

Michael A. Farley, “Reforming Reformed Worship: Theological Method and Liturgical Catholicity in American Presbyterianism, 1850-2005” (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 2007)

Abstract

Since 1850, American Presbyterians have shown an increasing interest in moving beyond the boundaries of the austere and minimalist worship practices of the Anglo-American Presbyterian tradition to recover more ancient and catholic patterns of worship from the early church. I call this movement toward greater continuity with pre-Reformation patterns and forms of corporate worship a shift toward greater liturgical catholicity.

This dissertation compares and contrasts representative works on liturgy by traditional Anglo-American Presbyterians (Thomas Cartwright, George Gillespie, Samuel Miller, and Thomas Peck) with more recent works by representative catholic American Presbyterians (Charles W. Shields, John W. Nevin, Scott F. Brenner, Horace T. Allen, Jr., Harold M. Daniels, Jeffrey J. Meyers, and Peter J. Leithart) in order to examine the shifts in biblical interpretation and in the use of post-biblical liturgical traditions that have accompanied a movement toward greater catholicity in liturgical practice.

In biblical interpretation, movement toward liturgical catholicity has been accompanied by broadening the locus of liturgical norms in Scripture. Whereas traditional Presbyterians insisted that explicit commands and/or examples in the New Testament are necessary to warrant a particular liturgical practice, catholic Presbyterians have justified liturgical practices by demonstrating that a particular practice embodies biblical-theological principles even if the practice itself has no precedent in the New Testament.

In their use of post-biblical church tradition, catholic Presbyterians have rejected primitivism and affirmed the legitimacy of historical liturgical development. Their favored historical models are liturgies from the late patristic era, Reformed liturgies from the early sixteenth-century Reformation, and the liturgies that emerged from the twentieth-century Catholic and Protestant liturgical movements.

The catholic reformers have differed among themselves in their interpretation of Scripture and tradition according to the relative weight given to Old Testament typology and post-biblical traditions as guiding norms for the liturgical expression of biblical-theological themes. Meyers and Leithart draw more of their liturgical framework from a Christological reading of Old Testament patterns of covenant renewal embodied in the sacrificial worship of the Tabernacle and Temple. The others turn more to post-biblical liturgical models for the outline of their order of worship.

Key terms

1. Praxis-oriented regulative principle: A hermeneutical approach to a biblical theology of worship that defines the norm for Christian worship as the apostolic practice of the first-century church. According to this principle, liturgical practices are biblical only if there are explicit New Testament commands or normative examples of those particular practices.

2. Theologically oriented regulative principle: A hermeneutical approach to a biblical theology of worship that defines the norms for Christian worship not only explicit biblical commands and examples of particular liturgical practices but also general theological principles and patterns derived from the whole Bible. According to this principle, liturgical ritual is biblical when it embodies truths taught in the Bible, and not merely because the apostolic church actually practiced the ritual in question.

3. catholic worship/liturgical catholicity: Worship traditions that arose during the first millennium of the church's history and became widespread across a variety of Christian communions (particularly Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions as well as the Anglican and Lutheran traditions that maintained substantial continuity with their western Catholic liturgical heritage). Liturgical catholicity seeks a liturgical embodiment of Christian unity that moves toward greater continuity with the *ordo* of pre-Reformation patterns of worship and the emerging ecumenical consensus in recent liturgical renewal movements.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITURGICAL CATHOLICITY: PART 2

While mainline Presbyterian scholars in the twentieth century were heavily engaged in liturgical scholarship and reform, most of the smaller, more theologically conservative Presbyterian bodies remained largely untouched by the ecumenical liturgical movement.¹ Compared to the activity of scholars like Brenner, Allen, and Daniels, there was a conspicuous dearth of liturgical works by more conservative Presbyterians during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the few writings that did emerge from these Presbyterian circles contained little or no interaction with the massive and rapidly expanding literature of liturgics.²

The history of American Presbyterianism in the twentieth century provides some plausible reasons for this difference. Most of these conservative Presbyterian denominations emerged from the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversies of the twentieth century as different groups broke away from the larger mainline Presbyterian churches to form new churches. For example, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church split from the northern PCUSA in 1936, the

¹ By “conservative,” I mean Presbyterians who have continued to adhere closely to the doctrine taught in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, and the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. In twentieth-century America, conservative Presbyterians were (sometimes reluctant) members of the Fundamentalist coalition in the debates over theological liberalism/modernism in the early twentieth century. Many conservative Presbyterian groups in the United States later became associated with the constellation of institutions and ministries that historians have called the neo-evangelical movement. These institutions included seminaries (such as Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary), publishers, periodicals (e.g., *Christianity Today*), parachurch organizations (such as the National Association of Evangelicals and the Evangelical Theological Society) and ministries (such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association). This “new evangelical” movement continued to uphold the strong fundamentalist views of biblical authority and inerrancy as well as a core of central and historic tenets of Christian orthodoxy while seeking to engage contemporary American culture in a more open, more intellectual, and less directly confrontational manner. See Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 62-82; George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 153-171. Whether or not “evangelical” is the most appropriate label for conservative Presbyterians—and some have rejected it (Mark A. Noll and Cassandra Niemczyk, “Evangelicals and the Self-Consciously Reformed,” in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991); D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 85-140)—they at least share many common theological commitments with evangelicals because they maintain a strong commitment to the doctrine of the *Westminster Confession* and catechisms.

² This isolation from the larger field of liturgical studies—whether due to lack of awareness or interest—is evident in books like Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) and in the works surveyed in R. J. Gore, Jr., “Reviewing the Puritan Regulative Principle of Worship,” *Presbyterion* 20 (1994): 41-50. The separation continues in more recent publications, e.g., John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1996); Terry L. Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship: A Sourcebook for Presbyterian Students and Ministers Drawing upon the Biblical and Historic Forms of the Reformed Tradition* (Oak Ridge, TN: Covenant Foundation, 1996); Terry L. Johnson, “The Pastor’s Public Ministry: Part One,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (1998): 131-152; D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, *With Reverence and Awe: Returning to the Basics of Reformed Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002); D. G. Hart, *Recovering Mother Kirk: The Case for Liturgy in the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003); Philip G. Ryken, Derek W. Thomas, and J. Ligon Duncan III, eds., *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003).

Presbyterian Church in America broke away from the southern PCUS in 1973, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church severed ties with both northern and southern churches when they merged to form the current PCUSA in 1983. Since their very identity was defined over against the mainline Presbyterian groups, it was highly unlikely that liturgical developments among mainline churches would attract any conservative interest.

Furthermore, conservatives perceived a liberal draft in the direction of American Protestant ecumenical endeavors that downplayed doctrine and compromised the fullness and integrity of historic Reformed orthodoxy on vital theological matters. Conservative Presbyterians have refused membership in the National Council of Churches (formerly the Federal Council of Churches) and the World Council of Churches for precisely these reasons.³ Therefore, the fact that the ecumenical movement was a major source of ideas and impulse behind liturgical reform in mainline Presbyterian churches would have been a source of suspicion rather than attraction.

Theological and confessional concerns also made them the most anti-Catholic of Presbyterians. Presbyterians have a long history of opposing Catholic doctrine, liturgy, and ecclesial structures, and conservative Presbyterians in the twentieth century continued their principled opposition—even if the rhetoric became somewhat more restrained over time—when their more liberal mainline counterparts were gladly entering into new relationships with Catholics.⁴ In 1960, on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, Presbyterian Lorraine Boettner published a lengthy theological polemic against the Catholic Church that became a staple of Presbyterian anti-Catholic apologetics for decades.⁵ More recently, conservative Presbyterians were some of the leading critics of the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) initiatives led by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus.⁶ Therefore, conservative Presbyterians were not likely to look favorably upon the mainline Presbyterian readiness to adopt liturgical practices associated in the popular Presbyterian mind with the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, in spite of the general hostility or indifference toward catholicity in these Presbyterian communions, a new and surprising concern for liturgical catholicity began to appear

³ Presbyterians participated in the formation of two conservative ecumenical groups in opposition to the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches: the American Council of Christian Churches founded by the fundamentalist Presbyterian Carl McIntire in 1941 and the National Association of Evangelicals founded in 1942. Both organizations denied membership to any body that belonged to the Federal Council (later National Council) of Churches. See Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 47-50. Several smaller Presbyterian bodies also belong to a parallel ecumenical organization known as the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), which provides a forum for mutual encouragement, communication, and deliberation on matters of common concern. See <http://www.naparc.org> for a list of the eight member churches.

⁴ For a history of (mostly Reformed) evangelical-Catholic relations in American history, see William M. Shea, *The Lion and the Lamb: Evangelicals and Catholics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 247.

⁵ Lorraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1960). It currently remains in print.

⁶ Shea, *The Lion*, 55-185; Noll and Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?*, 151-191. ECT is an informal dialogue between evangelical and Roman Catholic scholars that began in the early 1990s in an attempt to model reconciliation through personal friendship and to explore both ongoing theological differences and potential avenues for cooperation in ministry together. The group has produced a series of papers on theological topics that delineate areas of agreement and disagreement between the Catholic and evangelical members of the group (the papers address topics as diverse as political activity, evangelism, pro-life concerns, and the doctrines of salvation, the relation of Scripture and church tradition, and the communion of saints). See Noll's chapter for the relevant bibliography.

in a few works by conservative Presbyterians by the 1980s. This was a period of new liturgical interest among evangelical Presbyterians, and the new developments in worship moved in several different directions at once.⁷ Some Presbyterians adopted more contemporary styles of music and a simplified, more informal service that has been historically characteristic of revivalist and charismatic movements.⁸ Others encouraged a return to earlier Scottish models that were relatively more catholic than the prevailing American practices. However, this second group of reformers lacked a catholic spirit because they ignored ecumenical scholarship and resisted learning and borrowing from other liturgical traditions, insisting firmly that Presbyterian worship must be distinctively Presbyterian.⁹ Still others moved toward greater liturgical catholicity by adopting catholic practices associated with the early Reformation and patristic eras, some of which move outside the older boundaries of Anglo-American Presbyterian tradition.

This chapter surveys the work of two conservative Presbyterian advocates of this liturgical catholicity, Jeffrey J. Meyers (1957–) and Peter J. Leithart (1959–). Their preferred liturgical practice is remarkably similar to that advocated by Brenner, Allen, and Daniels. In their convictions about the overall shape of the eucharistic *ordo* and the value of ancient forms of prayer, confession, calendar, ceremony, and gesture, Meyers and Leithart are rather closely aligned with their mainline Presbyterian counterparts.

In their theological method, however, Meyers and Leithart distinguish themselves from the other reformers examined in this dissertation. Like the others, they do affirm a more theologically oriented regulative principle, which creates hermeneutical space for embracing the catholicity of the church's tradition in worship. It is their interpretation and application of Scripture to liturgical matters that makes them distinct. Meyers and Leithart derive much of their liturgical framework from the Old Testament by reading the accounts of Israel's sacrificial worship through a typological lens. Their close reading of the Bible yields a wealth of liturgical details ignored by other Presbyterians, and their heavy reliance upon Scripture results in a corresponding independence from post-biblical liturgical models vis-à-vis those embracing a patristic-ecumenical model of liturgical theology. Consequently, I distinguish their liturgical-theological method as a *biblical-typological* model.

Jeffrey Meyers and Peter Leithart have very similar ecclesiastical and theological backgrounds. They were both exposed to classical catholic traditions of Christian worship in their earliest years since they were raised in Lutheran families and faithfully attended Lutheran churches. Both also became Reformed Christians and obtained graduate degrees in theology from Reformed seminaries.

Meyers grew up in St. Louis, Missouri as a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. After his college years, he came to embrace Reformed theology and completed a Master

⁷ For some of the diversity that emerged in the early 1980s, see Gore, "Reviewing."

⁸ E.g., Frame, *Worship*; John M. Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997). Cf. the historical summary of revivalist and Pentecostal-charismatic worship in James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 171-208. Presbyterians who have adopted these forms of worship have often been very concerned about the evangelistic potential of more informal and simple services.

