

**Liturgical
Challenge in
the 21st
Century**



Liturgy Canada

**“Gonna Rock the Town Tonight”
Liturgical Challenge in the 21st Century**

John Stephenson

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Something new has come to be in North American religiosity and this new thing is casting influence on the liturgies of most Christian groups on the continent. As a development in liturgy, it appears to be without historical warrant or Biblical depth. Birthed in Pentecostalism, given creative impulse in the Charismatic movement, and refined in third wave Vineyard churches, this new thing is an indigenous North American pattern of worship. This new liturgical form is highly malleable, constantly permutating, but nonetheless always recognizable.

The following discussion of this new thing is based on two presuppositions: first, that there is no such thing as non-liturgical worship. For those of my friends and colleagues who would aver that there are patterns of worship that are intentionally non-liturgical, I would respond that all corporate worship is by definition liturgical. It is after all, as the word states, “the work of the people” and as such is necessarily “liturgical.” It follows then that if there is no such thing as no liturgy, then the question becomes, “Is the way in which a group worships bad or good liturgically?”

My second is presupposition is that “*lex orandi – lex credendi*” holds true: how we worship influences, indeed shapes, what we believe. This new thing is shaping North American theology in ways both obvious and subtle and in ways that may not even be readily apparent. For those denominations and churches which have historically valued liturgical form, adoption of this new pattern of worship,

or even attempts to adapt it to liturgical forms based on long-standing tradition, is fraught with implications and consequences that are considerable.

Spiritual Origins

It is impossible in the scope of a brief discussion to trace even the broadest of outlines of the sources of this new thing. However, a few cursory comments may be helpful.

By the 1950s, the glory years of the Pentecostal Movement seemed to be over. From the moment of critical mass in a little Holiness chapel on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in April 1906, it took the Pentecostal message only a matter of months to go around North America and indeed the world. Even though on the margins of both the religious scene as well as general society, Pentecostalism nonetheless grew steadily through the first two decades of the 20th century. Espousing a faith that promised profound ecstatic experiences with God and regular manifestations of divine power, Pentecostalism found a hearing especially among the disadvantaged and the poor. Prominent in the theological milieu was an eschatology that emphasised an imminent return of Christ coupled with a strong emphasis on personal holiness borrowed from the Methodist Holiness movement and the fundamentalist Keswick movement. One consequence of this theological mix was a felt need for the believer to separate in all practical ways from the values and activities of the sinful host society.

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Editorial—Gonna Rock the Town Tonight

Marion Jenkins

Dr. John Stephenson has written compellingly about the modern liturgical movement which has come to be known as neo-revivalism, or by some as neo-Pentecostalism, a phenomenon which is characterized by loud contemporary music that has been professionally produced, 'prayer and praise' services with little or no scripture and an absence of the Sacrament of the Altar. This, he says, is in pursuit of the relevant, attempting to reach those who are consumed by the popular culture of the world around them; he refers to it as a tyranny. This liturgical expression is consumption driven, devalues the worshipper and has caused us to lose our liturgical direction. Stephenson warns us, "However, when technology, music, and emotion begin to overwhelm Scripture, the sacraments, and tradition, disaster becomes imminent." While continued dialogue needs to occur, we, Lutherans and Anglicans, need to renew our commitment to the scriptural and sacramental tradition which provides our liturgical groundedness. We ignore this to our peril.

Several responders, each from their own context, ask how we can both hold that which the church has found to be good and valuable liturgically down through the last several centuries and respond to the religious and spiritual needs of a generation with little or no religious memory. Dr. Stephenson has named the elephant in the room and has not offered practical ways to dress the creature. Everyone in the position of parish liturgical leader has wrestled with the elephant, with the exception, perhaps, of those with a niche that has no interest in contemporary worship forms whatsoever. None have found easy answers for we are in uncharted waters in an unfamiliar age. I believe that the Church has always attempted to be relevant from Cranmer's first assertion that worship be in language understood by the people. The world changed so little between the sixteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries that there was not that much to do to stay relevant. The explosion of technology in the past fifty years has caused a seismic shift in world view.

Rather than giving up and throwing in the towel—either to retreat to the familiar or to plunge into perceived relevance—it may be helpful to first reflect on what is going on out there before trying to craft a liturgical response.

Philosopher and educator, Tex Sample, a keynote speaker at the Nurturing Healthy Parishes Symposium sponsored by General Synod in March of 2007, spoke of three distinct cultures: oral, literate, and electronic. To be somewhat simplistic, oral cultures are those where knowledge is acquired and the faith transmitted primarily through oral means like story telling and home truths. In North America that would primarily

be Aboriginal people and some immigrant groups. Literate culture learns primarily through the written word. That's where many reading this are most likely to feel comfortable. Our prayer books and hymn books bear witness to that. The electronic culture of computers, Blackberries and iGadgets, which is the world of the 20s, 30s and even 40 somethings, learns best through multi-media, engaging as many senses at the same time as possible. Sight, sound, smell, and movement of the body all play a significant role in the acquisition of knowledge and transmission of the faith.

