitude as the Kyrie above, and therefore may

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[99] Senn, *New Creation*, 47.

[100] Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy*, 227.

[101] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 158.

employ a similar gesture. Arthur Piepkorn records, "During the singing of the Agnus Dei by the congregation, the celebrant . . . strikes himself on the breast with the tips of the last three fingers of his right hand at the final word of each of the three petitions."[102] The assembly could similarly do the priest's action of striking the breast. Romano Guardini says that this action "is to beat against the gates of our inner world in order to shatter them."[103] It is another sign of our attitude of repentance and our desire to be renewed by The Lamb of God. During this sacrificial element, "The congregation should give its undivided attention and endeavor to realize its deeply devotional spirit."[104] It could be helpful for one to close his eyes during the singing of the Agnus Dei to focus on the profound prayer that is being sung.

The Distribution

As the congregation is welcomed forward to receive the Lord's Supper, many individuals wonder what to do as they approach the altar. It may be beneficial for one to take a posture that is uncommon to his everyday life, since something unique and transcendent is happening here at the Lord's Table. One could hold his hands in front of himself with his palms pressed against one another, or simply clasp his hands in readiness to open them and receive the body of Christ. Then, when communicants approach the altar, Piepkorn notes the common practice of bowing: "In many parishes it is customary for the communicant to bow moderately before kneeling to receive the host and to bow moderately again after having been dismissed or after having received the cup."[105] This bow acknowledges the presence of Christ in this meal and allows the individual to show his humility and appreciation to Christ.

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[102] Piepkorn, *Conduct of the Service*, 28.

[103] Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs* (St. Louis: Pio Decimo, 1956), 30.

[104] Senn, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 347.

[105] Piepkorn, *Conduct of the Service*, 31.

Writing to newly catechized Christians, Cyril of Jerusalem impresses the importance of certain bodily gestures when approaching the Eucharist.

> So when you approach do not come with your wrists extended or your fingers parted. Make your left hand a throne for your right, which is about to receive the King, and receive Christ's body in the hollow of your hand, replying 'Amen'. Before you consume it, carefully bless your eyes with the touch of the holy body, watching not to lose any part of it; for if you do lose any of it, it is as if it were part of your own body that is being lost. Tell me, if someone gave you some golden filings, wouldn't you keep them safe and take care not to incur a loss through mislaying any of them? So shouldn't you take much greater care not to drop any crumbs of what is more precious than gold or gems?
>
> Then after receiving Christ's body, approach the cup of his blood. Do not stretch out your hands; bow down, say 'Amen' as a form of worship or adoration, and sanctify yourself by partaking of Christ's blood. While your lips are still moist, touch them lightly with your hands and bless your eyes, your forehead and your other senses. Then as you wait for the prayer, thank God for admitting you to these great mysteries.[106]

This magnificent imagery that Cyril describes shows the thought that went into early Christians' posture and gesture in worship.

During the reception of the Sacrament, it is important to remember, as Reed comments, "The Lutheran Church prescribes no particular posture. Either kneeling or standing is proper, but not sitting. Kneeling more fittingly expresses the right spirit of the moment, born of reverence and humility. Practical considerations sometimes favor standing. Luther approved kneeling, though he refers to standing."[107] Maschke adds to Reed by saying, "To deepen the sense of

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[106] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catechesis 5,* 186–87. Referenced in Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 65.

[107] Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 351. Bradshaw and Johnson give further details on the developments of certain ritual actions. "When people did receive communion, there were changes in the manner of reception, some of which arose out of a concern about accidental spillage of the sacred elements. From the ninth century onward the bread began to be placed on people's tongues instead of into their hands (though whether this was to avoid crumbs failing to be consumed, or because of fears that the bread might be carried away for sacrilegious purpose, or because the people were thought unworthy to touch the sacred object is not clear), the practice of kneeling to receive communion began to be introduced from the eleventh century onward (this certainly for reasons of reverence), and by the thirteenth century in some places acolytes were holding a cloth (known in English as a houseling cloth) in front of each communicant to catch anything that might fall from their mouths." Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic*

oneness and unity in Christ that the Sacrament provides, many congregations use a continuous method of distribution. . . . Regardless of the method, the pace of distribution should communicate dignity and respect because the gathered guests are receiving the greatest gifts from the Host – Himself."[108] Kneeling, standing, and continuous distribution are all faithful methods of distributing the sacrament. Space and context will aid in determining which mode of reception is practiced by a congregation.

