

# Forms of Worship in our Synod Today and Tomorrow

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Worship is not a spectator's sport. It is an act. The fact of the matter is that often one wonders about the truth of the statement. There are times, perhaps too often, when we would like to put a great big sign in front of the church door after the service has started reading, "Do not disturb."

It also is a fact that this is the age of the empty pew. More and more churches are experiencing less and less attendance during Sunday services. And this is especially true of the attendance of the young adult as well as the teenager. Churches have attempted to counter-act this exodus of church worship services by looking for new forms of worship. In every denomination and in every church body there is a rash of experimentation with new modes of worship, hoping that with them they would capture again the people and bring them back into their fold. We, in the Wisconsin Synod, often hear responses by youth and young adults as well as adults, which state that they simply could not get anything out of the service. That its form is antiquated, its language is archaic, its sermons are irrelevant and its music is too slow and uncomfortable for the modern person. That is their claim.

I hope to have my discussion emphasize the practical aspect of worship. That does not mean that I will not attempt to show some valid principals, theologically valid, as well as historically valid. I would like to ask questions such as these: Are we doing all that we can to make the worship service meaningful? That is, the worship service in the form which we are using now? Are we using, all of the resources which we have to enrich and to make relevant, in the proper sense of the word, the worship service? In fact, do we have the proper attitude and understanding in regard to the concept of what is truly Lutheran worship and good liturgical practice?

I have no intentions of throwing out the baby with the bath water, i.e. all that we have had so far should be thrown out as worthless, because much sweat, blood, and tears has gone into the creation and formulation of the liturgical forms that we do have. And that unites with the Saints of old and that we want to keep. On the other hand, must we continue to hand on to the next generations the same fossilized form that we have accepted from our forefathers? Is there any room for creativity in terms of language and style? There is this, in fact, that living languages change as people use them. And ought we as church make the worship meaningful by having orders which, in fact, reflect living language? Is it in accordance with good Lutheran tradition to have the kind of church music that reflects the musical expression of the people of the day? Or did that stop when the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century? Is there room for variety of forms as well as freedom of expression! In order to have unity in the church, is it necessary to have uniformity or ought there be some room for freedom of creativity? In other words, need we take into consideration the worshipper and the time in which he lives and provide the leadership and the atmosphere that would make the worship meaningful for him of his day?

The first point, I would imagine, is to discuss the concept of worship itself, maybe even to ask the question, "What is worship?" Someone has claimed that public worship is largely the expression of feeling. Or someone else, worship is man's response to God's revelation of Himself. And worship, in the highest sense, includes the revelation as well as the response. Someone else has said, worship is faith in action. Again, worship is the whole Christian life, or that the chief objective and essence of worship is to glorify God.

Now, there is a difference between private devotion, which is the duty and privilege of the individual, and usually is quite spontaneous and free, and that of public worship where usually time, place, form, and musical setting is provided. I will be concerned with the various forms of public or corporate worship. I certainly do not need to convince anyone in this audience that whatever activities the church may be engaged in, public worship is considered essential to its life and its mission.

It is believed that this coming together of the congregation is to help spiritual development and to emphasize the unity of the believers and their common faith. Luther D. Reed, in his book, *The Lutheran Liturgy* states, "The main springs of common worship are a compelling sense of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving, the

desire to hear the truth of God and to be strengthened by the holy sacrament and the joy of spiritual fellowship.” That is why people gather together as Jesus states that where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. And every assembly of believers, theoretically at least, has the sense of reverence for their Lord, the living Lord in their midst. And so on Sunday mornings, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans gather together and follow a certain order on page five of the Hymnal. Unless it is Communion Sunday, which means that they follow page fifteen. And with few exceptions we follow the prescribed lessons every Sunday, the propers, and if we are short on time we might cut out one part or another, usually something out of the general prayer, maybe the Gloria Patri or maybe the Gloria in Excelsis. But if asked to explain why one or the other part is there or one or the other part was cut out, we find it hard to give acceptable reasons. And the large majority of our people have been so conditioned to this exact form of service, that if it is not followed, they feel as though they have not worshipped or that it was a worship service inferior or less acceptable. All they know is page five or page fifteen of the hymnal. And having heard their pastors speak often about the Lutheran Church having the true doctrine and teaching only the true doctrine, they have been conditioned and deduce that this is THE doctrinally correct form. Any other form might be less worthy of a worship service and gives them the feeling of not really having worshipped.