I've worked in an Aboriginal context for the past 5½ years where I have had to come to grips with a world view that is counter-intuitive to my own. I think the only way for those of us whose culture is literate to understand electronic culture is to enter into it. Suspending your world view, and that means all your prejudices, is a challenging task and not for the faint of heart. Watch music videos and compare concerts from each of the last six decades to see how the performer's interaction with the audience has changed. Get a *Facebook* or *Twitter* account and participate. Learn the culture from the inside out before trying to engage that particular mission field.

Surely with some work on our part we can do better than the experience of a young person in the Diocese of Rochester (England). I leave you with a margin quote from Richard Giles' *Re-pitching the Tent: reordering the church building for worship and mission*.

'A young friend went to a church close to my home a few weeks ago – the first time since her baptism over twenty years ago. She told me that she will not go again and handed me a list which read: "You are asking me to change the way I speak, the sort of music I enjoy, the length of time I usually listen to a speaker, the type of people I mix with, my body temperature, the type of chair I sit on, the type of clothes I am used to seeing people wear; my sense of humour. You expect me to know when to stand, sit and kneel and the answer to prayers I have never heard. I am prepared to change but there was nowhere I could connect any part of my life with that service."' (Anne Lehanne, Rochester Diocesan newspaper)

Jesus routinely met and ministered to people where he found them. Surely, we can do no less and we don't have to abandon our liturgy and sacraments to do it.

Marion Jenkins is a member of Liturgy Canada and is currently Coordinator of Henry Budd College for Ministry, an Anglican, Aboriginal Theological College in The Pas, Manitoba, Diocese of Brandon.

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More than one Pentecostal child grew up singing songs like, "This world is not my home; I'm just a-passin' through." However, by the early 1950s the energy seemed lost in North America: numbers at best had plateaued; worse, even adherents sensed that Pentecostal worship had become routinised and that energy had declined. In some places, Pentecostal worship bordered on outright lassitude. In the late 1940s, an ill-fated attempt to breathe fresh life into the Pentecostal churches, the so-called Latter Rain Movement, met with intense crushing resistance from the Pentecostal leadership.

In 1959, a new movement began that Pentecostals initially rejected but which ironically became the source of new life in Pentecostal churches. On an April morning, Dennis Bennett, the rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California announced to his flock that he had had the experience that was the *sine qua non* of the Pentecostal movement: speaking in tongues. Spreading first through the Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran churches, a new message of the ready availability of invigorating religious experience quickly gained footholds in almost every North American religious group. Adherents were generally less doctrinaire than the Pentecostals and argued explicitly that the point of their experience was to breathe new life into their own churches, not to push them out and to established Pentecostal groups. However, throughout the 1960s, many thousands did leave their churches providing a rich source of recruitment that thrust the Pentecostals into a new cycle of great growth.

In the late 1970s, a new force appeared in North American religion. Institutionally, this new movement took shape as the Vineyard Movement; intellectually, its roots were in the thought of Peter Wagner and others like him at Fuller Seminary in California. Dubbed the "third wave" by sociologist David Barrett, this new variant on the

Pentecostal message emphasised the so-called power gifts as recorded in the apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: power to heal, power to have knowledge of persons and events that were previously unknown to the recipient of the gift, power to predict the future, and power to confront the demonic. While the Vineyard attracted a significant number of bright well-trained young people, it remained essentially on the fringes of North American religion. However, although the Vineyard remained on the periphery, third wave ideas began to surface, just as charismatic ideas had earlier, in congregations of mainline churches.

By the 1980s and 90s, all three "waves," each advocating a spirituality that represented some variation on the theme of the availability of intense religious experience, were exerting considerable influence on the North American religious landscape.

Liturgical Origins

In searching for the liturgical origins of this new form, the development of musical expression is paramount since so much of this form is dependent on vocal and instrumental music.

Times have certainly changed: the Pentecostals throughout the last half of the 20th century steadily abandoned their separateness from the general society. Also, along with their new ease with this world, emphasis on the imminence of the Second Coming waned dramatically. Clothes, cars, homes, educational achievement: over the decades, the Pentecostals steadily experienced social lift and they have begun to enjoy their new-found wealth. Grant Wacker, the eminent historian now at Duke University has said that it is striking that the Pentecostals were born of a total rejection of culture and yet have now embraced culture more than any other religious group in North America.

Increased financial strength began to be seen ecclesiastically too: the days of the

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super-churches dawned. In new gigantic mega-churches, Pentecostals began to install the latest sound and light technologies, adjusted their style of Gospel music to admit influences from rock-and-roll, jazz, and “new” country. It is no surprise, for example, that the first cousin of Pentecostal evangelist Jimmy Swaggart was Jerry Lee Lewis and that they attended Bible College together. In the early 1980s, I was the minister of music at Kennedy Road Tabernacle, a large Pentecostal church in suburban Toronto. Even then, our sound crew would have over 20 microphones in use on a typical Sunday evening service. They were all needed to service a sixteen piece big band, a fifty voice choir, and soloists. On special occasions, strings and other professional musicians were brought in to augment the regular complement of musicians. In the past 20 years, the technological capabilities of large Pentecostal churches have multiplied exponentially. With dramatic speed, the Pentecostals have gone from being disestablished and poor to being the hippest Christians on the continent. In the early 1960s, in the wake of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church saw the rise of folk music in North America in an attempt to make liturgy more relevant to the people. The new genre, Eucharistic folk music, certainly met with mixed reviews in the 1970s and 80s. (I was once told that there was a book published in that period titled *Vatican II and the Triumph of Bad Taste*. The existence of such a work must remain apocryphal, however, since I have never located a copy.)