⁹ See, e.g., Hart, *Recovering Mother Kirk*; Hart and Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*; Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship*; Ryken, Thomas, and Duncan III, eds., *Give Praise to God*. Several of the authors in these works have an expansive definition of "Presbyterian" that includes some Continental Reformed practices typically rejected by many Scottish, English, and American Presbyterians, such as singing extra-biblical hymns in addition to psalms, celebrating major festivals of the liturgical year, and favoring more frequent communion.

of Divinity at Covenant Theological Seminary in 1988. Ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), Meyers served as the associate pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Huntsville, Alabama from 1988-1991. He became the senior pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Houston, Texas, where he served from 1991-1994. Since 1994, he has been the senior pastor of Providence Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA) in St. Louis, Missouri. During that time he has also completed the course work for a Ph.D. in systematic theology at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, a seminary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Meyers has devoted many years to extensive study of liturgical history and theology, and he has led his congregations through a gradual process of liturgical reform toward more catholic expressions of Reformed worship.

Meyers has drawn upon his study and practical experience to promote liturgical education in the PCA. From 2000-2002, Meyers organized conferences on Reformed liturgy for PCA ministers, elders, and laity just prior to the annual PCA General Assembly. He has also authored a substantial work on Reformed liturgy that grew from a series of essays composed to teach his congregation about the theological and historical reasons for their liturgy.¹⁰

Peter Leithart grew up in Columbus, Ohio attending an independent Lutheran Church, although one that had strong affinities with the conservative Wisconsin Synod. Leithart also moved into the Reformed tradition and obtained a Master of Arts in Religion in 1986 and a Master of Theology in 1987, both from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He earned his Ph.D. in theology at Cambridge University in England studying under the direction of John Milbank.¹¹

Leithart is also a minister in the PCA. Prior to his doctoral work, he was the pastor of Reformed Heritage Presbyterian Church (now Trinity Presbyterian Church) in Birmingham, Alabama. He is currently a professor of theology and literature at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho and senior pastor of Trinity Reformed Church.¹²

Leithart has written a number of books and articles on liturgical and sacramental theology. His work has primarily addressed the nature of the sacraments as efficacious signs. While his work in this area is broad and multi-faceted, a unifying thesis in his writings is that sacramental efficacy is better understood in relational rather than substantial categories. Drawing upon sources ranging from semiotic and ritual theory, contemporary Trinitarian theology, and particularly John Milbank's work on the inherent social character of the Christian faith,¹³ Leithart argues that sacraments are best understood when placed in an explicitly relational and social context. As physical creatures, humans necessarily conduct their relationships through physical signs, symbols, and rituals.¹⁴

¹⁰ Jeffrey J. Meyers, *The Lord's Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003).

¹¹ His dissertation on the theology of baptism has been published. See Peter J. Leithart, *The Priesthood of the Plebs: A Theology of Baptism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).

¹² While Leithart retains his ministerial credentials in the PCA, Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow, Idaho is a congregation in the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches, a Reformed denomination that is similar to the PCA in its theology and polity.

¹³ See, e.g., John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

¹⁴ For his more general writings on sacramental theology, see Peter J. Leithart, "Conjugating the Rites: Old and New in Augustine's Theory of Signs," *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 136-147; Peter J. Leithart, "Marcionism, Postliberalism, and Social Christianity," *Pro Ecclesia* 8 (1999): 85-97; Peter J. Leithart, "'Framing' Sacramental Theology: Trinity and Symbol," *Westminster Theological Journal* 62 (2000): 1-16; Peter J. Leithart, "Embracing Ritual: Sacraments as Rites," *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 (2005): 6-20.

According to Leithart, sacraments do not derive their unique efficacy vis-à-vis the word of God because they are physical signs. Scripture is also a physical sign and symbol, and the ministry of the word of God conducted through the reading and preaching of Scripture is also an embodied/physical ritual through which God conducts his relationship with his people. Sacraments are like other rituals because they are physical means for establishing and maintaining relationships.

Using biblical metaphors and analogies, Leithart links the form and function of sacraments to a variety of ordinary human rituals. For example, Leithart explains how baptism is a kind of ordination to priesthood, an anointing to kingship, an adoption ceremony, and a wedding. All of these rituals create new relationships, confer new offices and responsibilities within a social system, and entail new social obligations to the newly established relationships.¹⁵ Likewise, the Lord's Supper is a kind of meal that does what all human meals do (or at least have the capacity to do), namely, to embody and nourish relationships of families and friends in a variety of different social settings.¹⁶

In Leithart's view, sacraments are not unique because of their physicality or their particular form but rather because of the unique social setting in which they function and the specific kinds of relationships to which they give expression. The sacraments are unique among all human signs and rituals because they are special means by which God establishes and conducts his relationship with the church, which is a supernatural society united to Christ by the Spirit. In this relational ontology of the sacraments, Leithart explains sacramental efficacy in terms of a Trinitarian personalism in which sacraments are not sacred "things" or "substances" separate from God but rather the embodied forms through which God works. Thus, there is nothing "merely social" about the sacraments; rather, sacraments are always already both social and theological acts because they are acts of God conducted in and through his church. To use language from contemporary Catholic theology, Leithart attributes the efficacy of the sacraments to the sacramentality of the church as the body of Christ.¹⁷ On this point, the general contours of his thought are similar to John Nevin's linkage of ecclesiology and sacramental efficacy.

Leithart's concern for liturgical theology and practice emerges from these more general reflections on sacramentality. For Leithart, the sacraments cannot be isolated from the liturgical context in which they occur. On the contrary, the sacraments derive their meaning and efficacy from the ritual and socio-theological context of the liturgy. By stressing the commonalities of the ministry of word and sacrament under the common rubric of sign and symbol, Leithart (like Nevin) construes the whole liturgy as sacramental, and therefore, he maintains a strong interest in the content and manner of celebrating the liturgy.

¹⁵ See Peter J. Leithart, "Christ's Christened into Christ: Priesthood and Initiation in Augustine and Aquinas," *Studia Liturgica* 29 (1999): 68-83; Peter J. Leithart, "Modernity and the 'Merely Social': Toward a Socio-Theological Account of Baptismal Regeneration," *Pro Ecclesia* 9 (2000): 319-330; Peter J. Leithart, "Womb of the World: Baptism and the Priesthood of the New Covenant in Hebrews 10.19-22," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 49-65; Leithart, *Priesthood*. For his view of priestly ordination in the Old Testament, see Peter J. Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House: Priesthood in the Old Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 85 (1999): 3-24.

¹⁶ See Peter J. Leithart, "What's Wrong with Transubstantiation? An Evaluation of Theological Models," *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 295-324; Peter J. Leithart, "The Way Things Really Ought to Be: Eucharist, Eschatology, and Culture," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59 (1997): 159-176; Peter J. Leithart, *Blessed Are the Hungry: Meditations on the Lord's Supper* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000).

¹⁷ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 1.1, 21 November, 1964 (English translation in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Rev. ed., vol. 1 (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996), 350); E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

Both Meyers and Leithart share a mutual friend, James B. Jordan, whose work has been the primary contemporary source for their Reformed liturgical theology. Jordan also earned a Master of Theology from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1980 and he was a pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Texas from 1980 to 1986. Jordan is now the full-time director of Biblical Horizons, an organization that promotes Reformed biblical theology and Reformed liturgy primarily through Jordan's writings and speaking at conferences. Jordan also produces the newsletters *Biblical Horizons* and *Rite Reasons*, which address the topics of biblical studies and liturgy, respectively.¹⁸ These newsletters contain theological and historical essays written primarily by Jordan himself but also by Meyers, Leithart, and others. In addition to his essays, Jordan's books on liturgical theology¹⁹ as well as his self-published articles on Israel's Tabernacle, Temple, and sacrificial worship²⁰ have been very formative in the development of Meyers's and Leithart's theology of worship.²¹

The friendship between Meyers, Leithart, and Jordan and two decades of collaborative effort in writing and publishing has produced a shared liturgical-theological vision. Leithart thus explicitly identifies himself, Meyers, and Jordan as members of the "Biblical Horizons group."²² As with Allen and Daniels who were also friends and colleagues and shared virtually identical views, I will examine the work of Meyers and Leithart together.

¹⁸ Archives of both newsletters may be viewed at <http://www.biblicalhorizons.com>.

¹⁹ James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988); James B. Jordan, *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1986; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999); James B. Jordan, *Liturgical Nestorianism: A Critical Review of Worship in the Presence of God* (Niceville, FL: Transfiguration Press, 1994); James B. Jordan, *Theses on Worship: Notes toward the Reformation of Worship*, 2nd ed. (Niceville, FL: Transfiguration Press, 1998); James B. Jordan, *The Liturgy Trap: The Bible versus Mere Tradition in Worship*, 2nd ed. (Niceville, FL: Transfiguration Press, 1998); and James B. Jordan, *From Bread to Wine: Toward a More Biblical Liturgical Theology* (Niceville, FL: Biblical Horizons, 2001). The book *Through New Eyes* explains the development of redemptive history in Scripture through a series of major covenants, and it places liturgical symbolism and practice at the heart of those successive covenantal administrations. *Liturgical Nestorianism* contains Jordan's critique of the praxis-oriented regulative principle espoused by many traditional American Presbyterians. The book *Theses on Worship* sets forth many of the key insights developed by Meyers and Leithart concerning the order of worship contained in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Christ. In *The Liturgy Trap*, Jordan distinguishes the kind of liturgical reform he favors from some liturgical practices in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglo-Catholic traditions.

²⁰ James B. Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice: Its Liturgy and Meaning," *Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper*, No. 11 (Niceville, FL: Biblical Horizons, 1991).

²¹ Although Jordan is currently a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Valparaiso, Florida, he has never been a minister in a Presbyterian denomination. While he is a Reformed Protestant and his work sits squarely within the Reformed tradition, he considers his own views to be more closely aligned with Reformed groups outside the Anglo-American Presbyterian tradition (James B. Jordan, email to the Biblical Horizons mailing list, December 18, 2006). Since the scope of this dissertation is limited to figures within American Presbyterian churches (and their English and Scottish antecedents), I will not analyze Jordan's work directly. I have also decided to focus upon Meyers and Leithart because their work presents some of Jordan's ideas about Christian typological readings and liturgical applications of the Old Testament sacrificial system in a more updated and systematic fashion.

²² Peter J. Leithart, *From Silence to Song: The Davidic Liturgical Revolution* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 105-106.

Meyers's and Leithart's Liturgical Ideals

Both Meyers and Leithart set forth their liturgical ideals using examples from their own pastoral ministry. Table 6 outlines the orders of service for worship on the Lord's Day that come from the liturgical practice of the two congregations they serve.

Table 6: Eucharistic Liturgies by Jeffrey J. Meyers and Peter J. Leithart

Providence Reformed Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri (Meyers)	Trinity Reformed Church Moscow, Idaho (Leithart)
<p>The Lord Calls Us Into His Special Presence</p> <p>Call to Worship Hymn Salutation & Scriptural Dialogue Collect for Purity</p> <p>The LORD Cleanses Us</p> <p>Call to Confession Confession</p> <p>Absolution</p> <p>The LORD Consecrates Us</p> <p><i>Sursum corda</i> Preface <i>Sanctus</i> (or thematically similar hymn)</p> <p>Old Testament Reading</p> <p>Epistle Reading Psalm Gospel Reading Creed Sermon</p>	<p>Entrance</p> <p>Entrance (Processional to Doxology) Call to worship</p> <p>Salutation & Scriptural dialogue Collect for Purity</p> <p>God Cleanses Us</p> <p>Exhortation Call to Confession Confession <i>Kyrie</i> Absolution</p> <p>Ascension</p> <p><i>Gloria in excelsis</i> <i>Sursum corda</i> Preface <i>Sanctus</i> Collect for the day <i>Te Deum</i> Collect for peace</p> <p>God Speaks</p> <p>Old Testament Reading Psalm or Hymn Epistle Reading Psalm or Hymn Gospel Reading Creed Sermon Pastoral Prayer Lord's Prayer</p>

Table 6 (continued)

Hymn Prayers of Dedication and Intercession Lord's Prayer Offering <i>Gloria Patri</i>	Prayers of the People (Intercession) Passing of the Peace & Offering
The LORD Communes With Us	God Feeds Us
Prayer of memorial and thanksgiving for the Bread Words of Institution (Bread) Distribution (with hymn) Prayer of memorial and thanksgiving for the Cup Words of Institution (Cup) Distribution (with hymn) Post-communion benediction <i>Nunc dimittis</i> Post-communion thanksgiving	Eucharistic Meditation Thanksgiving for the Bread Words of Institution (Bread) Distribution (with hymn) Thanksgiving for the Cup Words of Institution (Cup) Distribution (with hymn) Post-communion thanksgiving
The LORD Commissions And Blesses Us	Dismissal
Hymn Commissioning Benediction Hymn	Pastoral Charge Benediction Recession (<i>Nunc dimittis</i>)

These very similar liturgies reflect a common commitment to liturgical catholicity. First, these services are liturgies of both word and sacrament. For both Meyers and Leithart, a full eucharistic liturgy is the normative form for corporate worship on the Lord's Day, and their congregations celebrate communion every week.