I do not mean to say that the people should not follow the worship service as found on page five or fifteen of the hymnal. I am thoroughly convinced that the basic form of service as we have it is worthy of all the honor and respect that one can give it. Its basic form, I believe, cannot be improved upon. That is because, as we all know, through its development and maturing through the centuries it does, in fact, reflect biblical truths and reflect the theology that the scripture gives us. And on that we know we cannot improve. And without having to go into any discussion on the development of the Lutheran liturgy, we might point out that it has this beautiful balance of what we as Lutherans know as the sacramental and sacrificial elements: that on the one hand we hear God speaking to us and on the other, we speak to God, who hears. And those need to be the two elements, regardless of what form, or what order a Christian might decide upon.

For without these two elements whatever the program may be called, it is not a worship service. Or possibly put in a different way, we must say that where there is a worship service there must be the marks of the church; the word and the sacrament in truth and purity, and the worshipper responding to these marks of the church. The tragedy, of course, as we all recognize in our circle, is that page five and fifteen seem to be the only pages in the hymnal or in anybody’s imagination which incorporates those two elements which make up for the right kind of worship. One must, of course, give credit to our commission on worship, who has encouraged leaders and pastors to be creative and original, and above all to instruct the Christian as to the meaning of the form of worship and to help him make his worship experience more meaningful. The bulletin, *Focus on Worship*, does so regularly. May we, therefore, encourage all worship-leaders, pastors, teachers, and laymen alike to first of all instruct the people in what they are doing to make it meaningful and secondly not to hesitate to be creative and original, to use the talents that they have and to give the people an opportunity for variety and originality of expression.

This, of course, leads us to another point and that is the language, the style, and the liturgical service. It is very interesting that when our Lord inspired holy men of God to write His word, He had them, write it in the language of the people. Possibly many of us or most of us would have thought such language to be too undignified and unlearned or unscholarly and would have had it written in the best style and cultural expression. And yet the word of God is for the people and the worship service is for the people. And Luther with his genius saw it, and that is why his Bible was so popular for so long. His overriding concern was to find expressions which properly would translate the original into the language of the people. He went to the people to discover expressions from daily life. And when he brought about certain reforms in liturgical matters, the first and foremost thing in his mind were the people. And if a person is to express the faith that is in his heart and the faith that he shares with his fellow saints; and if he is to respond with his whole heart, mind, and soul to the revelation that came to him and the means of grace offered now, he can do it the best in the language that he knows best—the language that he speaks; the expressions that he uses.

The time has come that we grant validity to certain criticism given to us especially by the younger generations, who have not over the years been accustomed to the language of this liturgy. To say that the worship service would be more meaningful if it were in the English language of today is no sign of disrespect. Nor is the suggestion that the style should reflect the style of language of today. And by that I do not suggest that we throw out the liturgies that we have and even in the languages we have them. Not at all. Use them. But I would suggest that in addition we create, prepare, write liturgies that would also reflect our day and the language of our day. That for the people who are used to the type of service that we have, especially in the terms of language and style we will continue it and hope they express their faith and find it more meaningful in that medium; but on the other hand, for those who have not been accustomed to it, and for whom it would be more meaningful, we create something in the style and language that they know and that would make it more meaningful for them. Do you remember when among Lutherans German was the language, and it was suggested that services were to be in English? One of the major arguments against having English was that it was not a good vehicle for religious truths because the theological concepts couldn't be expressed as precisely and as well in English as they could be in German. And therefore the German language was superior. And hence forth should be kept. I think we have the same kind of feeling about liturgy and changes from many of the archaic ways to the modern way, that somehow when put into the language of the people, we lose the atmosphere of worship and of dignity and of reverence. The point that I am trying to make is that each age or generation must make the faith of their father's their own. It cannot be automatically handed down from one to the other. So each age or generation must express its faith in its own terms and its own medium and its own culture.

Unless anyone come to the wrong conclusion of what I am trying to say, this has nothing to do, obviously, with doctrine or biblical truth. It has to do with the expression of faith and worship. In other words, of the things that fall into what the Lutheran confessions call adiaphora. May I quote from the *Augsburg Confessions*, "Of such things men are admonished that consciences are not to be burdened." Or as stated in the *Epitome* in regard to church rites, "The object is that they be useful and edifying." And I think we have lost, not in theory, not in principle, but in practice the concept of the freedom of expression that the Christian has is basic for creativity in ways to worship and in ways to formulate worship services. And all of you who are students of the reformation know how strongly Luther expressed that concept and carried it out in practice.