In the forefront of liturgical folk music, however, were creative able musicians and composers such as the St. Louis Jesuits and the Franciscan monk, John Michael Talbot. At its best, this tradition featured compelling tunes and theological acuity. In the 1990s, Roman Catholic worship music transcended its folk origins and experienced a dramatic surge of creativity as seen, for example,

in the *Gather* collection and the music of Taizé. (Some of the best liturgical music I have heard in any context in recent years came from Roman Catholic centres of creativity such as the mother church of the Paulist Order, St. Paul the Apostle in midtown Manhattan).

The Vineyard Movement came to be through the efforts of John Wimber. From its inception, the Vineyard fostered a contemporary musical idiom that was compelling. The Vineyard married melodic interest and clever harmonic development with inspiring lyrics. So sophisticated was Vineyard music that it has left an indelible impression on the liturgical music of most groups. Vineyard music can even turn up in the more traditional of hymnals. Some have traced the musical excellence of the Vineyard to Wimber himself who became a Christian after a career as a bass player in the rock-and-roll industry.

By the middle 90s, developments in these three “waves” provided a fertile soil for the emergence of new liturgical expression that would be indigenous to North America but like any North American product, capable of exportation.

The New Liturgy

The common element among Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Third Wavers was the belief in the immediacy of the Presence of God’s Spirit during worship, a Presence, they argued, that could and should become manifest in both private and corporate worship. Perhaps the quintessential expression of the new form was found at the so-called “Toronto Blessing.” What became an international movement of great dynamism began at a small Vineyard church near Pearson International Airport in Toronto. In January 1994, Randy Clark, a Vineyard pastor from St. Louis came

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to the church for a prayer weekend. At a service on 20 January, something happened during the service of worship that observers described as an explosion. It left 80% of the congregation on the floor. For the next decade, "renewal" services were held at the church every night from Tuesday through Sunday. The crowds grew at spectacular speed becoming so large that a new building had to be acquired. Numbers ranged into the thousands nightly for months on end. In the early years, a large percentage of attendees came especially from Anglican as well as other mainstream groups.

The liturgical form at the Toronto Blessing was simple, consistent, and persistent. The service would begin with a long period of singing lasting over an hour. The form of the singing was crucial: a "worship team" of excellent musicians would sing a song as many as 25 or 30 times. The performance of the songs would follow a pattern: waves of tension would be slowly and inexorably built to be resolved finally in peaceful release only to have the pattern begin again. Through the long period of singing, sometimes only four or five different songs would be sung. After the singing, testimonies would follow, given by a previously selected few who had already had profound religious experiences. In the full sight of all, by the end of their testimonies these individuals usually experienced the same symptoms as they had just reported: violent shaking, uncontrollable laughter, animal sounds, moaning, total loss of control of their limbs, and other even more exotic phenomena. Following the testimonies came a long sermon that featured a strong emphasis on images such as fire, water, or wind. When the sermon ended, music would again be used to prepare people for what the Toronto Blessing staff themselves called "carpet time," a period when trained intercessors would go through the crowd laying hands on and praying for all who

requested it. In what followed many, if not most, attendees found themselves on the floor in some form or another of ecstatic religious experience.

While Pentecostals were at first extremely suspicious of the Toronto Blessing, parallels in worship practices already existed, and over time, Pentecostal practices have bent to the Toronto Blessing pattern. Again, services begin with long periods of singing while standing. Usually, a worship team would perform the songs while encouraging the congregation "to enter in" to the spirit of the event. The music of the worship is usually performed at a high level of proficiency and features the idioms of popular contemporary music. Clapping, jumping, and dancing in the congregation often accompany the singing. A sermon follows the protracted period of singing and the service culminates with a call to come to the "Altar." In Pentecostal churches, the front of the church is a raised area often called simply "the platform." In front of this raised area is the "Altar" which includes the space immediately in front of "the platform" and the steps up to it. Often, people kneel on the steps or stand, kneel or lay in the space before "the platform". The aim of the Altar experience is to provide a context in which the worshipper can achieve profound religious experiences. Music can be intense and encouragement is usually given the seekers by the preacher or other clergy. While intense, these "altar" times are not always lengthy in duration.

Here then is the simple but recognisable new indigenous North American liturgical form.

Welcome and Encouragement to Participate
A long period of singing (often called "the worship")
Sermon
"Altar" time.

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If the use of contemporary music and excellence of sound and light technology in the service of providing the context for producing an intense emotional high becomes the goal of worship, then we become only another entrant into a market aimed at those who wish to attain such an experience.

Over the past decade, this pattern of worship has begun to exert influence on most religious groups both in North America and transcontinentally. In Anglicanism, by 1994, the "Toronto Blessing" methodology was reported to have been adopted by over 1,200 parishes in Great Britain. In Canada, the influence has been less obvious. I have seen only the occasional occurrence where this pattern has been introduced in a radical way. Often it is adapted to suit the needs of the particular group. In most Canadian Anglican churches where I have seen the values of this kind of worship embraced, the pattern has been used either in youth ministry or adapted to regular Sunday services in parishes that have previously been associated with the Charismatic movement.