Numerous historic forms also appear throughout these liturgies. Meyers often opens his liturgy with the salutation from Ps. 124:8 used by Calvin, and both pastors employ Thomas Cranmer's collect for purity. Their congregations confess their sins with written prayers drawn from various Reformed sources, and (in Leithart's church) the *Kyrie*. Ancient acclamations and hymns of praise (*Gloria*, *Te Deum*, *Sursum corda*, *Sanctus*, *Nunc dimittis*) appear regularly alongside ancient creeds (Nicene and Apostles' creeds) and ancient prayers (e.g., the Lord's Prayer).

Like many ancient and early Reformed services, these liturgies are highly responsorial. Numerous opportunities for active corporate participation occur throughout the liturgy through various acclamations (e.g., the salutation, the *Sursum corda* dialogue, responses to Scripture readings). Each liturgy invites corporate prayer through written prayers of confession, bidding prayers or litanies with congregational refrains, and corporate "Amens."

Meyers and Leithart have also adopted several catholic customs in liturgical ceremony and environment. Their congregations regularly kneel or stand for prayer. Leithart's liturgy opens and closes with a processional movement in and out of the sanctuary. Both ministers reject black Geneva gowns in favor of the more ancient and catholic tradition of white albs and stoles, and they decorate the altar-table with white cloth, paraments, and candles.

Finally, both of these conservative Presbyterian pastors organize their Scripture readings, sermon themes, and prayers by following the major Christological festivals of the liturgical calendar. Following the widely adopted scheme of liturgical colors, they change their paraments and stoles to follow the changing seasons and festivals of the liturgical year.

Thus, the practice of corporate worship in Meyers's and Leithart's congregations is quite similar to the liturgical ideals favored by members of the patristic-ecumenical model discussed in the preceding chapters. However, differences between these two schools of Reformed worship emerge when we examine their biblical-theological method for deriving and defending their liturgical practice.

Meyers's and Leithart's Liturgical-Theological Method

In contrast to the other catholic Presbyterians examined in this study, Meyers and Leithart grapple directly with the hermeneutical challenge of narrower understandings of the regulative principle of worship. The other defenders of liturgical catholicity employ a theologically oriented regulative principle that largely remains implicit in the kinds of arguments they offer. What remains implicit in the writings of Brenner, Allen, and Daniels becomes explicit in the work of Meyers and Leithart. These conservative Presbyterians tackle the hermeneutical challenge posed by the Puritan legacy in Presbyterian liturgical theology and explicitly articulate and defend the legitimacy of broader interpretations of biblical warrant.

Both scholars are openly critical of the narrow praxis-oriented regulative principle found in many traditional Presbyterian works on liturgy, which they summarize in the slogan "whatever is not commanded in Scripture is forbidden in worship."²³ Leithart finds this approach objectionable for two reasons. First, it is "in practice, hermeneutically wooden" because "an explicit command is required for every act of worship." It is also "theologically Marcionite" because it "ignores the abundant Old Testament liturgical instruction in favor of exegeting a few passages of the New."²⁴

Meyers also rejects the sort of praxis-oriented regulative principle found in much traditional Presbyterian liturgical thought. Summarizing the principle as "whatever is not commanded therefore is forbidden," Meyers protests that this criterion is "completely unworkable and in practice has never been followed." There are no explicit commands in the Bible directing the church to open the liturgy with a call to worship or close it with a benediction. There are no direct imperatives that instruct pastors to preach a sermon every week, to take an offering and baptize in the liturgy, and to worship on the first rather than the seventh day of the week.²⁵

²³ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 101. Cf. Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 303.

²⁴ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 15-16.

²⁵ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 303. The force of Meyers' point here is blunted somewhat by an overly narrow construal of "command" as an imperative. Even Presbyterians who operated with a narrow, praxis-oriented regulative principle included normative examples within the scope of the Bible's "commands." Thus, examples of early Christians worshipping on the first day of the week could be interpreted as establishing norms for the Christian liturgy. Scripture also contains examples of benedictions including the famous Aaronic benediction in Num. 6 and

While Meyers and Leithart reject the particular praxis-oriented regulative principle found in the works of many traditional Presbyterian theologians, they affirm the more general parameters for worship found in the Presbyterian confessional standards and also in earlier Reformed theologians. Meyers opens his discussion of the regulative principle by affirming with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Westminster Larger Catechism* that “the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself.” This means that worship is “limited by his own revealed will” such that the church has the duty of “receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his Word.” Negatively, practices “not prescribed in holy Scripture” are forbidden.²⁶ Meyers also commends a similarly general definition of hermeneutical principle from Martin Bucer’s work *Censura*: “Nothing should be introduced or performed in the churches of Christ for which no probable reason can be given from the Word of God.”²⁷

Meyers agrees with these formulations of the regulative principle because they do not stipulate the meaning of biblical warrant in an overly narrow way. In his own words, Meyers explicitly affirms that “the content and ritual of our Lord’s Day corporate worship must be informed and regulated by the Word of God. Nothing should be added to the Church’s worship without biblical warrant.”²⁸ However, Meyers distinguishes himself from many of his Presbyterian predecessors by broadening the scope of “biblical warrant” to include “biblical commands, *principles*, or examples [emphasis added].”²⁹

Leithart joins Meyers in submitting to biblical norms in a broader manner more oriented to the different ways that Scripture provides instruction relevant to liturgical theology. As he explains, “I adhere to the regulative principle in the sense that we are to worship God as He has taught us to worship Him, but He has taught us in myriads of ways, and not merely in explicit commands.”³⁰ Meyers and Leithart thus make explicit the theologically oriented regulative principle at the heart of the Presbyterian movement toward liturgical catholicity.

Leithart describes this as a “regulation-by-analogy principle,”³¹ and he finds this approach to biblical hermeneutics within the Bible itself. He observes that figures in later stages of redemptive history acknowledge the ongoing relevance and authority of laws about liturgy

also apostolic blessings at the end of epistles intended to be read in the church’s public worship. Nevertheless, Meyers’s main point stands because there other practices in the worship of Reformed churches for which no command or normative example exists.

²⁶ Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 298. He cites *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21.1 and *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q 108.

²⁷ *Martin Bucer and the Book of Common Prayer*, trans. E. C. Whitaker (Essex, England: Alcuin Club, 1974), 42, 44. This work contains both the Latin text and English translation of Bucer’s book. Cf. Hughes Oliphant Old’s summary of the dominant sixteenth-century Reformed perspective on the role of Scripture in worship: “Christian worship should be in obedience to God’s Word as it is revealed in Holy Scripture....[T]he church should develop services of worship in accordance with whatever specific directions and examples are found in Scripture. When Scripture does not give specific directions, then we should be guided by scriptural principles.” Old distinguishes this approach from “some sort of Bible-pounding literalism.” See Hughes O. Old, *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture*, Rev. ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 3.

²⁸ Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 298.

²⁹ Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 303. See also Jordan, *Sociology*, 208-210; Jordan, *Liturgical Nestorianism*, 21-26, 49-56.

³⁰ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 101.

³¹ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 104.

from earlier stages.³² However, they apply these earlier laws in creative ways by deriving general principles from the law and developing new practices from these analogous principles.

³² By “earlier” and “later,” Leithart means both location in the literary sequence of the Old Testament books and in the chronological sequence of historical events. As theologically conservative Presbyterians, Meyers and Leithart believe that the narratives of Israel’s history in the Old Testament are historically reliable, i.e., the Old Testament provides accurate (although not exhaustively detailed) depictions of events that actually occurred in history. Thus, they affirm that Israel really was a nation enslaved by Egypt in the second millennium B.C. and that the exodus was an historical event in which Moses led the nation out of Egypt. They believe that the laws recorded in the Pentateuch were given by God to Israel at Mt. Sinai as the Pentateuch describes. They also believe in an historical David who performed the actions ascribed to him in 1-2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles. They are very critical of the historical and literary presuppositions and practice of source criticism that was popularized initially by Julius Wellhausen. They are skeptical of the skepticism toward the Bible’s historical reliability that underlies the majority of constructions of Israel’s history in modern scholarship. Much of this contemporary Old Testament scholarship views the Old Testament as essentially historically unreliable. Many scholars view these narratives as stories fabricated for purely theological reasons and projected back into the past, and they place their date in the late monarchy or even the exilic or post-exilic eras. See Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1885); Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1962-1965); Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1991); Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, trans. P.R. Ackroyd, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1960); Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernhard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972); R. J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism since Graf* (Leiden: Brill, 1970); Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961); Norman Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979); J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). Meyers’s and Leithart’s views of biblical historicity align closely with a school of critics of source criticism and a conservative school of Old Testament historiography. See e.g., Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961); R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, JSOTSup, vol. 53 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); Duane A. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); A. R. Millard, James K. Hoffmeier, and David W. Baker, eds., *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994); Alan Millard and James K. Hoffmeier, eds., *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); V. Philips Long, ed., *Israel’s Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999); V. Philips Long, David W. Baker, and Gordon J. Wenham, eds., *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument, and the Crisis of “Biblical Israel”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969). However, even if one does not share their conservative views of Old Testament historicity, their theological exposition of the Old Testament could still be persuasive for Christians as a form of canonical criticism (see e.g., Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992)). Those who accept the canonical authority of the final form of the biblical text (on some other grounds besides its historical referentiality) could accept the theological patterns in Meyers’s and Leithart’s work as a relevant basis for Christian liturgy. On a canonical-critical view, the Old Testament narratives and legal material could be interpreted a reliable witness to divine revelation in Israel’s (or Israel’s priestly and prophetic leaders’)

For example, in his analysis of David's liturgical instructions in 1 Chron. 15-16 and 23, Leithart notes that David frequently describes the newly established music ministry of the Levites using technical terminology from the Pentateuch. David was a liturgical innovator when he introduced choirs accompanied by a wide array of musical instruments into the public worship of Israel. The Torah contains no instructions about song in worship or musical instruments to accompany them. However, David repeatedly states that he is following the Law of Moses, and he explains the new music ministry of the Levites using terms associated with Levitical service in transporting and guarding the Tabernacle and the offering sacrifices by priests.

For instance, the only reference to worship music in the Law of Moses occurs in Num. 10:9-10 where the blowing of trumpets is called a "memorial" (Hebrew: *zikaron*) that causes Israel to "be remembered" (from the Hebrew verb *zakar*) before the Lord. David alludes to this text when he says that the Levitical choirs were to sing "to cause [the Lord] to remember" (from the Hebrew verb *zakar*). For David, the choirs performed the same function as the trumpets in Num. 10, and he used the very same verb from Num. 10 to describe that function.³³

Leithart constructs the analogical reasoning implicit in this expanded application of the Torah to new Levitical musical duties:

Major premise: The Law governs worship.

Minor premise #1: The Law prescribes that trumpets be played over the public ascensions in public worship.

Minor premise #2: The trumpet is a musical instrument.

Conclusion: Analogously, song and other music are a legitimate part of worship.

inner experience and theological perspective on the world, even if the precise relationship of that witness to the events narrated in the text is unclear.