When we get to the discussion of music, certainly the same principles would apply. Anyone who has read in liturgical works or books on liturgical change or reform of various denominations would recognize and appreciate even more the tremendous heritage that we as Lutherans have. That is most certainly true. We ought never be ashamed of it. We ought to keep it and use it. And according to the continual admonition of our Commission on Worship, teach the people to appreciate what we have and to use it properly.

Everywhere, churches and church leaders are having words of admiration for Lutherans and their musical traditions. They borrow from us and use our music. We are glad to share it, because we believe that it belongs to the Universal Church. On the other hand, it is also interesting to note when comparing, for example, the Lutheran Hymnal with the Presbyterian Hymnal, the times when the hymns were created are rather different. Whereas most of our hymns go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Presbyterian's date to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are numerous reasons for that. In the first place, the Presbyterian hymns were written as a result of the various revival movements in these centuries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially. On the other hand, as Lutherans we have been content to simply take what our fathers have handed to us without using our talents and creativity to add to that treasure. And there lies our sin. It is a shame and not worthy of the Lutheran tradition to practice poor stewardship with regard to the musical talents which God has given us. It is tragic we are not more actively involved in the creation of liturgical form and musical expression. During the time of the reformation a Jesuit is quoted as saying, "The hymns of Luther have killed more souls than his sermons." Perhaps too often one gets the feeling that this Jesuit's prophesy has come true in our age, especially when you listen to the singing that our people are doing. My point is that there are many different types of music and musical settings modern musical settings that can be and should be employed for the present day person in expressing his faith. And insofar as we deny him that expression, we also deny him the freedom to do so. And

insofar as we attempt to impose on him things that are indifferent; that is, our opinions about liturgical forms, we are creating, theologically speaking, a tradition that becomes doctrine, and thereby become guilty of things that we accuse others, false doctrine. I dare compare that to the imposition of ceremonial laws that the Judaizers tried to do on the Galatians. Paul, you recall, insisted that they stand in their liberty. Yes, I dare say that if we insist on worship forms based on one particular cultural development at the exclusion of others, we have become a sect. For then we do not practice the universal gospel that we so proudly and boldly proclaim in doctrine. And certainly, when we impose such cultural forms and expressions upon our people, we have come to practice a form of papism, which in doctrine we very much despise.

What I am saying is simply this, that whereas there are of various talents, inclinations toward a variety of cultural form and music, we ought to urge people to express themselves in these terms. On the one hand then, we practice the freedom of variety, and enjoy the talents that are active to glorify God. On the other hand, by no means will we discard the great and wonderful forms and settings that have been handed down to us, nor are we thinking of them any less or appreciating them any less, rather continue using them.

If God permits a variety of people to be born with different talents, different gifts, and different appreciation, how dare we limit them. But I think what has especially come down to us in terms of the musical settings and expressions has to do with interpretations of cultural and religious truths that are not necessarily true. One of them has to do with the general cultural fooling of superiority of our Western culture, especially of Germany. Such overtones are easily accepted when we have been talking so much about purity of doctrine and thanking God for the many ways that we are not like other men. Though we wouldn't admit it to others, few of us even to ourselves, we are convinced that we have arrived at a position of superiority in liturgical and musical matters. The other, has to do with the understanding that we have as to the expression of emotions. Through the last number of centuries biblical Lutherans have had their battle with denominations that base their faith and certainty on emotions. Lutherans have rejected not only that position but emotional expression as well. We are very much afraid to be emotional because somehow over-tones of instability and unmanliness are attached to a person who expresses himself emotionally. Religiously, through Pietism and Puritanism, we have inherited some of the ideas which claim that any kind of expression of pleasure or joy is sin, that especially any form of rhythm automatically is sensual and sinful and therefore must be excluded from worship expression.

But may I submit that we carefully re-examine those positions. To be sure, we are by nature sinful and all of our thinking and feeling is permeated with sin. Notice I said *thinking* and *feeling*. Yet the gift of emotions as well as reason is ours according to the 1<sup>st</sup> Article. We ought to use these emotions to express our praise and glory to God. I don't have to remind you that many of the Old Testament liturgical form, the psalms, are those emotions in vivid and uninhibited language. Could it be that our liturgical practice is actually influenced more by the spirit of Zwingli and Calvin than by Luther, who, incidentally, was much more uninhibited about expressing himself than we are.