As this style of worship continues to exert influence on North American religion in general and if calls continue to increase for Anglicans to become more relevant to our culture, the temptation to adopt elements from this style of worship can only increase. In this context, I believe we need to be aware of some of the dangers this new form poses:

1. **The Tyranny of the Relevant**

As early Anglicans understood, the development of a pattern of worship which is accessible to the people and allows them to express their faith in ways appropriate to their culture is a prime imperative. However, this endeavour has always been a delicate one. In the title of his critique of the mega-church movement in North America, Os Guinness quoted the aphorism of sociologist Peter Berger: "When you're dining with the devil, you had better use a long spoon." The dilemma of an overemphasis on relevance is that the mode of worship and the attitude and experience of the worshipper can become indistinguishable from parallel phenomena in the broader culture. If the use of contemporary music and excellence of sound and light technology

in the service of providing the context for producing an intense emotional high becomes the goal of worship, then we become only another entrant into a market aimed at those who wish to attain such an experience. In the long term, I don't believe we can compete with the dance clubs and concert halls. Surrender to the search for the next "buzz" is a surrender of our identity.

2. **The Devaluation of the Worshipper**

Jack Hayford, a Pentecostal composer and theologian has said that the problem with modern worship songs is that they are often too difficult technically for the average person to sing. As a result, only gifted singers in worship teams can perform the songs. With the high volume and the difficulty of the music, the worshipper becomes reduced to a passive consumer. In a manner reminiscent of worship in the Middle Ages, the "worship" is produced by the professional elite who provide it for the people who stand as passive consumers. Producer/consumer: a living example of North American popular culture. I attended one youth service which began with the leader of the worship team exclaiming, "We're gonna rock the town tonight." During the singing that followed I looked around the room: no-one was singing; many were clapping, nodding to the rhythm, and watching the excellent musicians produce the "worship". All were obviously enjoying the pleasurable experience that had been provided for them. (I recognise that this description raises the often-blurred distinction between entertainment and religious experience in such contexts).

3. **Worship as Consumption**

A survey of many of the contemporary worship songs that are making their way into contemporary service songbooks reveals a disturbing trend. Arguably, the last 20 years of Christian song-writing has seen the rise of the first generation in Christian history of hymnody based on first person pronouns.

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Several years ago, I attended a service in which a song was sung whose refrain featured seven different statements all beginning, "I Want" In the new liturgical form, it is quite easy for all to fade into the background intimidated by an overarching emphasis on the worshipper. Mission, outreach, and concern for others becomes muted in such a milieu, if not totally lost. Even the reading of Scripture and prayer for others often becomes lost in the search for ecstatic private experience. Worship becomes simply a quest for the next high. Many scholars have doubted the staying power of this kind of spirituality. Perhaps the most vivid example of the rise and complete collapse of spiritual vitality fuelled by the quest for private experience is the Welsh revival of 1902-1904. This new liturgical form bears striking resemblance to the Welsh experience.

4. Loss of Liturgical Direction

In radical Protestantism, the sermon is the climax of worship. Throughout much of the rest of the Christian world, the Eucharist, following naturally from the Liturgy of the Word, forms the climax of worship, a climax that leads to the appropriate response: re-entry into the world to love and to serve. In the new liturgical form, all this breaks down. Since the Spirit is there to grant the worshipper an immediate and dramatic experience, Scripture is no longer needed and the Eucharist is redundant. I attended one Sunday service in which there was no reading of Scripture and no celebration of communion. Without these twin anchors to worship, there are no controls on the experience. The devaluation of Scripture and the loss of liturgical shape encourages the search for experience for experience's sake and as the disciples of Friedrich Schleiermacher so long ago soon realised, if experience is all that ultimately matters, how one gets the experience is of no final consequence. In the so-called liturgical churches, the desire to stem the tide of loss joined with

a felt need to speak in understandable terms to our culture has brought about a great opportunity and a great temptation. We do not have to be Luddites: technology is not morally bad, and we do not have to be musical snobs. Contemporary musical idioms are not inherently less in value than the music of previous generations. And a desire for a heart-felt faith is not to be despised. However, when technology, music, and emotion begin to overwhelm Scripture, the sacraments, and tradition, disaster becomes imminent. More reflection and more trans-denominational dialogue among theologians and church musicians (and yes, among technicians too) needs to occur. But above all, we need a renewed commitment to that which holds us steady. Scripture, Sacramental celebration, and the liturgical shape that fosters our commitment to them must be reaffirmed or else the price we pay will be steep indeed.

John Stephenson was ordained a deacon in 2001 and a priest in 2002. Prior to that he was chair of the department of biblical and theological studies at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. He holds a Th.D. from Wycliffe College in the history of Christianity. His primary research interest is in movements of renewal and revival especially in the modern era. He is currently the Incumbent of Saint James Anglican Church in Caledon East, Ontario.

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Marshall McLuhan wrote “The Medium is the Message” way back in 1967 and still the church doesn’t get it.