³³ Leithart offers several other lines of argument to support his thesis. In 1 Chron. 15:2, David cites the law in Deut. 10:8. Both texts state that the distinctive duties of the Levites are to carry (from *nasa'*) ark of the covenant and to "minister" (from *sharat*) to the Lord. In 1 Chron. 15:1-16:3, however, the account of the transport of the ark and the subsequent ministry of the Levites includes the singing of the Levitical choirs, which is also described as "ministry" (*sharat*) in 16:4 and 16:37. "Ministry" has been expanded beyond its Deuteronomic scope to include song. Second, in 1 Chron. 6:31-32 and 23:25-32, the Levites are said to offer "service" (*'abodah*) at the house of God. While Num. 4:24, 31, and 49 describe the Levitical "service" (*'abodah*) as physical transport of the Tabernacle materials, the verses in Chronicles affirm that the Levites have a continuing "service" even when this physical duty is no longer required due to the permanence of the Temple. This ongoing "service" is ministry in music and song. Once again the scope of Levitical ministry has been expanded beyond its Pentateuchal limitations even though described with the same terminology. Third, Leithart observes that the use of the verb to "stand" (*'mad*) is part of a technical phrase in the Pentateuch describing priestly ministry at the Tabernacle. A priest is one who "stands" to "serve" Yahweh in some capacity at his house (see e.g., Num. 16:9; Deut. 10:8, 17:12, 18:5). In 1 Chron. 15:16 and 6:31-33, David "caused the Levites to stand" (from the verb *'mad*) to "minister" (*sharat*) in music. Fourth, in 1 Chron. 25:8, the Levites who minister in music (vv. 1-8) are organized into "watches," a noun from the same root as the verb *shamar*, which means "to guard." Both noun and verb appear in texts in the Torah devoted to Levitical guard duty (Num. 1:53, 3:7, 8:26, 18:3-5). In 1 Chronicles, the range of guard duty has expanded to include musical ministry. Fifth, the same Hebrew words is used to refer to both the musical instruments of Levites and the sacred utensils of the Temple for ministry at the altar. Both are *keli* (cf. 1 Chron. 28:13-14 with 1 Chron. 15:16 and 16:5). The range of Levitical utensils for ministry has grown to include musical instruments. Finally, in 1 Chron. 16:37, the Levites perform their musical ministry "continually before the ark as each day's work required." The adverb "continually" (*tamid*) is a technical term in the Pentateuch for the daily sacrifices offered at the Tabernacle (Exod. 29:41-42; Num. 28-29) and phrases similar to "each day's work" also are used to refer to sacrifices in Lev. 23:37 and 2 Chron. 8:12-13, and Ezra 3:4). Cf. the temporal conjunction of Levitical music and the offering of these daily sacrifices in 1 Chron. 23:30-32. See Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 57-72.

So Leithart defends his theologically oriented regulative principle (in part) by demonstrating that biblical authors themselves engaged in inner-biblical or inter-textual hermeneutics in a similar fashion. Within the biblical canon itself we find liturgical developments and applications of biblical law based upon analogical forms of reasoning that are not restricted to explicit commands or normative examples of specific practices.

Therefore, Christians are following canonically based hermeneutics when they adopt the same approach to the Bible as a whole to derive a biblical theology of worship. In order to develop a biblical liturgical theology in this manner, Meyers and Leithart insist that interpreters must place New Testament commands and portrayals of apostolic worship in the larger context of Scripture narrative of redemptive history. The Puritan tendency to appeal to the New Testament almost exclusively and to read it in a legalistic fashion as an exhaustive liturgical manual is inadequate because the New Testament authors themselves are engaged in a typological interpretation and analogical application of Old Testament forms of worship. Thus, Meyers and Leithart seek to expand the scope of traditional Presbyterian hermeneutics by bringing more fully into liturgical theology both Old Testament teaching about worship and a more eschatological understanding of the New Testament set within the trajectory established by the Old.

In order to accomplish this task, Meyers and Leithart draw upon the resources of a school of Reformed biblical theology that is a sort of (ultra)conservative parallel to the Biblical Theology Movement popular among mainline Protestant circles in the mid-twentieth century.³⁴ The founder of this school in the American Reformed context is Geerhardus Vos, the first professor of biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.³⁵ Vos's legacy continues in the work of conservative Reformed scholars who have developed his approach of studying the Bible as a unified narrative by tracing both continuity and progressive development in the various epochs of salvation history.³⁶

³⁴ See chapter 4 for discussion of the Biblical Theology Movement. While proponents of the Biblical Theology Movement affirmed the theological unity of Scripture and developed a relatively traditional reading of the theological message of the Bible, they also accepted much of the historical-critical analysis that called into question the historical referentiality and reliability of the biblical text. The result was an inability to harmonize their theological exposition of the Bible with the constructions of history that they accepted from modern critical scholarship (Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 103). The particular (ultra)conservative Reformed biblical theology to which I refer is more conservative in that it resolves this tension by affirming a more traditional view of the Bible's historical veridicality and critiquing the soundness of modern critical reconstructions of biblical history.

³⁵ His most seminal work in this field was Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

³⁶ Important representative works include: John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace: A Biblico-Theological Study* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1953); Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, trans. H. de Jongste (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1962); Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John R. De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (S. Hamilton, MA: M. G. Kline, 1989); Richard B. Gaffin, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," *Westminster Theological Journal* 38 (1976): 281-299; Richard B. Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1987); Richard B. Gaffin, "Biblical Theology and the Westminster Standards," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 165-179; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980); W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1997); Jordan, *Through New Eyes*; Willem Van Gemeren, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988); Graeme Goldsworthy,

This school of Reformed thought stresses the unity of redemptive history and thus the theological continuity of Old and New Testaments. The twin themes of God's covenant and kingdom provide the framework for the biblical narrative, which consists primarily of a series of covenants between God and his people through which God established, administered, and extended his kingdom in the world. Christ is the center of redemptive history and Scriptural revelation because he definitively inaugurated the new covenant and the eschatological kingdom promised in the Old Testament. This is not something entirely new in the Reformed tradition. Reformed theologians have always strongly affirmed the essential continuity of Old and New Testaments, and the Reformed tradition has been the only major Christian theological tradition to adopt "covenant" as an architectonic theme for structuring its confessional theology.³⁷ However, these twentieth-century Reformed scholars of biblical theology have utilized the tools of newer historical and literary methods to develop a much more detailed and sophisticated analysis of biblical covenants.³⁸ Important keys to this development have been historical advances in understanding the form and purpose of covenant-making in the historical context of the Ancient Near East³⁹ and also recent developments in the literary analysis of Scripture,⁴⁰ particularly the growing attention to inter-textuality and typology within the biblical canon.⁴¹

According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991); Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005); Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Way of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

³⁷ For early modern attempts to use the theme of covenant as an organizing principle in the construction of Reformed theology, see Johannes Cocceius, *Summa Doctrinae de Foedere et Testamento Dei* (Lugduni Batavorum, Elsevirorum: 1648); Herman Witsius, *De Oeconomia Foederum Dei cum Hominibus* (1677; reprint, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*. Translated by William Crookshank. Escondido, CA: Den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990).

³⁸ By new "historical" and "literary" methods, I do not mean all of the methods of source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism and the historical constructions that critical biblical scholarship builds upon them (or assumes in their use).

³⁹ Greater knowledge of the nature of covenants in the historical context of the Ancient Near East has shed new light on the presence and importance of covenant structures in the Old Testament text. See e.g., the parallels between the structure of the book of Deuteronomy and that of suzerain-vassal treaties in the second millennium B.C. in Kline, *Treaty*). See also George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963); E. W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); Scott W. Hahn, "Kinship by Covenant: A Biblical Theological Study of Covenant Types and Texts in the Old and New Testaments," (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1995).

⁴⁰ For recent developments in studies of genre, literary devices, and discourse analysis (or textlinguistics), see Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, eds., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman, III, eds., *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993); Robert. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985); Robert D. Bergen, ed., *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (Winona Lake, IN: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994). Several essays in the volume edited by Bergen argue that a more systematic and linguistically rigorous analysis of the grammar and structures of Hebrew discourse undermine traditional source criticism.

⁴¹ Renewed interest in typological interpretation has emerged in modern scholarship via studies of both patristic biblical interpretation and in biblical scholarship itself. For typology in patristic thought, see e.g., Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Wulstan Hibberd, vol. Burns & Oates (London, 1960); Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For recent biblical scholarship on typology and Old Testament allusion in the

The influence of these themes from biblical theology appear in Meyers's and Leithart's emphasis on the importance of the Old Testament for liturgical theology. Without the Old Testament, Leithart maintains that Christians are left with few biblical materials for constructing a biblical theology of worship.

Where else do we go, if we are going to be Biblical, to work out the meaning of worship? What book gives us more information about worship than Leviticus? Certainly, no book of the New Testament offers anything like a theology of worship, or even much practical guidance....[T]hough certain isolated 'elements' of worship can be teased out of the New Testament, little is said about the order or significance of these elements.⁴²

Yet few Reformed scholars have turned to Leviticus and other Old Testament texts about worship for liturgical instruction, and Meyers and Leithart believe that this largely untapped biblical resource is an important key for the continuing reformation of Reformed worship.

Leithart attributes this antipathy toward Old Testament liturgy to a "semi-Marcionite" theology that characterizes the discontinuity between Old and New Testament spirituality and liturgy as a transition from an external ritualism to an internal religion of the heart. A semi-Marcionite approach to biblical hermeneutics is

a structuring theological narrative that, while remaining within orthodox parameters,⁴³ betrays reservations about Old Testament materialism or legalism, or minimizes the grace offered to Israel....Modern Marcionism, like its ancient counterpart, conspires with a Gnostic ambivalence to physical creation and sees Christianity as removing the husks of materialism in religion. Christianity is not merely a different religion but a different *kind* of religion from that of Israel....The Marcionite account of history supports the reading of Christianity as inwardness, and the interpretation of Christianity as inward piety sets it off from the materialism and socio-political concerns of Hebrew sensibility. Among the "husks" of Old Testament religion supposedly discarded in the emergence of the spiritual "kernel," ritual has first place. Hebrew religion is to Christianity as empty ritualism is to heartfelt piety, as Baroque Catholicism is to Puritan liturgical minimalism.⁴⁴

Leithart has shown that this perspective on the relation of Israel's system of worship to that of the church in the New Testament is present to varying degrees in the history of Christian

New Testament, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos, the Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993)

⁴² Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 106.

⁴³ The figures Leithart discusses as semi-Marcionite (or employing semi-Marcionite arguments) are orthodox and not properly Marcionite in the historical sense because affirm the canonicity of the Old Testament. Leithart invokes Marcion not to address ideas about the extent of the Christian canon but rather as a label for those who shared to some degree Marcion's negative evaluation of Israel's religion as presented in the Old Testament. He specifically defines "semi-Marcionite" (a synonym for "Modern Marcionism" here) as a view that is uncomfortable with the Old Testament's account of the physicality and ritualized form of Israelite religion and thus portrays the transition from the system of religion in the Old Testament to the New as a transition from external physical ritual to inward, unmediated encounter with God.

⁴⁴ Leithart, *Priesthood*, 4-5.

sacramental theology. In Leithart's terms, a "semi-Marcionite" view has two defining characteristics. First, it holds a "spiritualizing semiotic theory" in which "signs and rites function as more or less dispensable aids to invisible spiritual transactions, or the similar notion that signs aim primarily at achieving channeling grace to the soul." Semi-Marcionites attribute the reception of grace to a direct, internal link established between individuals and God. They may be either advocates or critics of sacraments, but all assume that "interior grace is 'what matters,' disputing only the usefulness of external signs for achieving this internal state."⁴⁵ For the sacramental "realists" in this camp, physical signs are (at best) mere containers of the invisible medicine of grace that acts directly on the soul.⁴⁶ For anti-sacramental "mystics," physical signs are barriers that obstruct true encounter with God who is ultimately known via an economy of grace that is beyond material signs altogether.

Second, a semi-Marcionite characterizes the contrast between the sacramental economies of Old and New Testaments as a transition from an (inferior) system of ineffective material signs to a (superior) system of worship in which grace is received in an encounter with God either beyond material signs altogether or conveyed in a material sign to which it is conjoined in a merely extrinsic fashion.

[Sacramental] realists construe the Old as a covenant of "mere signs," while those of the New are "effective signs," "signs that contain or confer realities," or signs that veil underlying "substance." For mystics, the rites and signs of Hebrew religion are bound up with the material and outward form of the Old Covenant, whereas Christianity begins as ascent to spirit, a descent into the heart, or both at once.⁴⁷

Either variation of a semi-Marcionite sacramental theology winds up critiquing the Old Testament sacramental economy as something qualitatively different from and inferior to a Christian one.

One of the earliest expressions of a semi-Marcionite framework appears in some of Augustine's works on the nature of signs in Old and New Testaments. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine distinguishes the religion of Jews in the Old Testament from that of pagan Gentiles by pointing to the role of physical signs and symbols. The Gentiles were enslaved to error because they worshipped with signs that led them to false gods. The Jews, on the other hand, had true and useful physical signs that led them to contemplate and worship the true God. And yet Augustine describes even the Jewish religion with its "signs divinely instituted for a useful purpose" as "a carnal form of slavery." Christianity is superior to the Jewish religion of the Old Testament because it liberates humanity from "the tiresome necessity of attending to signs, even the signs which we understand."⁴⁸ Leithart argues that "the way Augustine uses 'bondage of signs' suggests that signs inhibit rather than make possible fellowship with God; he is not merely warning against abuse of signs, for even religious expression through 'useful signs' is 'bondage.'"⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Leithart, *Priesthood*, 5.