I suggest that our younger generation has developed a different cultural attitude in that they find, nothing unethical about expressing full feelings in church. When the psalmist says praise him with the sound of trumpet," he would like to hear a trumpet blast, to express that very emotion that the psalmist is trying to express.

Part of the reason why in our day and age, we of the older generation have problems communicating with the younger generation is that we place emphasis on words and rational logic, whereas they emphasize the visual symbolic action; they like to exaggerate for effect they like to express themselves in terms of emotions and the senses; more with the feelings than with the thoughts. This is a cultural concept that they grow up with due to the various forms of communication of our day. We better hesitate to judge such attitudes as sinful, or such levels and forms of communication as less acceptable to Christian way of life and worship. Need I point out that anthropomorphically speaking, God did not logically reason out that man needed a Savior, but that "God so loved the world which reflects emotion rather than logic or reason. That God is spoken of often in terms of feelings in his attitudes and actions and words toward man. We may be mistaken, when we place so much emphasis on rational thought and ignore the other senses, which are as much of ourselves as our reason.

The problem that we face is how to help a pluralistic society create forms and expressions of worship. And it is as much a cultural problem as anything else. It is our responsibility to conceive, and shape and mold, defuse and adopt form and music to meet the emotional and intellectual and spiritual needs of a particular culture at a particular time. It is not just a question of form or music but a problem of the whole cultural dilemma. Tragically, too many of us have not yet grasped what Saint Paul long ago already put into proper perspective in I Corinthians Chapter 9, when he says he will be “anything to any man” whether Jew or Greek or Barbarian in order “that he might save some.” How many aggravations and minor and major irritations could be spared us if we would let the Spirit move our heart to fuller understanding of that passage. When we insist that church life and worship form must follow certain cultural lines we, have already become an offense to some, and have in practice denied the universality of the gospel and the universal priesthood of all believers (which in doctrine we so strongly proclaim.)

I suggest that there be unity in terms of content and terms of the basic form of worship service. Simply it means to proclaim doctrinal truth and respond in a scriptural way. But that does not mean to have rigid uniformity since we are living in a multi-cultural society. There was a time and a place for such common uniformity to which we are trying to cling to now—when all of the people lived in a particular area and were all of the same cultural background and held the same cultural values. But now, when the world is wide open at our front door, in fact through TV right in our living room, it is a different world. We may treasure our cultural heritage and show that we are united with our fathers and honor and use worship forms they had. But we ought to open our minds and hearts and talents wide open to all those cultural expressions whose usage can only broaden and enrich our worship life and experience. At the same time we testify that unity of faith is in doctrine and not in uniform and that unity is of the spirit and not of the letter. Jesus said to the woman at Jacob’s well that the time would come when they would not worship Him on Gerizim or Jerusalem (uniformity) but in spirit and in truth (freedom by the Spirit).

To me there is nothing more devotional than a Gregorian chant. To me there is nothing that expresses the glory and splendor and power and majesty of God than some of our Lutheran chorales. But there is nothing that expresses the despair and the agony of a conscience-stricken soul in repentance reaching out for forgiveness and deliverance than that of a spiritual gospel or soul song. The joyful exaltation of the Hallelujah Chorus is matched in the joyous and rhythmic deliverance songs of the gospel singers. There is no room for inhibitions or repression when it comes to testifying to our Lord. There was nothing as intense in the expression of the dedication of faith, as, for example, was shown us by Dr. and pastor Metra a few years ago when they testified in word and song at our high school. Therefore, let the form or the worship setting be as it may, the important point is let the believer express it in that form which is comfortable and at home to him. Incidentally, there is some value to the argument that those things that have stood the test of time are good and worthy of possessing. Let us remember, however, that such things as sin and evil, too, have stood the test of time.

Now, let me suggest a number of things as the basis for stimulating further discussion among us (which hopefully will be fruitful and productive as discussion, and of course the after-effects of having some creative production take place in our churches.)

Certainly, the first and important point that I would like to make is that we must teach appreciation of the heritage that we have. It is excellent, and it is too bad that part of the philosophy of today’s generation is to throw out all that is history as meaningless and irrelevant. The meaning of that heritage is that we have continuity with the church throughout the ages. In it we express the faith of all the saints of all times. Part of that heritage, too, is something that we easily lose sight of—the freedom of every age to add its own. In the Thorough Declaration of our Confessions it states: “The churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarities of ceremonies when in Christian life one has less or more of them, provided that they do agree in doctrine. We do not want to become iconoclasts as many of the Protestants did during the Reformation. We do not want to speak of liberty by which we license the destruction of good forms of worship from the past. We do not accept the extremes of Protestantism on either side, the Quakers on the one and the Anglican High Church on the other. But there is a great space between the two, which grants a great variety of possibilities.