A Response

Richard J. Salt

I have read the thoughts of the Rev’d Dr. John Stephenson and have to wonder if his real concern is that we might lose our liturgical direction or if it is that he doesn’t like the musical styles and cultural practices of the twenty-first century. Our Anglican roots clearly have the principle that worship should be in the language of the people. (See the twenty-fourth of the Articles of Religion.) In my mind, the principle of language extends to music and other acts of praise such as dancing, clapping and raising hands. Let’s face it, the language of twenty-first century North Americans is foreign and scary to many of us over the age of thirty. I suspect it is even more foreign and scary to the church crowd that tends to be slower in adapting to changes in the culture.

There is no doubt that the emphasis of large segments of “praise music” is the entering into the presence of God and that the “altar time or carpet time” that he refers to are times that seek ecstatic religious experience, but practicing the presence of God is not new to the people of God or even to Anglicans. In fact it has been a vital part of our theology of worship. Anglicans have proclaimed the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist and that certainly has been my experience since my earliest days. If we want to look to the Old Testament people we need look no further than to Moses who covered his face with a veil because it was radiant with the glory of God after meeting with Him. Saul, first king of Israel was known to have “prophesied” all day and night after an encounter with God’s Spirit. When Solomon’s temple was dedicated we are told that the glory of the Lord came down such that none could enter. Why should it be that twenty-first century Christians would only find the presence of God in the Eucharist? Should we put God in the bread and wine and religiously try to keep Him locked up in the tabernacle? Many have found a special presence in the dark wood and stained glass of our churches. Maybe that is where we

should try to keep Him contained.

The Rev’d Dr. Stephenson expresses concern about the professionalism of those leading this music. He is concerned that the music is too difficult and too well done for people to enter in. This sounds to me a little like the pot calling the kettle black. Giving the best to the Lord is very sound theology. I have stood in cathedrals (and many “wannabe” cathedrals) for years, listening to choirs sing in a key too high for me to join in and too overwhelmed by the sound of the organ for me to discern the tune. At least with modern forms of praise music I can clap and raise my hands if the music is beyond me. Perhaps rather than devaluing the worshippers, it actually allows them to enter in. I believe the participants are seeking and finding more participation in order to bring authenticity.

Dr. Stephenson also seems concerned about the use of modern technology and wonders if this is not bowing to the culture. I think we need to understand that the way in which people communicate today has changed radically. Marshall McLuhan wrote “The Medium is the Message” way back in 1967 and still the church doesn’t get it. The printed word and the talking head are increasingly obsolete as a means of communication. Younger generations gather information visually or through small sound bites all best delivered electronically. Nobody reads the bulletin in our church. They say we don’t communicate with them. Now we are experimenting with short videos to make announcements. I’d rather get the message across than stand on my high horse about how people should read their bulletins.

Are we in danger of losing our scripture and sacraments? Not at all. These elements of worship have stood the test of time and will be with us until the Lord returns.

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However, while older people find comfort in familiar words, young people find repetition to be boring and suspect it is simply rote that is insincere. Can our worship become more authentic for the participants by allowing some of the influences of the modern Charismatic movement and the so called Third Wave to impact the way we do things? Absolutely. Perhaps if we Anglicans hadn't been so rigid in the first place many who were lost and are still being lost to the Pentecostal movement would still be amongst us.

The Venerable Richard J. Salt is Archdeacon of Kent/Lambton & Rector of Trinity Church, Sarnia, Ontario.

Is This Why Cranmer Went to the Stake?

Alan T. Perry

In his book *The Entertainment Economy*, American media consultant Michael J Wolf argues that Americans (and, by extension, Canadians) increasingly make decisions to purchase goods and services based on which option is perceived to be the most entertaining, and which appears most likely to make the consumer feel good. As one reviewer put it, "Americans now consider 'fun' as an entitlement."¹ In a 1999 speech, Perrin Beatty, then President of the CBC, noted that this entertainment and technology driven cultural force that Wolf calls the e-factor is so pervasive in our society, that "it touches every aspect of our lives". Wolf was concerned particularly about the implications for business, commerce and marketing, whilst Beatty was more interested in the implications for the mandate of the CBC to be a driving force in protecting and encouraging Canadian culture. To read John Stephenson, the same force has made its mark on the Church and its worship.

When I first read John Stephenson's paper, my immediate response was "Yes!" The sort of narcissistic, pseudo-religious search for a high - the entertaining or feel-good aspect of Wolf's e-factor - that Stephenson describes is indeed a dangerous force in the Church. In its misguided search for a replica of

transcendence, it more resembles the drunken orgies of ecstasy in the Dionysian mystery cult than authentic Christian worship, and ultimately produces the sort of litur-tainment that can never be more than an unconscious parody of authentic liturgy.

The ease with which purported Anglican clergy can succumb to this movement of our consumeristic culture is all the more worrisome, given our history as Anglicans and the Laws and Canons which govern us. For in a very real sense, a crucial part of the foundation of the Anglican Church is to be found in the Act of Uniformity 1549, and its successors to 1662, which mandate the use of the Book of Common Prayer. The Canons of 1603 included a provision requiring the priest to take an oath that he would use only the Book of Common Prayer.² Similarly, clergy in three of the four Ecclesiastical Provinces in Canada are required at their ordination and licensing to swear to the effect that "in public prayer and in the administration of the Sacraments I will use the form of the Book of Common Prayer and none other except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority."³ (Unwisely, in my view, Ontario leaves the form of the oath to each diocese. The Synod of the Province of Ontario should restore the oath at its earliest opportunity.)