⁴⁶ The "container" and medicinal metaphors are those of Hugh of St. Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 1.9.4.

⁴⁷ Leithart, *Priesthood*, 5.

⁴⁸ Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 73-75.

⁴⁹ Leithart, "Conjugating," 139-140. Leithart also cites numerous other texts in which Augustine employs alternative metaphors that clearly demonstrates that Augustine does not consistently follow this line of thought.

The semi-Marcionite position is perhaps clearest in the works of modern liberal Protestants, who have often defined the “inwardness” of piety (i.e., knowing God in a direct, unmediated, and “spiritual” [non-material] manner) as part of the essence of the Christian faith. Leithart provides examples from Friedrich Schleiermacher, F. C. Baur, Adolph von Harnack, Rudolf Bultmann, and Karl Barth⁵⁰ to show that this alleged contrast between the physical, mediated nature of worship in the Old Testament and the “spiritual,” unmediated, inward nature of worship and reception of grace in the New Testament has been a pervasive framework in modern Protestant biblical studies and theology.

The roots of this contrast extend farther back in history, however. It is also a pervasive theme in English Puritan and American Reformed liturgical theology.⁵¹ Reformed theologians have described the Old/New contrast with external/internal and carnal/spiritual dichotomies. For example, John Owen maintained that Christians no longer need “outward helps” for their worship as Israel did in the Old Testament because the coming of the Holy Spirit has rendered these “outward helps” unnecessary.⁵² John Nevin’s chief opponent in the German Reformed liturgical controversy in America, John H. A. Bomberger, emphasized the immediacy of New Testament worship in opposition to the material rites of the Old Testament in his interpretation of John 4:23-24:

“In spirit,” as under the *immediate influence*, and by the *immediate aid of the Holy Spirit, operating upon the mind and heart*... The devout communings of the worshipper should be *no longer bound to local or sensuous manifestations of God*, to temple, altar, or ark. They should ascend by faith to God Himself, to God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and in Him as ascended on high, and seated at the right hand of God in glory. Their worship should be *heart-worship, in contradistinction to all formal, material, carnal worship consisting of ceremonial, sacrificial offering, and the like* [emphasis added].⁵³

The fathers of the Reformed Church, therefore, sought above all to restore the worship of God in spirit and in truth, even as the Lord Jesus designates this as that which should be instituted under the New Covenant in opposition to that which characterized the old.

Elsewhere, Augustine describes the transition from Old to New Testament religion with metaphors that affirm the goodness and necessity of physical signs and symbols in the Christian faith and overcomes the intellectualist separation of *signum* and *res* along with its neo-Platonic depreciation of the *signum* (143-147).

⁵⁰ Leithart, “Marcionism.” On Augustine and the legacy of Augustinian semiotic theory in early medieval eucharistic theology, see Leithart, “Conjugating,” 136-143. Leithart also shows that Augustine and de Lubac work with other metaphors and models of relating Old and New Testaments that are not Marcionite on Leithart’s terms.

⁵¹ For analysis of English Puritan opposition to ritual and ceremony and the manner in which that hostility affected their interpretation of the Old Testament, see Henning G. Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 91-184. An anti-Old Testament bias appears in the traditional Presbyterian liturgical theology surveyed in chapter 2 of this dissertation (particularly American Presbyterian theologian Thomas Peck). The same theme appears in the work of John H. A. Bomberger, John Nevin’s chief opponent in the nineteenth-century liturgical controversy of the German Reformed Church in America. See Michael A. Farley, “‘A Debt of Fealty to the Past’: The Reformed Liturgical Theology of John H. A. Bomberger,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 39 (2004): 352-356. .

⁵² See the discussion in Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 304.

⁵³ John H. A. Bomberger, “Primitive Christian Worship,” *The Reformed Church Monthly* 2 (1869): 245.

Hence, they *excluded...every thing that was calculated to work upon the senses, rather than appeal to the spirit* [emphasis added].⁵⁴

American Presbyterian Thomas Peck also made some of the same assumptions when he calls the Old Testament people of God an “effete and carnal church” that lacked the Spirit of God. Attempting to borrow or adapt various liturgical forms or customs from the Old Testament (e.g., the use of written prayers or musical instruments in worship) is to return to “bondage” and forsake the spiritual “liberty of the gospel.” For Peck, the Spirit “liberated” the New Testament church not only from a sinful formalism but also from all the forms of the Old Testament *per se*.⁵⁵

Meyers and Leithart contest this semi-Marcionite perspective by showing how it is undermined by the New Testament itself. Not only was the New Testament written predominantly by Jewish Christians in a religious milieu profoundly shaped by the text of the Old Testament and the practices portrayed therein, but many texts in the New Testament describe the Christian church and her worship as the continuation and fulfillment of Israel’s sacrificial worship at the Temple. By repeatedly describing the theological identity and liturgical practice of the church in categories drawn from Israel’s Temple and sacrificial worship, the New Testament points Christians back to the forms of Old Testament worship for further details to understand the real nature of worship in Christ.

Both Meyers and Leithart point to numerous New Testament passages to demonstrate a pervasive pattern in apostolic use of Old Testament images and models.⁵⁶ They observe that the Lord’s Supper is a celebration of the (new) covenant,⁵⁷ and a typological fulfillment of the Passover and peace offerings more generally.⁵⁸ The Christian church is God’s new Temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:19-22, Heb. 8:1-2, 1 Pet. 2:5, Rev. 21:3) where Jesus serves as high priest in leading Christians in worship (Heb. 2:17, 4:14-5:10, 8:1, 9:11). In the earthly church-temple, Christians participate in the worship of the Tabernacle/Temple in heaven (Heb. 8:2; 9:12, 24; 10:19-24; 12:18-29; cf. Rev. 15:5-6), and they only have access to this heavenly sanctuary through the sacrifice of Jesus (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26, 10:12).

Sacrifice is an important liturgical category in the New Testament. Christian worship and service to God is described as an offering of sacrifices (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17, 4:18). New Testament authors not only apply sacrificial terminology to the Christian life as a whole but more specifically to concrete acts of worship experienced in the liturgical assembly. First, the New Testament repeatedly images the ministry of the word with a sword (e.g., Eph. 6:17, Rev. 1:16, 2:12) that splits the “joints and marrow” of believers’ hearts as they submit to its active and searching scrutiny (Heb. 4:12). Second, acts of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are called

⁵⁴ John H. A. Bomberger, *The Revised Liturgy: A History and Criticism of the Ritualistic Movement in the German Reformed Church* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Rodgers, 1867), 91.

⁵⁵ Thomas E. Peck, “General Principles Touching the Worship of God,” in *Miscellanies of Rev. Thomas E. Peck*, ed. Thomas C. Johnson (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1895), 84-85.

⁵⁶ Peter J. Leithart, “Synagogue or Temple: Models for Christian Worship,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002): 129-132; Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 106-107; Leithart, “Womb”; Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 55-71. All the Scripture citations in the following two paragraphs appear in these passages by Meyers and Leithart.

⁵⁷ In the eucharistic institution narratives in the gospels, Jesus explains that the Lord’s Supper is an act of covenant renewal by alluding to the covenants established and/or promised to Israel in Ex. 24:8 and Jer. 31:31.

⁵⁸ See C. John Collins, “The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice: How Patristic Authors Can Help Us Read the Bible,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 1-23.

sacrifices (Rev. 8:3-5; Heb. 13:14-15, 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Finally, the Lord's Supper is portrayed as a sacrificial act. The symbolism of body and blood offered, separated, blood poured out, and body eaten clearly recapitulates the procedures employed in offering animal sacrifices (Lev. 1-7). The apostle Paul also draws a direct parallel between the Eucharist and the sacrificial meals that Israel ate at the altar (1 Cor. 10:16-18).

According to Meyers and Leithart, the implication of this typological pattern is that the same covenant reality experienced in the Tabernacle and Temple is fulfilled in the worship and life of the church. This fulfillment does not entail simple repetition of Old Testament forms without change since the New Testament explicitly declares the cessation of the system of animal sacrifices and the old world of graded holiness symbolized spatially and cultically in one central Temple sanctuary (Hebrews, John 4).

Neither does fulfillment entail the complete abrogation and irrelevance of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Rather, it means that Old Testament worship has undergone a transformation in the person and work of Christ so that the whole Old Testament must now be understood through a Christological lens and applied in a manner appropriate to the new covenant context established by Christ. Thus, there are both continuities and discontinuities between the meaning and ritual structures of corporate worship in the Old Testament and the New. Leithart expresses both the continuity and discontinuity when he explains his understanding of the redemptive-historical changes that have occurred in worship in the wake of Jesus' death and resurrection:

The fundamental claim here is that sacrificial worship did not cease with the coming of the New Covenant, but was transformed into a "spiritual sacrifice" and "sacrifice of praise." We now do different things than ancient Israelites did, but those actions have the same meaning as the actions in the Levitical ceremonies. We no longer slaughter bulls and goats for blood purification, but we do confess our sins so as to be cleansed (1 Jn. 1:8-9). We no longer dismember animals before the Lord's table, but instead the Word cuts us into pieces so that we may be offered as sacrifices (Heb. 4:11-12). We no longer keep Passover but we celebrate the Lord's Supper, which fulfills Passover (among other things) and may be described as a Christian Passover. This same "transposition" from an Old to a New Covenant key can be applied to other rituals of the Levitical system. We understand what we are doing in worship through the categories of the sacrificial system, under the metaphor of sacrifice.⁵⁹

Thus, the New Testament itself provides adequate hermeneutical grounds to look back to the Old Testament for further details to develop a fuller liturgical theology. It is the New Testament authors who direct their readers back to the Old Testament with a Christological lens to learn what it means for the church to worship as the new Israel and God's new Temple. "In purely historical terms, if we want to understand the *New* Testament's descriptions of worship, we are forced to examine the *Old* Testament worship."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 108-109.

⁶⁰ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 107. This typological mode of argument should be quite familiar to Reformed and Presbyterian Christians since Reformed theology commonly appeals to the Old Testament practice of infant circumcision (a practice usually categorized as "ceremonial" law) as the primary biblical grounds for the practice of paedobaptism. Presbyterians infer from the practice of circumcision a normative pattern of initiation for the infant children of believing adults. They hold this pattern to be a trans-covenantal one that remains binding upon believers in the new covenant in spite of all the ways that initiation rites have been transformed in Christ with the

Meyers and Leithart clearly side with Scott Brenner in favoring the Temple as the primary background for interpreting New Testament teaching about the church and her worship. Unlike Brenner, however, they also directly tackle a possible objection to this perspective by addressing the relationship between the Temple and the Jewish synagogue and the implications for Christian liturgical theology. It has been common for liturgical scholars who oppose this Old Testament typology to appeal to the institution of the Jewish synagogue as an alternative source for the pattern and meaning of Christian worship. Observing that the New Testament abrogates the practice of animal sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament, these scholars have argued that early Christian worship grew out of simple synagogue services of word, singing, and prayer rather than the elaborate ritual of the Temple system. In chapter 4, we have already noted Horace Allen's attempt to ground Christian liturgy in Jewish family and synagogue practices rather than the Temple.

With better sources for tracing the history of later synagogue practice, liturgical scholars have attempted to draw precise parallels with early Christian worship. Historians of Christian liturgy have attempted to trace the roots of the overall shape or order of the liturgy, the specific features of the liturgy of the word, and at least some portions of the eucharistic prayer to roots in the Jewish synagogue.⁶¹ Horace Allen's polarization of the Temple and synagogue has been typical of much contemporary liturgical scholarship, which has failed to devote substantial attention to the Temple as a historical and theological source for explicating the origin and meaning of Christian liturgy.⁶²

Leithart shows that the alleged contrast between Temple and synagogue has been a trope in American Reformed liturgical writing for a long time. For example, Leithart mentions John Girardeau's opposition to instrumental music based upon synagogue-Temple dichotomy. Quoting Hughes Oliphant Old, PCA minister Terry L. Johnson claims that

establishment of the new covenant. The New Testament nowhere explicitly instructs Christians to baptize the infant children of believing adults; rather, the argument rests upon an inference from the typological relationship between the church and Israel in general and from the connection between baptism and circumcision in particular (see Col. 2:11-12). The pattern of argument for the normativity of the Old Testament sacrificial order follows precisely this same form: it is a typological argument based upon the relationship between descriptions of the church and worship in Old and New Testaments. If Presbyterians accept the pattern of infant initiation into the covenant as a continuing covenantal obligation on the basis of typology despite the absence of explicit New Testament commands or examples, then it seems that they cannot object in principle to the form of Meyers's and Leithart's typological arguments for Christian liturgical norms from the Old Testament sacrifices.