It is also quite appropriate to "assist the minister who delivers the chalice by raising the head and by grasping the base of the chalice to guide the cup to the mouth."[109] It is unnecessary to be completely 'hands-off' in the reception of the sacrament. While this is a ceremonious and reverent act, it is also an opportunity to receive physically what Christ is giving as one touches it with his fingers, holds it in his hand, and receives it through his lips.[110] Maschke also notes, "After receiving each element [communicants may] make the sign of the cross either before or after receiving the elements as a reminder of their own continuing baptismal relationship with God."[111] This is a simple and repeatable ritual action that declares faith in the One who is present in this gift.

After receiving the Sacrament some personal space to reflect upon and respond to the Lord's gifts is beneficial: "Immediately upon returning to the pew, each communicant kneels and offers a prayer of thanksgiving and self-dedication."[112] Even without kneelers, a communicant

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Liturgies, 212. They also note that one can find further details in Jungmann, *Mass*, 2:374–82; Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (New York: Pueblo, 1982), 86–88.

[108] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 173–74.

[109] Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy*, 245.

[110] As a practical note, the holding of the chalice also assists with preventing any unwanted spills while receiving the blood of Christ.

[111] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 175.

[112] Senn, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 353.

may sit and pray for a moment, thanking God for His gifts in the Sacrament. This is also one more opportunity that the liturgical rite may offer for silent reflection. Hymns or special music are common during this time of distribution and can enhance the congregation's focus on the service, but omitting these may also give opportunity for the congregation to sit in meditative silence. This would allow the post-communion prayer time to be even more intentional and reflective.[113]

Amidst the ritual action associated with distribution and reception of the Sacrament, Henry Horn reminds us, "The action that transpires in Holy Communion is not our action. It is God's action."[114] It would be easy to get caught up in particular movements that would be done 'just so' in order to feel like one *properly* receives the sacrament. Just as Christ's body and blood are His gift to us, so are the bodies and movements with which we receive these elements. These suggested movements are intended to draw the communicant deeper into the work of God in the Sacrament.

The Dismissal

Depending on the practice of a congregation, the dismissal could happen at the rail with each table or corporately after everyone has communed. As the pastor speaks "Go in peace" while making the sign of the cross, the congregation may also desire this gesture as a seal of remembering that this body and blood of Jesus are peace-giving elements that have now been consumed and go with us. Again, a smile may be a simple appropriate response as we are dismissed to be "strengthened body and soul to life everlasting."

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[113] Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 176.

[114] Henry E. Horn, *Liturgy and Life*, ed. William E. Wendt (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church, 1966), 69.

The Post Communion Canticle: The Nunc Dimittis and Thank the Lord

After communion, we, God's creatures, have beheld our creator who has met with us through His Son in Holy Communion. The Nunc Dimittis is a song of God's physical proximity to His people. As the congregation sings, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit" they may wish to bow as they did during the Introit, honoring God's holy name.

Since we are lead out "in joy," as we sing Thank the Lord, one will likely find herself singing this song while smiling. One who has encountered the presence of their Savior cannot help but give a full-bodied shout of "Alleluia" in acclamation. This song of proclamation also states that we "bear His name" as we go from God's presence. Our embodied worship of God does not end in the Divine Service; it goes out with us into the world.

The Post-Communion Collect

This is one final opportunity to reflect on the gifts that God has given through this sacrament and various prayer postures could help aid in that reflection. Praying this prayer in the orans position would remind one that they came to this altar with empty hands and God filled them with His gifts. Closed hands in prayer would remind one of holding fast to what God has given to her, that it would be a blessing to her as she leaves with Christ in her heart and Christ on her lips. Finally, kneeling could provide for a posture of gratitude to God for His forgiveness and grace in this sacrament.

The Benediction

Standing and kneeling are both common during the Benediction, and one common Christian practice has been to bow the head when receiving the blessing.[115] However, as with

[115] J. H. Srawley records that this practice was part of the Syrian Liturgy dating back to the fourth century. J. H. Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1957), 99.

receiving the Absolution, one may also wish look to the pastor delivering the Benediction. In a physical gesture of "receiving" the Benediction, one could hold her hands open in front of her, in a desire to take hold of the promise of blessing God gives in these words.