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The point of these oaths is not arbitrarily to restrict the clergy in the practise of their liturgical ministry, nor to stifle their creativity, but to ensure that public worship which purports to be Anglican actually is authentically Anglican. Gregory Dix suggests that the trend toward uniformity was in fact the assumption by Parliament of the episcopal powers of *jus liturgicum*, the power to authorize liturgy and to correct abuses.⁴ This power is essential for the bishop to fulfil the twin responsibilities as guardian of unity and guardian of orthodoxy, for, on the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, whoever controls or manipulates the liturgy controls or manipulates the range of authentic belief. The imposition by law of a new Book of Common Prayer was, in a very real sense, the first attempt at a nationwide programme of adult Christian education - and quite specifically a vehicle for promulgating the new theology of the Reformation.

For Anglicans, it is a fundamental principle that authentic public worship is worship that is duly authorized, which implies first that the text of the liturgy comes from a source that is authorized, and second that the worship leader is properly licensed.⁵ Licensing implies that the worship leader has been properly trained and has agreed on oath to operate within the parameters of authentic Anglican liturgy. It also implies that anyone who violates that oath may be removed from office. Using an authorized liturgical text implies that someone (or a group of someones) with proper education and training has worked through the theology of the text and certified it to be within the parameters of authentic Anglican faith. Placing that content in a proper form is an essential part of the responsibility of the liturgical leader. Canonically, it is our legal responsibility and duty, not because some Synod wants to ruin our fun or oppress us, but because our forebears clearly understood the grave

responsibility that lies in teaching the faith through the leadership of worship.

Without being legalistic, or stifling legitimate local creativity, conducting worship in a manner that is properly authorized is a very serious matter. The willy-nilly introduction of a happy-clappy quasi-Dionysian form of "worship" is in fact a serious violation of liturgical law and practice, which threatens to undo generations of formation in Anglican faith and spirituality. Those who are tempted to go down this road would do well to ask themselves, "Is this why Archbishop Cranmer went to the stake?"

Alan T. Perry is a priest in the Diocese of Montreal, having been ordained to the diaconate in 1993 and to the priesthood in 1994. He holds the LLM in Canon Law at Cardiff University, Cardiff.

¹ New Yorker, 22 November, 1999

² Canon 36. See Gerald Bray, ed., *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Church of England Record Society, 1998, p. 321.

³ Canon IV 3(3) *The Ecclesiastical Province of Canada: Constitution and Canons*, p. 34. Rupert's Land and British Columbia have similar provisions.

⁴ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Second Edition. Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945, p. 588.

⁵ For authorized liturgy as a principle of Anglican Canon Law, see Norman Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, Chapter 8, and especially pp. 228-240.

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Bring Back Reverence, Transcendence and Beauty

Hilde Lorenz

The Rev. Dr. John W. Stephenson in "Gonna Rock the Town Tonight" provides us with a valuable service by offering a concise review of how the whole Pentecostal movement has affected our current liturgy. He cautions us at the end:

But above all, we need a renewed commitment to what holds us steady. Scripture, Sacramental celebration, and the liturgical shape that fosters our commitment to them must be reaffirmed or else the price we pay will be steep indeed.

He gives two presuppositions: first, he contends that there is no such thing as non-liturgical worship. Liturgy is, after all, "the work of the people." His second presupposition "*lex orandi – lex credendi*", how we worship influences, shapes, what we believe. While all worship may be liturgical, we need to go into more depth and define with some precision as to what we mean when we use the word "liturgy".

Father Michael Bechard, liturgist for Kings University College, University of Western Ontario, presents it this way by covering all the bases. Be warned before you read on. If the Apostle Paul can be wordy, Father Michael puts him to shame. However, if you take the time to digest what Father Michael is saying, you will see that he has left nothing out. With that preamble, here is how he defines liturgy:

Christian liturgy is a religious rite of the church, in which the whole church, renders visibly present in symbol and publicly celebrates, the mystery of our salvation already accomplished once and for all by Christ in the Holy Spirit, thanking and glorifying God for this gift of Divine life, in order that this life might be intensified in those who participate in the sacred mysteries of the liturgy for the remission of their sins and fulfillment of the

Kingdom to come, and communicated to all women and men for the building up of the church into a kingdom for the salvation of all, the perpetual glorification of God, according to His (sic) own express will. Within the liturgy we thank and glorify God for this gift of Divine life. The liturgy is used for the building up of the church into a kingdom for the salvation of all.

His definition of liturgy clarifies for us that Christian liturgy is a standard and not a contrived ritual. We do not make it up as we go along. It is not a celebration of the individual but for the whole Christian community. Good liturgy is ritualistic. The ritual activity is formal, uses sacred symbols, and is traditional. It carries over time and is similar from place to place. Liturgy is a celebration of the community and is not based on one individual's personal philosophy.

As a university chaplain and having spent what seems like decades in ecumenical work, I find it odd that right now when so many of our Christian young adults are searching for a deeper encounter with the beauty of the Lord in formal worship, we are discarding parts of the liturgy.