⁶¹ See Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 118-143.

⁶² Paul Bradshaw omits any discussion of the Temple in his survey of recent literature on the Jewish background and influence upon Christian worship. He does acknowledge that early Christians described the Eucharist in sacrificial terms, but he attributes this to the influence of literary accounts of Temple liturgy in the Old Testament rather than the Temple institution itself. See Bradshaw, *Search*, 35. Standard reference texts common lack any treatment of historical or theological connections between Christian liturgy and the sacrificial worship of the Tabernacle and Temple (e.g., Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds., *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Robert Cabié, *The Eucharist*, ed. A.G. Martimort, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, New ed., vol. 2, *The Church at Prayer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986)). In another popular introductory text and reference work, R. T. Beckwith briefly mentions the various sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament, and he acknowledges that first-century Jewish Christians continued to worship at the Temple by offering sacrifices. However, he only considers Jewish synagogue and family practices as historical influences upon early Christian liturgical theology and practice. See Cheslyn Jones et al., eds., *The Study of Liturgy*, Rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 68-80.

the foundation for the simple and spiritual worship of the New Testament may be found in the synagogue services that developed in the exilic period in response to the prophetic critique of the formalism and ceremonial ostentation that surrounded temple worship... . The worship of the synagogue was essentially the worship of the temple minus the apparatus of sacrifice: temple, priest, altar, victim, incense, and ritual.⁶³

Leithart contends that these arguments rely on two disputable premises:

(1) synagogue and Temple were antithetical, (2) Christian worship and Christian theological interpretation of worship grew primarily out of the practice of the Jewish synagogue rather than the Jewish Temple. He argues, however, that neither premise is true, at least not in ways that make a Temple theology inappropriate for Christian liturgics.

Regarding the first premise, Leithart draws upon the recent scholarship of Donald Binder to demonstrate that the Jewish synagogue functioned as an extension of the Temple, i.e., as mini-temples for the Jewish diaspora.⁶⁴ Binder shows how synagogue leadership structures, architecture, and liturgical practices were modeled on Temple patterns. Second, the New Testament interprets the worship and theological identity of the Christian church in categories drawn from the Temple and not from the synagogue.

Leithart notes the irony of this view for proponents of a strict praxis-oriented regulative principle like Thomas Peck and John Girardeau:

Girardeau has jettisoned the ‘regulative principle of worship’ with which he began. On the one hand, he stresses the need for biblical warrant for every element of worship; on the other hand, he ends up employing synagogue worship as a model for Christian worship. But there is virtually *no* information in Scripture about the worship conducted in the synagogues, and certainly no ‘commandments.’ Girardeau leads us in strange directions: Scripture clearly reveals that instruments were used in the worship of God, yet under the banner of the ‘Scriptural regulation of worship,’ Girardeau wants Christian worship to conform to the extra-biblical synagogue service.⁶⁵

Eschewing such modes of reasoning, Meyers and Leithart turn to the Old Testament with their theologically oriented regulative principle in hand in order to derive a Christian theology of liturgy. Following the many Old Testament allusions in the New Testament, they turn to the Old Testament’s Tabernacle, Temple, and sacrificial liturgy in order to discover via typological analysis the theological patterns and principles to guide Christian worship.

The Old Testament Sacrificial Liturgy

Meyers begins his study of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament by positing a link between worship and the accounts of covenant making and renewal in the history of Israel. He argues that a consistent sequence of events occurs when God establishes or renews his covenant with his people. According to Meyers, this covenantal pattern can be summarized as a fivefold order:

⁶³ Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship*, 8.

⁶⁴ Leithart, “Synagogue or Temple,” 124-128. Cf. Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 57-59.

⁶⁵ Leithart, “Synagogue or Temple,” 121-122.

1. God takes the initiative to “take hold” of his people.
2. God separates his people from their old situation and transforms them by bringing them into a new state or condition.
3. God speaks to instruct his people in the way of life and obedience in the covenant. He gives them stipulations and spells out their covenant obligations.
4. God confirms his promises and seals his relationship with his people through tangible ritual signs. These signs and seals function as a kind of oath or pledge of loyalty (both by God and the people involved) and are accompanied by promises of blessing for continued faithfulness and curse for unfaithfulness.
5. God arranges for the future succession of the covenant.⁶⁶

Meyers explains the covenants mediated by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus according to this general pattern. For example, he describes the order of the Mosaic covenant with the following model:

1. The people of God are graciously regarded by Yahweh, who takes hold of them and their situation in order to do something new (according to his covenant promises made to Abraham).
2. The people of God are torn from Egypt, separated from the death of slavery to Pharaoh, and cross the Red Sea as a new creation. They are bound together into a new entity—a nation with a new name: Israelites. God reveals himself with a new name: Yahweh (Exod. 3:14-15). There is now a new authority structure for the new nation: Moses, Aaron, priests, Levites, and elders are newly installed as rulers.
3. God speaks to the people, graciously providing them a new word from Him fit for their new estate—the Ten Commandments and what is called “the law of the covenant” (Exod. 20-23). The people then hear and respond with oaths of loyalty.
4. Not only does God utter the Ten Words from Mt. Sinai, but He also provides them with new signs and seals of His covenant: the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system. Not surprisingly, associated with these sacramental tokens of His presence are all sorts of blessings promised to those who faithfully perform them and curses for those who faithlessly violate the covenant rituals.
5. Finally, the entire book of Deuteronomy renews the covenant with the second generation of Israelites in the wilderness just before they cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. The whole book is concerned with the maintenance of the Mosaic covenant under the leadership of Joshua (see especially Deut. 32-34).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 40-44.

⁶⁷ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 48-49. Meyers acknowledges that other scholars have identified anywhere from three to eight elements in God's covenants in the Old Testament (44). Meyers believes that all of these different models are mutually complementary, and the diversity simply reveals the theological richness of the covenant relation. However, it seems more likely that that such diversity in the interpretation of covenant structure indicates that interpretive decisions about which elements of the text to highlight are more a function of the theological interests of the interpreter and less dependent upon objective literary structures in the narratives themselves. This kind of arbitrariness is particularly evident in Meyers's claim that his fivefold covenant model constitutes a consistent sequence of events. For example, in his analysis of the Mosaic covenant in the Pentateuch, he associates the giving of a new authority structure including priests and Levites with the second stage in the sequence. In the narrative sequence of the text, however, priests and Levites are not actually ordained until after the giving of the Law from Mt. Sinai (which is stage 3). Also, Meyers associates the giving of sacramental symbols with stage 4 of the sequence, but the establishment of Passover (a practice laden with symbolic and sacramental

According to Meyers, this order of covenant renewal has liturgical implications because the same sequence is found in the sacrifices that constitute the regular, daily and weekly corporate worship of God's people at the Tabernacle and later the Temple in the Old Testament. This repetition of the covenant renewal pattern in the sacrificial system reveals that the purpose of the sacrifices is to provide a regular opportunity for the renewal and maintenance of the covenant relationship by offering a way to deal with the guilt of sin and enabling worshippers to enter God's special presence by means of a representative.⁶⁸ In the Tabernacle and Temple, God provided a symbolic Mt. Sinai to which Israel could offer sacrifices through which God renewed the covenant that he established with Israel in the ceremony at Sinai.⁶⁹

The order of covenant renewal can be observed in both the ascension offering⁷⁰ described in Lev. 1 as well as the liturgical sequence of different sacrifices offered in Lev. 9.

significance) occurs in Exodus 12, which occurs in the part of the narrative identified as stage 2. Furthermore, Meyers later associates the second stage of the covenant sequence with purification and forgiveness of sins. However, there is a significant purification ceremony performed at Mt. Sinai with the sprinkling of blood over the nation, and this correlates with the Exodus texts that he assigns to stage 3 or stage 4 of his analysis. In addition, there are major texts left out of this sequence. Where does the ceremony in Exod. 24 (which seems to contain within it the full covenant sequence in itself) fit into the scheme? If the sequence ends with Deuteronomy, where do all the events in Numbers fit (apparently in stage 4), and can that entire book be plausibly categorized as fitting into only one stage if it contains elements that Meyers associates with other stages (e.g., the giving of new laws, the affirmation of Moses' and Aaron's leadership, etc.)? Finally, what should we make of the discrepancy between Meyers's and Leithart's fivefold sequences that attempt to fit the life of Jesus into this covenant order? (Cf. Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 49 and Peter J. Leithart, "Sacrifice and Worship," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/000960.php] (accessed February 26, 2007). We could offer a similar critique of the other fivefold sequences that he claims to find in other parts of the Old Testament. I believe that Meyers is on firmer ground (1) when he describes his five elements as "dimensions" of God's covenants and (2) when he identifies a consensus among interpreters that the covenants consists of "God's sovereign initiation of the covenant, His establishment of the terms or stipulations, His promise of blessing and threat against breaking the covenant, and His arrangement for the covenant's future continuance and expansion."

⁶⁸ Meyers cites Ps. 50:5, which makes the link between covenant and sacrifice explicit: "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!" (ESV). For additional support, he cites Gen. 8:20-9:17; Gen. 15:8-18a; Exod. 24:4-11, 34:15; Lev. 2:13, 24:1-8; Num. 18:19; 1 Kings 3:15; Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15, 18; 9:20; 12:24; 13:20. See Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 55.

⁶⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 79. Biblical scholars have repeatedly noted the typological parallels between the structure and literary description of Mt. Sinai (the mountain itself as well as the events that occur there) and the Tabernacle: "The equivalence of the Tabernacle to Sinai is an essential, indeed, indispensable, axiom.... The Tabernacle, in effect, becomes a portable Mt. Sinai, an assurance of the permanent presence of the deity in Israel's midst" (Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 574; see also Peter J. Leithart, *A House for My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000), 8-84; Victor Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 234-235; Philip P. Jenson, "The Levitical Sacrificial System," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 31). There is not only a general connection between Sinai and the structure of the Tabernacle, but there is a more precise link between the sequence of events that occur to establish the covenant at Sinai and the consistent liturgical sequence of sacrifices offered at the Tabernacle (see Lev. 8-9 for this full liturgical order). The order of events of Exod. 19-24 and even more specifically the order and content of the liturgical ceremony of Exod. 24 mirrors the liturgical of sacrifices described in Lev. 8-9 (see John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 122-123). This typological link between Sinai and the Tabernacle is a much stronger basis for Meyers's claim that the sacrificial liturgy performed at the Tabernacle is an act of covenant renewal. This link implies that a key theological purpose of the Tabernacle sacrifices was the ongoing renewal of the covenant first established at Sinai.

⁷⁰ This sacrifice is commonly translated "whole burnt offering." However, the Hebrew word is *'olah*, which comes from the same root as the verb *'alah* ("to ascend") and means "that which ascends." Meyers and

Leithart lists the steps involved in the ascension offering and interprets their theological meaning as follows:

How does one approach Yahweh? How can we sit down to have a meal with Him? The ritual of the offerings gives the answer. Though there are important variations in the rites, the following are the basic common elements of the offerings:

1. The worshiper lays his hand on the head of the animal. We draw near to God through a substitute.
2. The worshiper slays the animal. Sinners cannot stand before a holy God. The way to God is the way of death, the death of a substitute.
3. The priest displays the blood before Yahweh. As in the Passover, blood displayed turns away the wrath of Yahweh.
4. The priest arranges Yahweh's bread on His altar, and turns it to smoke. Through the substitutionary animal, the worshiper ascends into the presence of God.
5. Normally, there is a meal. Having drawn near to Yahweh through a substitute, we can eat and drink in His presence.⁷¹

This same basic sequence occurs again in the full sequence of different sacrifices in their order of liturgical performance. When Israel gathered for worship at the Tabernacle or Temple, the sequence or liturgy of sacrifices offered was the following:⁷²

Leithart favors this label for the sacrifice because the description of the *'olah* in Leviticus highlights the ascension of smoke from the animal that becomes a pleasing aroma to God. Also, the names of the other sacrifices are related to their theological meaning and not the condition of the animal. See Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 357; Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice."