We want to keep what is truly Lutheran. We reject what developed during the period of orthodoxy, which gave the worship service a mechanical and legalistic character. We want to reject what later happened in Pietism that emphasized subjective experience and disregarded the unity of the church. With its private devotional assemblies replacing regular church services, it denied many of the objective doctrines and truths that the Scriptures give us. We reject what happened during the period of Rationalism, which denied revelation and placed reason supreme over faith, which mutilated liturgies and hymns and Scripture and in their place put moralizing and sentimental phrases.

We also reject being labeled “radical” simply because we suggest that new forms, new expressions be added to the treasure that we have, and that every age and every generation is to be creative, making meaningful the doctrines of God for its time.

We must ever be alert that we do not let liturgical practices become such strong traditions that the people begin to look on them as church law which stifles freedom of expression and creativity. When we talk of freedom of expression, we want to emphasize that this liberty imposes responsibility. In the exercise of this liberty, in the biblical sense, one must be selfless and be concerned with the building up of faith of others. Liturgies as they may be created and forms as they may be produced are in the interest of the spiritual well-being of others, not for some personal gratification. This kind of liberty does not go against decency and order. We need to ask whether decency and order means a rigid, almost militaristic outward form and discipline or simply an atmosphere where all are involved in the building up of faith. When we think of the worshipping church as it is described in the book of Acts, we cannot help but be amazed at the power of the worshipping church. The people are active participants, giving dynamic testimony to the reality of faith and the presence and power of the Spirit of God. And certainly the form of the services were anything but highly liturgical. In fact, one can safely say about the apostolic and post-apostolic age, the church was much more spiritual and powerful than during the later centuries, including our own. One Protestant writes who leans more toward a non-liturgical form but wants to be objective, about judging formalized services, says that “neither their ways (pointing to our liturgical ways) nor our way (pointing to their non-liturgical ways) have any monopoly of the advantages.” And he is talking about meaningful worship and he is not rejecting form. He is rejecting the claim that only a particular kind of liturgical form or tradition is proper for acceptable public worship.

As to content. Certainly the content must be theologically biblical. The worship service must reflect biblical truths or doctrine rather than shallow moralizing or sentimentality. Regardless of form, the center of every Christian worship is Jesus Christ, the Lord, the Redeemer. That there must be a balance of every service in law and gospel. (Every religion teacher and preacher ought to read Walther’s *Law and Gospel* at least once a year. It will empower your preaching and teaching ministry.) Without this center of the worship service it is not Christian. Clustered around this center doctrine of justification by faith are to be the other doctrines of Scripture in their proper perspective. Every service ought to have some sort of invocation, confession of sins and absolution, prayers, not only for self but for the whole church, praise and thanksgiving, a rededication to the Christ-life, and a benediction. And whatever else may be said about form these are essential for making every worship situation meaningful.

We must have a great variety of forms to fit the needs of the people. There are times when a worship service is formal. At other times it ought to be semi-formal, relaxed. There are various situations and occasions and we ought to have more, much more of a variety than just page five of page fifteen of the hymnal. What untapped resources are hidden among the many talented people in our midst? I think we would be more creative when we think in terms of the needs of the people and of the children. We insist that children go to church, but how much do we do to actually lead them to worship on their own level. Certainly, in the schools there ought to be a great variety of devotional settings in their language on their level. We should not hesitate to use different art-forms, demonstrations audio visuals, whatever to really involve them in the act of worship. Never dare any of these become the object, rather only instruments leading to the reality of God and the desire to do God-acts to men.

The teenage years are the most difficult of life. We ought to have much more for the teenager to help him during these trying times. For worship there should be informal type of devotional services that tend more towards the spontaneous, toward the emotional toward the dramatical, toward the active involvement of the individual and they ought to fit the many occasions teenagers find themselves in. Many folk songs and prayers have been created and are excellent for use. There are valid arguments against some songs and prayers that the content is too shallow. Well, you know we can do something about that. We have poets in our midst. Are we going to disregard the medium because it is misused? Let's give the content some meat. Let's create some worthy content. Am I correct in remembering that Luther took the popular song, *A Maid has Lost her Shoe*, and made hymn out of it?