Music is key in a worship service. Singing has a way of getting into our souls. Yet it is around the area of music that unfortunately most expressions of dissatisfaction occur. Certainly within our setting, the common source of discontent about church music lies in the generational gap.

As a university chaplain and pastor within a local parish, I seem to have my feet straddled in two different worlds. There is no question that in the university context, synthesizers, guitars, and drums are the instruments of choice.

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Educating and exposing congregational members and those who assist in liturgy to solid liturgy and educating them on the principles and historical significance behind each action movement will assist all in attempting to do "liturgy well."

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However, we need to remember that we are dealing with young adults of Baby Boomers who have little or no church experience in their background or are energetic "evangelicals".

Is there a solution to the problem other than being careful? Educating and exposing congregational members and those who assist in liturgy to solid liturgy and educating them on the principles and historical significance behind each action movement will assist all in attempting to do "liturgy well".

Perhaps the solution lies in going back to basics and education. Let us define precisely by what we mean by crafting a liturgically sound worship service and bringing all the elements together in a meaningful whole.

It may be that we have already paid the price. The steady decline in worship attendance is no fiction. It may be in chasing the latest fad, we have contributed to that decline. It is our role as stewards to craft a liturgically sound worship service. Do that and the people will come to worship. The evidence, if we look for it, exists and astonishingly the generational divide disappears.

Let us bring back reverence, transcendence and beauty to the role of the presider and the responses of the faithful to our liturgy will be self evident.

"lex orandi – lex credendi"
As we worship, so we will live

The Rev'd Hilde Lorenz was Lutheran Chaplain to the University of Western Ontario and Associate Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, London, Ontario when she wrote this article. She is now pastor at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta.

Good Biscuits

Marian Jeffries

I was four papers from graduating with my M.Div., had one week left in the term and was "crawling to the finish line", when I first entered into the conversation about good liturgy. A few weeks later, I still do not feel like an expert on the subject.

"...how we worship influences, indeed shapes, what we believe." How does our worship influence and shape us, affect what we believe and how we act? As Dr. Stephenson says, the consequences are considerable. Does the liturgy we participate in guide our lives and how does the Christian community respond to the world following a worship experience? The reading in 1 John in the lectionary the morning I began my response to the article tells us to "love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

I appreciate liturgy that is exciting, motivating and where the presence of the Holy Spirit can be active and alive in worship. But I begin at the end, the dismissal. It seems to me that worship should set us up to go out into the world, continuing to experience God, carrying with us throughout the week, the presence of the Holy Spirit expressed in the way we relate to God and each other in long lasting relationship that goes well beyond Sunday. How important is liturgy in setting us up to go out into the world, excited and motivated "to love and serve the Lord"?

What happens between the time I enter the doors to the time I leave that changes me, inwardly as well as outwardly, carrying me from one state of being to another, a state of being not in isolation but affecting how I interact with my fellow human beings and all of creation? What does worship mean to the interdependence of all things and the joy and hope in the message that Christ brings?

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“Good liturgy” may or may not hinge on technology. Technology is a tool that is used to the church's advantage and disadvantage. My Nova Scotia worship experiences where the latest technology was used have been consistently good news stories. The liturgy, whether it be in Morning Prayer in the chapel at the Atlantic School of Theology or at a contemporary Evening Prayer in a local church, was well constructed and well thought out. It enhanced and enriched worship and was not distracting.

When the screen is too low, people end up with whiplash and frustrated trying to see around bobbing heads in front of them. When technology fails, or the operator isn't competent, the last prayer can be first and hymns sung with verses sung from back to front, or worse still, with no words at all. But technology is a credible tool and the course I enrolled in my second year at AST was valuable. Competency is important and practice and training certainly helps.

And does the “quality” of the worship experience hinge more on leadership structure and content, providing rich and engaging liturgy, than technology? I believe so. If done well, Anglican liturgy can provide the structure and content, not simply as performance, but in a manner that gives meaning to the experience. It seems to me, only a humble new graduate, that attracting worshipers is not necessarily about abandoning the components of traditional Anglican worship but whether or not it is led in a manner that is respectful of the situation and provides a meaningful worship experience to those present. This can include joy, humour, pleasure, excitement, tradition and technology, but in a way that respects people and the environment. (e.g. never place the drummer right behind the altar).

The use of music in liturgy is not new, but music has evolved. It is about new music. Is the style of music, more important than the quality? I'm left wondering more about the message than the medium. Is the message centered only on the relationship of the individual to God or is there evidence of corporate relationship with God that is based on Christ's teachings and our call to love our neighbour as ourselves? In the end, how are we communicating with God through music and where do the lyrics take us?

When I asked my spiritual director what constitutes “good liturgy”, she used the analogy of biscuit recipes. She explained that everyone has a good biscuit recipe, yet they are all different. Each recipe has different qualities. It depends on the skill of the baker (or in this case officiant) and the preference of the consumer (some people prefer extra ingredients, e.g. raisins and others take them plain). The components are equally important. Too much of anything in the recipe and the biscuits are ruined. If they are baked too long, they will burn and if they are not in the oven long enough, they will come out raw. It is about quality.

Marian Lucas Jeffries, M.Div. is a graduate of the Atlantic School of Theology (2006) and is currently the parish priest serving four congregations in the Parish of Upham in the Diocese of Fredericton.