⁷¹ Leithart, "Sacrifice and Worship," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/000960.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007). See also Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 355-365. Many Old Testament scholars have debated the theological meaning of the various sacrifices described in Lev. 1-7, and there is a wide range of views about the way that Israel understood these acts in their original historical *Sitz im Leben*. For an entry point into the scholarly debate about Israelite sacrifice, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*. In a chapter on the ascension offering, Meyers offers a more extended defense of his interpretive glosses. See Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 355-365, and cf. Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice." The interpretations Leithart and Meyers offer for the various sacrifices are not historical claims about the way that individual Israelites understood their participation in the sacrificial system. Rather, their explanations are, first, a theological exposition of the final form of the texts in Leviticus in light of other texts about sacrifice, ritual, and worship in the Old Testament, and, second, a typological exposition of their theological meaning as an prefiguring of the person and work of Jesus Christ. For Old Testament scholars who affirm various aspects of their exegetical conclusions about the theological meaning of the various sacrifices (particularly their substitutionary and propitiatory significance), see J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1863); Jenson, "Levitical"; Gordon J. Wenham, "The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995); Jay A. Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005).

⁷² Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 80-92. See also Jordan, *Theses on Worship*, 88-93. In a seminal article, A. F. Rainey noted that when different sacrifices were offered together in the same worship event, they always occur in the same sequence: sin/purification offering, ascension offering, and peace offering. See A. F. Rainey, "The Order of Sacrifices in the Old Testament Ritual Texts," *Biblica* 51 (1970): 485-498. This full sequence is found in Lev. 8-9; 1 Chr. 15-16, 28-29, and 2 Chr. 5-7. Other contemporary scholars who recognize this liturgical sequence and its relevance for Christian worship include Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 66; Wenham, "Theology," 82-84; R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 106-107; Jenson, "Levitical," 25-40; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 110-113.

1. Sin/Purification offering
2. Ascension offering
3. Peace offering

Leithart explains how the theological significance of this sequence corresponds to the same meaning inherent in the ascension offering.

When a series of offerings are brought, they are in a standard sequence: Sin offering, Ascension offering, and Peace offering (Lev. 8; Num. 6). This lays out a basic liturgical sequence: The sin offering is for purification and cleansing; the ascension offering symbolizes total consecration and involves a symbolic “ascent” to Yahweh’s presence; the peace offering includes a meal. The sequence is cleansing, consecration, and communion; absolution, ascension, and Eucharist.⁷³

To this basic threefold liturgical core, Meyers adds the entrance and call to worship at the beginning and a benediction by the priest at the end (cf. Lev. 9) to derive a basic fivefold order for covenant renewal liturgy: call to worship, cleansing, consecration, communion, commissioning/blessing.⁷⁴

This liturgy of covenant renewal ritually embodied in the sacrificial system is relevant for the practice of Christian worship because it finds its typological fulfillment in Jesus and the worship of the church. As Leithart explains, the sacrificial order of covenant renewal finds expression in the life of Jesus.

1. Jesus is the elect substitute. As we trust Him, His death is propitious for us.
2. Jesus dies for the sake of sinners.
3. Jesus is also the priest who displays His own blood before the Father.
4. Jesus ascends to the Father to stand in His presence as our substitute. United to Him, we also ascend to the heavenlies.
5. We eat and drink with and on Jesus in the Supper.

In short, the entire work of Jesus – from the “hand-laying” of His incarnation and baptism through the ascension and the Eucharistic celebration of the church – all of it is part of a “sacrificial” sequence.⁷⁵

Thus, the sacrificial liturgy in the Old Testament was a prophetic type of Jesus’ establishment of the new covenant. His death was a sin/purification offering (Rom. 8:3), his resurrection, ascension, and giving of the Spirit on Pentecost enabled the church to rise with him and be seated in heaven (Eph. 2:6), and in the Eucharist Christians share a covenant meal with him that seals and joyfully celebrates their covenant bond with him and with one another.

For Meyers and Leithart, the theological basis for discerning the ecclesiological and liturgical applications is the close union between Jesus and the church. Jesus’ fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices has implications for the church’s worship because the church is the

⁷³ Leithart, “Sacrifice and Worship,” [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/000960.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁷⁴ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 86-87.

⁷⁵ Leithart, “Sacrifice and Worship,” [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/000960.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007). Cf. Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 49.

body of Christ, the new eschatological Israel founded by Jesus and the new Temple in which the Spirit of Jesus is known.

Throughout the N[ew] T[estament], we see that typology works with a double focus: O[ld] T[estament] institutions and practices of worship are fulfilled in Christ, but also are played out in the practices of the New Testament church. Actually, this is a single, complex typology: O[ld] T[estament] institutions and practices are fulfilled in the *totus Christus*, both in the events that surround the death and resurrection of the Head and in the concrete continuing practices of the Body.⁷⁶

Therefore, the Old Testament sacrifices are types not simply of Christ as an individual but of the whole Christ consisting of head (Jesus) and members (church).

Meyers and Leithart unfold the implications of that insight for the church's worship. Because of the continuities between Israel, Jesus, and the church, the animal sacrifices not only prefigured the sacrifice of Christ but also the way that the church relates to God in Christ. If the sacrifices prefigure the way that God accomplished salvation in Jesus Christ, then they also establish patterns governing the church's worship because the church continues to draw near to God by means of Christ's sacrifice.

Therefore, Meyers and Leithart analyze the Old Testament sacrificial order to find theological concepts and principles that can be translated into explicitly Christian liturgical and theological categories found in the New Testament. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, they discern a theological structure that corresponds rather directly to common elements of Christian worship. In fact, they argue that the sacrificial sequence of covenant renewal embodies a liturgical framework that is remarkably similar to the order and elements of liturgical traditions of the Christian church in both east and west. Leithart summarizes the Christian covenant renewal order as follows:

1. Worshipers gather
2. Worshipers invoke Christ as their representative and substitute (leaning hand)
3. Worshipers confess sins, hear absolution (slaughter and blood)
4. Worshipers ascend to God, hear His Word, sing His praises (burning)
5. Worshipers eat a sacrificial meal.⁷⁷

Meyers provides further elaboration, explaining the typological connections of the covenant renewal sequence for Christian liturgy in greater detail.

1. Call to worship: God comes near and calls His people out of the world to gather in His presence. He graciously takes hold of us and brings us near to Himself.
2. Confession and Forgiveness: God reminds us what He has done for us in Christ and declares His interest in restoring us again to his favor in Christ. We confess our sins and God absolves us of guilt. God graciously reminds us that we bear the name of Christian and are members of His family in Christ. He tears us from our old sinful ways and renews His love for us in Christ.

⁷⁶ Peter J. Leithart, "Hermeneutics of Worship," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/000947.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁷⁷ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 107

3. Consecration: Scripture Readings and Sermon: God speaks to us through His Word. His people respond by giving themselves and their gifts of money and prayer as a fitting self-offering.
4. Communion: The Lord's Supper: God invites us to commune with Him at his covenant meal, and we respond by memorializing His covenant and enjoying His faithful provisions at the family feast.
5. Commissioning and The Benediction: God blesses us and charges us to extend His kingdom into the future and into the world, making disciples of all nations. We are dismissed from God's special presence and renewed and equipped for this task.⁷⁸

Thus, a typological reading of the Old Testament yields a basic framework for Christian liturgy. Contrary to the common assumption of many Christian scholars (even liturgical scholars!), Meyers and Leithart maintain that the Bible does teach a normative order of service for Christian liturgy. This order will be most apparent to those who discern a substantial continuity between Old and New Testaments and who read biblical texts about covenants, the people of God, and corporate worship with an appropriate canonical or typological lens. The normative force of these liturgical patterns of covenant renewal will only be felt by readers who affirm that the Bible contains a theologically unified narrative of salvation history in which the history and worship of Israel that culminates in Christ, the church, and the new creation found in the kingdom of God.

Meyers and Leithart do not elaborate precisely what it means to call their biblically derived liturgical framework "normative." However, it is clear that they do not believe that other less catholic traditions of corporate worship are simply wrong or invalid. When Meyers evaluates alternative ways of conceptualizing the over-arching purpose of corporate worship, he concludes not that other models are wrong but rather incomplete.⁷⁹ In his discussion of the liturgical year, he describes it not as a liturgical law for Christians but rather as liturgical wisdom that is not absolutely binding or mandatory: "the Bible gives churches the freedom to use it if they so choose."⁸⁰

While they sometimes commend their liturgical applications in bold fashion, they do not hold all of their convictions with an equal level of certainty nor do they treat them all as equally fundamental. Thus, when Leithart suggests some possible liturgical implications of his study of worship music in the biblical accounts of King David, he acknowledges his own limitations and some degree of tentativeness about his conclusions.

In many cases, my discussion is no more than suggestive, offering hints and clues that could well be expanded greatly. On a few points, I attempt to apply the discussion to specific issues in liturgical debate, but I am for the most part content to leave detailed application to those sufficiently competent in music to draw sane conclusions.⁸¹

Meyers and Leithart therefore offer their covenant renewal liturgical model as an ideal that provides the best biblical framework for guiding corporate worship. There are some ideals,

⁷⁸ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 51.

⁷⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 15-31.

⁸⁰ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 336. One suspects that they would not describe other, more fundamental aspects of their liturgical model in this way.

⁸¹ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 110.

however, that Meyers has not even fully realized in the practice of his own congregation. He acknowledges that “Providence’s worship may not be everything I would want,” because he cannot simply impose his own convictions immediately upon his congregation.⁸² He believes that liturgical maturation ought to be an organic process because successful liturgical reform usually requires generations. Thus, he introduces liturgical changes slowly, incrementally, and with abundant catechesis so that his congregation’s worship may grow with maximum corporate understanding and unity. This is the pastoral wisdom that he urges on all ministers and other liturgical leaders.⁸³

It is also important to note that their system is a framework and not an exhaustive set of directives for every liturgical matter. On the contrary, there are virtually limitless ways that congregations could work within their biblical and liturgical guidelines and contextualize them differently in their selections of the amount and types of music; the kind of musical accompaniment; texts for prayers, acclamations, and readings; the length and style of sermon; gestures, postures, and movements; and use of visual symbol. While many automatically associate their views about liturgical order and forms with the style and liturgical customs of staid, white, middle-class, “high church,” European and North American congregations, there is nothing in their model that entails that it can only find proper expression and contextualization in that cultural milieu and format. The enthusiasm and shouting of Pentecostal music and prayer, the call-and-response style of African-American preaching, African drums and dance,⁸⁴ contemporary hymns accompanied by guitars and strings in a Celtic-inspired folk style—all of these ways of praying, singing, and celebrating and many more fit easily within Meyers’s and Leithart’s covenant renewal liturgical model.

Applying and Expanding the Sacrificial Typology

In order to erect their liturgical theology on this Old Testament foundation, Meyers and Leithart demonstrate their commitment to a theologically oriented regulative principle. As they seek to elaborate and apply the covenant renewal framework derived from the sacrificial order, they draw upon both normative biblical examples of worship practices (in both Old and New Testaments) as well as more general theological principles. In the process, they provide a biblical-theological basis for many catholic liturgical practices.

First, the overall shape and sequence of the covenant renewal order aligns very closely with classic Christian liturgies. The Meyers/Leithart *ordo* reflects ancient and catholic patterns that move from entrance and confession to the liturgy of the word followed by a response to that word in creed, prayer, and offering and concluding with the Eucharist.

Meyers and Leithart argue from the Old Testament sacrifices that a full liturgy containing both word and sacrament is the normative service for Christian worship on the Lord’s Day. In

⁸² Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 14.

⁸³ Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 155.

⁸⁴ James Jordan commends liturgical dance in theory although he does not specify what form that might take American Presbyterian and Reformed churches: “The most obvious bodily movement missing from ‘Bible believing Protestant’ culture and worship is the sacred dance. The psalms repeatedly enjoin dancing, yet psalm-singing churches do not dance, and neither do hymn-singing churches. If there was ever proof that a Greek rationalistic intellectualism has robbed the church of her Biblical foundations, this is it. The African churches, which have not been ruined by rationalism, use dancing. Perhaps we shall learn from them. Some churches still retain a shadow of the dance in the procession that begins worship. That is not much, but it is better than nothing” (Jordan, *Sociology*, 219-220).

the Old Testament, the culmination and climax of the sacrificial liturgy of covenant renewal was a ritual meal. It was not an optional and occasional practice; rather, it was an intrinsic and vital part of the liturgical sequence. Reflecting on the importance of the concluding sacrificial meal, Meyers observes,

We should also be careful to note that the fourth slot in this covenant renewal sequence occupies the climactic position in this process...Eating and drinking together with the Lord caps off the service. It is the goal of the Lord's Service. The Lord's Supper should never be something occasionally tacked on to the end of a Christian worship service.⁸⁵

For Meyers and Leithart, discussion of the catholic liturgical balance between word and sacrament properly begins not with the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr or even the New Testament but rather with the Pentateuch.