Then we ought to have a variety of forms of services for adults. Informal worship experiences are needed. Because of the regimentation of life in our time and the intense pace of life the people of our day long for that type of form. We need to have worship services that are more relaxed and that include somehow the struggles of life of their time and their personal experience. These informal services may employ some of the modern forms of communications and lifestyles. It would give them a chance to be creative in the medium that they are used to and that they live in. Then will the worship service do also this function that it is supposed to, namely to lead people with their whole being and life experience to praise the Lord and worship Him. You heard the story of the Pentecostal that came to the Lutheran Church to visit and worship. And when the pastor was saying some fine things in the pulpit, he responded with a loud "Praise the Lord" and after the second and third time he spoke up loudly "Praise the Lord," an usher walked quietly up to him, tapped him on the shoulder and said sternly to him, "Sir, we don't praise the Lord in our church!"

Worship services ought to be more informal. The person ought to have the urging of the Spirit within him to praise the Lord. Because it is a way of his own experience. There are also occasions when a formal service is best, one that is solemn that emphasizes dignity and ceremony. In other words, I am urging for discussion that would lead to the creation of a great variety of forms for the people that would meet the spiritual needs of the people of our day. Meanwhile as you have the services on page five and fifteen be creative there too. Include all of the members of your church. Write prayers that involve the children as well as the adult and the aged—every age group.

I wonder whether part of the apathy that many people seem to have in our worship services is not due to poor habits they have developed from childhood on. We don't expect our little children to participate. We expect them to go to church but they don't know the hymns, understand the words, or read yet. We place them in a far away corner where they perform their number. They don't even feel part of the congregation. How can they develop a worshipful atmosphere and attitude. Just by being told that this is a church in which they must worship? The sermon has no word for them. Most of it goes way over their heads. They don't see the altar. In one congregation the children sing behind the organ and see nothing. We expect these little children to sit there for a whole hour with a wall in their face and develop a worshipful attitude, which is ridiculous. If we are not prepared to make them feel that they are an intimate part of the whole worship service by including them in the prayers, in the sermon, and songs in language they understand then we have no right to insist they be there. Now, we are teaching the little ones, and older ones too, not to listen because there is nothing there for them.

And finally, let us remember that we still have the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, and a doctrine of the church and the ministry that rejects one man's claim to power and authority and knowledge as to the only right and proper liturgical form and practice. Rather the worship service belongs to the Communion of Saints, to the church of God. That his responsibility is to lead, to teach, to encourage, to inspire, to urge people the people of God to be creatively worshipful in their service and to praise, honor, and glorify Him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. And to do that with their very essence and being. Therefore, they are the ones who are finally creating the worship, that everything be done to make this meaningful for them.

We want to have worship services with dignity and reverence and preserve the order and balance with rhythm and progress. The worship service should appeal to the man who thinks and it should appeal to his

heart. The question we might ask is, does it appeal to the imagination with words that help a man to see and to feel and to move and to act; that makes him able to express his feelings as well as proclaim the doctrine? Handel was supposed to have been asked how he felt while composing the Hallelujah Chorus. He said "I did think I did see all heaven open before me and the great God, Himself." And that is what we want to do for the people that they can respond. Let the pastor and worship leader "in his quest for artistic forms send out a decree that the whole world of sacred art be taxed, but in the use of what he gathers from near and far, let him practice wise restraint." (*The Fine Art of Public Worship* by Andrew Blackwood.) When preparing our service, we ought as an artist use our imagination. We ought to give the people the feeling of spiritual adventure in faith. We keep the forms that are worthy and then go on to urge the people to use their own God given talents and imagination to lead and worship with radiance and power, like that of the Apostolic Church.

We do not urge a choice between antiquated greatness and dull modernity, for that is intolerable. But rather to be artistic and original and great.

I hope that some of what I have said may encourage many of you to work hard in your preparation for worship. I hope that we develop the attitude among our people as well as among our church and school leaders to be creative and to be expressive of the faith in our time and for our time, to be concerned with all the members of our churches, to think in terms of the various occasions and the possibilities for a variety of worship service forms, and to contemplate the use of the many mediums that are available to us. Let us realize that variety is no heresy whether this be in the form or the musical expression. But that, in fact, all of this striving is reflecting true biblical as well as true Lutheran teaching.