One family who tried them [churches which offer more contemporary styles of worship music] out came back to the Cathedral saying, “They put on a great show, but it was religion for dummies.”

“My Needs Weren’t Being Met”: A Local Response

Robin Walker

Much has been written in recent years about how to attract people from different generations, with simplistic formulas like “Just do [*tactic*] and the [*generation*] will flock to you.” Would that it were so simple! Liturgy is a hugely complex reality, steadfastly resisting the one-size-fits-all mindset, but the new “North American liturgy” which John Stephenson describes has proven to be very attractive for many people. As he observes, this new liturgy “is casting influence on the liturgies of most Christian groups on the continent.” Its effect has been felt even in places with more traditional worship.

My parish is the oldest of the three Anglican churches in Brandon, with a building dating from 1912. It looks like a Cathedral, and the dominant worship style has historically reflected the architecture. Liturgical renewal has come slowly, even grudgingly. Like many similar congregations, we struggle with numbers as our core membership ages. Even so, the new liturgy that James Stephenson describes has had some impact here, not evident so much in our Sunday worship as in shifts in the congregation, particularly among people under about 50. Our senior members display exceptional brand loyalty: “This is my church and I’m staying here, no matter what.” The younger families do not show the same loyalty, moving around between churches—or between church and no-church.

Older members look at this revolving door of younger families and say “we have to do something to attract younger people”. They often point to the full parking lots around some of the evangelical churches, something you can’t do for St. Matthew’s, because we only have on-street parking! “What are they doing right?” is the question.

The church-hoppers’ response is “My needs weren’t being met”, often referring to musical styles and tastes. Our music is traditional Anglican—hymns with pipe

organ, almost counter-cultural in a world dominated by rock, pop, and country music. There are a number of churches in this community which offer more contemporary styles of worship music, at least one of which uses the “seeker-sensitive service” concept pioneered by Rick Warren¹ and others. While their services have professional-quality production values and a highly-skilled musical group, the theological content is deliberately kept to a minimum. One family who tried them out came back to the Cathedral saying, “They put on a great show, but it was religion for dummies.”

These people may be in the minority: the full parking lots attest to that. On my lazier days, even I would be glad to be entertained without any demand being made on my mind. However, their experience shows that this approach soon wears out for some people. The accessibility of worship seems to me to have an inverse relationship to the robustness of its appeal. As Paul noted, easily digestible food must eventually give way to meat.²

The great appeal of the new liturgy is in its music, much of which is of very high quality within its own idiom. People who have experienced well-performed music of this genre have expressed a desire for more variety in music at St. Matthew’s. Interestingly, these calls for new music do not correlate perfectly with this generation. The few attempts we have made into this area have been less than successful, in part because we lack people with the necessary skills. Vineyard-style songs work well in a “worship set,” but we have found them to be less successful when standing alone in a specific place in our liturgy. It seems clear that using this musical style to best effect would require liturgical changes which many of our members would not tolerate.

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We are left with the conundrum of responding to “My needs weren’t being met” in a way that does not do violence to our liturgical tradition. The response I suggest is not to try to meet everyone’s perceived needs—down that road lies chaos!—but to challenge the complaint at its heart. It reflects what I would call a consumerist attitude to worship, focused on the worshipper, not on God. The mark of good liturgy of any variety is its ability to summon worshippers across thresholds: from individual to corporate, from wants to real needs, from human to divine. **We do not worship to meet our needs, but to give glory to God: not consumers of worship but consumed by worship.** “It is zeal for your house that has consumed me.”³

As for the new liturgy, if it is of God, it will stand—and we will all be the richer for it.

The Very Rev’d Robin Walker is Dean and Rector, St Matthew’s Cathedral, Brandon, Manitoba.

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Zondervan 1995

² 1 Corinthians 3:2f

³ Psalm 69.9a NRSV

Website Highlights

www.worshipwell.com

The Worship Well is an online community for sharing and creating fresh, innovative worship resources in the Episcopal Church. Enter the Well regularly to find and pass along liturgical and scriptural resources, art, multimedia and graphics, and music for worship in a variety of communities and contexts. Some of the resources are available for purchase; many more are free. You can read the seasoned advice and wisdom of peers, submit and share information you believe others would find inspiring and useful. There are many links to liturgy resources.

The Worship Well is a truly collaborative effort. Though it is spearheaded and run by Church Publishing Incorporated, it is a team made up of several groups within the Episcopal Church, including the Office of Liturgy and Music, Episcopal Church and Visual Arts, and the All Saints Company (linked with St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco).

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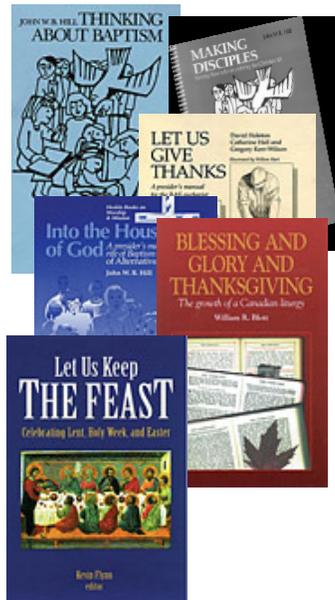
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