As the pastor makes the sign of the cross over the congregation in connection with the Benediction, this is one more opportunity for the assembly to make the sign of the cross on themselves. This reminds them that everything that they have received and responded to in the divine service has been done in the name of the one who has been crucified and raised for us.[116] It is only through him that we can receive blessings from God, and we go from the service filled with the peace of God. Whatever the posture, the time after the Benediction allows for one more moment of silence for the congregation to spend a couple of moments in prayer.[117]

Conclusion

Thanks be to God that we have been created body-and-soul. As our incarnate Lord comes to us and we fellowship with him, we realize this is a truly transcendent gift. In order to better understand this dynamic and the benefits of body-and-soul worship, we are blessed to examine the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and proprioception. From these we see that movement

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[116] "Der Segensformel, gesprochen oder gesungen, wird mit symbolischer Bewegung der Hände begleitet, indem man während desselben die Hände oder wenigstens die rechte Hand erhebt, am Schlusse aber bei dem Worte "Friede" das Kreuzeszeichen macht. Das Erheben der Hände über die Gemeinde ist die biblische Geberde des Segnens, das Kreuzeszeichen aber über die Gemeinde am Schlusse desselben "prägt dem Symbole seinen specifisch christlichen Character auf und erinnert hier, wie überall, daß alle Gnade und aller Segen aus dem Verdienste des Gekreuzigten fließt." Das Zeichen des Kreuzes ist nach alter Vorschrift in dieser Form und Folge zu machen:

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und zwar, es mag dasselbe mit der ganzen Hand oder mit dem Daumen und den beiden ersten Fingern formirt werden, so daß der kleine Finger dem zu segnenden Gegenstand zunächst zugekehrt ist." Friedrich Lochner, *Der Hauptgottesdienst der Evangelisch Lutherischen Kirche* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1895), 271.

[117] Senn, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 362.

in liturgy is not merely symbolic and useful but integral and formative. One benefit of the Divine Service is the ease with which it is adapted. Learning theory shows that the simple motions are easily imitated and easily repeated. The resulting repetition lends itself to internalization and creates a stronger bond between the worshipper and his Lord. The Divine Service's range of motions further allows the congregant to physically interact with the fellow body of believers and with the Savior. Body theory suggests that such motions as kneeling, bowing, or dancing present the values and gifts of the service in a tangible way and nurture identity in the participant as a child of God. Proprioception shows that our bodies are uniquely the receivers and actors in response to our ritual actions. The imitated movement incorporates us into the habitus of the congregation and forms an embodiment of faith.

Embodied worship finds further significance in its cultural context. Again, a beautiful aspect of the Divine Service is its ability to draw in the participant. This effect can both transcend and cross borders. Due to the range of suggested action, the embodiment can take on different forms for different congregations and lead to inculturation regardless of the gathered assembly's background. For instance, the Alleluia can be embodied by either swaying and dancing or a more reverent raising of the hands in the orans posture, depending on the congregation's norms. Either is appropriate and faithful. At the same time, the Divine Service is strong enough to stand on its own in the midst of culture. When culture clashes with liturgical action, the transcendent essence of the rite still invites the worshipper to engage, and this can lead to a realization of the otherworldliness of the event. While the American believer would not normally bow, he can still comfortably perform this action as he approaches the Lord's table, recognizing the lofty and miraculous nature of the gift he is about to receive.

A local congregation is the best judge of which ritual actions will be appropriate,

meaningful, and faithful in the proclamation of the gospel. This embodied worship is the natural response of one being served by God in the Divine Service. Our worship is enriched when we are intentional in our movement and actively receive and respond to the gifts that God gives to us as we hear and speak His Word. God has uniquely created us, body-and-soul, and by engaging physically in these communal actions, the worship of the body of Christ is enhanced. The physical embodiment of God's Word forms our further belief in God's action for His people.

By worshiping God with our whole being, we manifest what it means to be fully human. Embodied, we recognize God's particular plan for our personhood. From this, we enact the divine and edifying movements of the people of God in the presence of God. Through active participation and ritual action in the Divine Service, we return glory to God. Thus, in this embodied form of worship we are able to rest in the presence of our creator as his creatures – the body-and-soul persons He created us to be.

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