Leithart's liturgy begins with a procession, and he supports this practice by both biblical and theological arguments. First, he appeals to the precedent of Israel's literal processions through Jerusalem up to the Temple for corporate worship (e.g., Ps. 42:4; 55:14; 120-134; Neh. 12:27-47). He also finds it to be an appropriate ritual expression and reminder of the church's pilgrim status as a people journeying through time toward the fullness of God's eschatological kingdom, of which the eucharistic liturgy is but a small foretaste.⁸⁶

The entrance rites follow biblical patterns at a number of different levels.⁸⁷ The Psalms contain numerous examples of texts summoning the people of God to participate in corporate worship (e.g., Ps. 95:1-8; 100; 135:1-3), and various formulas for greeting in the name of God are found in Ruth 2:4; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 2 Tim. 4:22; Philem. 1:25. However, the call to worship and opening salutations also have a broader theological significance. The minister calls the congregation to worship God to emphasize that covenant renewal happens only at God's sovereign initiative and that the entire worship event occurs in the special presence of God where God reveals himself with special clarity and power and serves his people in unique ways through word and sacrament. The opening collect stresses the dependence of the congregation upon the ministry of the Spirit to enable God's people to respond in genuine faith and love toward God.

Confession and absolution occupy an importance place in Meyers's and Leithart's liturgies for biblical and practical reasons.⁸⁸ The first major movement in the order of Old Testament sacrifices is a sin or purification offering, and the Bible is filled with exhortations and examples of confessions of sin (e.g. Ps. 32, 51, 130; Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:8-9). Weekly corporate confession and forgiveness are also constant reminders that sin is a corporate as well as individual reality and that the covenant is a dynamic relationship that needs regular renewal through repentance and forgiveness.

In both liturgies, the liturgy of the word begins with the *Sursum corda*, Preface, and *Sanctus* and/or other hymns with similar themes (*Gloria, Te Deum*, etc.).⁸⁹ The primary theme

⁸⁵ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 52.

⁸⁶ Peter J. Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 1," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/001081.php] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁸⁷ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 167-175; Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 1," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/001081.php] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁸⁸ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 181-193; Peter J. Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 2," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/001103.php] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁸⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 195-198; Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 2," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/001103.php] (accessed February 26, 2007).

of these responses and songs is the union of heaven and earth as the church on earth joins in worship with the angels and saints in heaven gathered around the throne of God. Meyers and Leithart argue that this “ascension” to heaven is one important effect of the second major movement in the Old Testament sacrificial liturgy, the ascension offering. It also embodies the broader theological theme of the church’s union with the ascended Christ who has granted the church unprecedented freedom of access to the heavenly Tabernacle and the special presence of the Father (Eph. 2:6; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 4-5).

A second aspect of the ascension offering is the consecration of the worshipper to a renewed commitment to God. This is one of the primary purposes that Meyers and Leithart attribute to the reading and preaching of Scripture. They note that numerous biblical texts contain both commands and examples of the reading of Scripture in the context of the liturgical assembly (e.g., reading: Exod. 24:7; Deut. 17, 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:2; preaching: 2 Tim. 2:15, 4:2). Their particular manner of conducting the readings and their understanding of the particular purpose of preaching depends upon more general theological reflections. For example, Meyers observes that Heb. 4:12 uses a sacrificial metaphor to describe the effective ministry of the word. If the word is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart,” then the reading and preaching of Scripture has assumed the consecratory function of the ascension offering (i.e., convicting, instructing, and transforming believers and calling them to new commitment. Cf. Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Cor. 11:24-25).⁹⁰

Both follow the ancient pattern of three Scripture readings in each service (Old Testament, New Testament epistle, Gospel). While Leithart mentions that “the tradition of the church is weighty on this and many other points,” the determinative rationale is theological: these multiple Scripture readings confirm the truth of God and best reveal the fundamental structure of the canon. This pattern of readings demonstrates the typological relationship of promise and fulfillment between Old and New Testaments and focuses special attention on the Gospels because the life, death, and resurrection of Christ are the central events in Scripture’s narrative of salvation history.⁹¹

Meyers and Leithart both follow catholic patterns by placing the offering and prayers of intercession between the sermon and the Lord’s Supper. The placement of these elements has a biblical foundation in the sequence of Old Testament sacrifices. A tribute (meal/grain) offering of grain mixed with incense immediately followed each ascension offering (Exod. 29:41; Lev. 2; Num. 15:8-10, 28:1-31). According to Meyers and Leithart, this act constitutes an offering of one’s life back to God symbolized ritually by offering a portion of one’s labor and possessions. Thus, offering tithes and free will offerings and also intercessions for the world are done to obey God’s commands to engage in these liturgical practices.⁹²

The offering and prayers also receive their particular form and position in the liturgy because they are an appropriate expression of the theological identity of the church as a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6, 5:10) in response to God’s grace received in Christ. The church is the body of Christ, and because of this union with Christ in the Spirit she can

⁹⁰ Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 206-207.

⁹¹ Peter J. Leithart, “A Walk through Trinity’s Liturgy, Part 3,” [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001118.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

⁹² Meyers, *The Lord’s Service*, 208; Peter J. Leithart, “A Walk Through Trinity’s Liturgy, Part 4,” [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001150.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007). Incense is also a symbol of prayer in both Old and New Testaments (see Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8, 8:3-4).

respond to God and offer her works and words back to God confident that they will be acceptable because they are cleansed in Christ.⁹³ Meyers also stresses the value of active corporate participation in offering prayers in order to stress that the whole church collectively approaches the Father as a priesthood to intercede for the church and the world. Thus, he often leads the church to pray using the ancient forms of bidding prayers or litanies with many parts or refrains for the congregation to pray aloud not only because these forms have some biblical precedent (e.g., Ps. 136) but primarily because they provide an opportunity for the congregation to realize its priestly character and mission in corporate prayer.

The sacrificial system of Israel's Temple worship not only provides a biblical rationale for the practice and frequency of communion but also guidance for the proper manner of its observance. Old Testament examples strongly suggest that the Lord's Supper ought to be an occasion of happiness and vigorous celebration. Noting that texts like Ps. 27:6, Ps. 107:21-22, and 2 Chron. 29 associate loud, joyful singing with the offering of sacrifices (including peace offerings or thank offerings [a category of peace offerings]), Leithart infers that the emotional "tone" of the Lord's Supper and its accompanying music should generally be supremely joyful.

Much eucharistic music, however, is far too slow, meditative, and melancholy, contributing powerfully to a eucharistic piety that treats the Supper as 'tomb' rather than 'table.' Meditative music might occasionally be used at the Supper, but I believe that vigorous and triumphal music is far more appropriate. The Supper is a victory meal, memorializing the death that vanquished the powers and led captivity captive. It is not a moment to wallow in sorrow, but a moment to celebrate Christ the Victor. The picture we should have of eucharistic celebration is not an assembly of people bowed with eyes closed; we should think of a mead hall, with loud song, shouts, joyful noise.⁹⁴

Even more pointedly (and humorously), Leithart explains to his congregation that the Lord's Supper

is a moment of joy, not a time for mourning. In the Bible, God never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever tells his people to lament as they come to a meal. Fasting is the gastronomical form of lamentation. Feasting is joyful, robust, boisterous. Our singing at communion should be triumphant, loud, fast, glad.⁹⁵

⁹³ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 208-212.

⁹⁴ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 128. Leithart also mentions in this context the various Old Testament festivals where eating with God was an occasion of great festivity. God commanded Israel to rejoice greatly when they offered their sacrifices at these annual celebrations. Although he doesn't mention a specific text, one example of these festival texts is Deut. 14:22-27, where God exhorts Israel to spend money liberally on "wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household" (ESV).

⁹⁵ Leithart, "A Walk Through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 4," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001150.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007). Leithart does not suggest that every individual will (or even can) desire to approach the Eucharist each week in this precise frame of mind, still less that individuals should try to fake such joy when they have experienced real tragedy. Rather, he speaking more generally about the ethos most appropriate to the kind of event that the Lord's Supper is. If it is a celebration of the victory of the resurrection that is the typological fulfillment of Israel's great festivals (where rejoicing was commanded!) and an anticipation of the eschatological wedding feast that is supremely joyful (Rev. 19), then his point seems to follow. His reflections on ritual festivity in the Eucharist comports with other Christian writers on spiritual formation who note that celebration is itself a spiritual discipline (e.g., Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path of Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (San

The Old Testament liturgical system also provides the necessary biblical background for understanding how the Lord's Supper is a "memorial" of Christ (Greek: *anamnesis*; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25). Certain events, signs or symbols in the Old Testament function as "memorials"⁹⁶ for the purpose of calling to remembrance the covenant relationship between God and his people (see e.g., Gen. 9:8, 11-17; Exod. 3:15; 28:12, 29; 30:16; Num. 10:10). These memorials also includes both sacrifices and the music that accompanies sacrificial offerings (Exod. 12:14, 20:24; Lev. 2:2, 6:15. 24:7; 1 Chr. 16:4; cf. Ps. 38:1, 70:1).⁹⁷ The subject of the remembering is not only the people of God but also God himself. God established certain covenant symbols and rituals by which the people of God call upon God to remember his covenant with them and to fulfill the covenant promises to bless them.⁹⁸

Therefore, by designating the Eucharist as a "memorial," Jesus provides the theological foundation for the sacrificial language employed in later patristic eucharistic prayers.⁹⁹ These prayers typically include an offering of the bread and cup to God. Many Protestants have rejected this oblation in the eucharistic prayer fearing that it turns the Eucharist into a human work offered to God instead of a gift to be received from God.¹⁰⁰

Contrary to these Protestant hesitations, the theology of memorial defended by Meyers and Leithart provides a biblical rationale for oblationary language without making the Eucharist a meritorious work independent of or in addition to the work of Jesus. If memorials are divinely established signs or rituals by which the people of God call him to remember his covenant, then the eucharistic memorial is an occasion for the church gathered in Eucharist to offer their Eucharist to God as a sign of the new covenant in Christ.¹⁰¹ This act is simply a way of pleading the person and gracious work of Jesus before God the Father as the only basis for the church's covenant relationship with God and the only ground upon which the church can hope for blessing from God in the Lord's Supper and in life. This understanding acknowledges that the church is not independent of Christ but rather stands before the Father united to Christ as members of his body. Consequently, the eucharistic offering is not a re-sacrificing of Jesus but rather a participation in Christ's ongoing priestly ministry before the Father in which the church receives afresh the benefits of Christ's atoning work because it joins together with Christ in

Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 190-201; Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 179-181). It also reflects the a general consensus among contemporary liturgical scholarship as modern eucharistic theology broadens its scope to focus on the links between Eucharist, resurrection, and eschatology: "Traditionally, the tone of the Reformed Lord's Supper has been focused more upon the cross than upon the resurrection. In modern practice, the tone is shifting to a more joyful celebration of the presence of the risen Lord" (Craig D. Erickson, "Reformed Eucharistic Theology," *Reformed Liturgy & Music* 29 (1995): 227-228).

⁹⁶ When this or a related word appears, it almost always translates the Hebrew root *zkr*.

⁹⁷ The LXX usually translates the nouns derived from the Hebrew root *zkr* with either the Greek word *mnemosunon* or *anamnesis* (Lev. 24:7, Num. 10:10, Ps. 37:1, Ps. 69:1), which is the word for "memorial" found in the eucharistic institution narratives in Luke 22 and 1 Cor. 11. Their appearance in very similar contexts (sacrifices and other events in which God remember his people) suggests that there is a strong degree of overlap between the semantic ranges of these Greek words.

⁹⁸ In emphasizing God as the primary subject of the remembering, Meyers and Leithart draw upon the work of Max Thurian, *The Eucharistic Memorial*, trans. J.G. Davies, 2 vols. (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960-1961) and Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966)

⁹⁹ For examples, see R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁰ For standard Protestant objections and qualifications emerging from Reformation polemics, see Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 448-479.

¹⁰¹ See Meyers's extended discussion in Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 216-223.

pleading Christ's complete and perfect sacrifice for sin and victorious resurrection before the Father.¹⁰²

Meyers and Leithart rely on both biblical examples and broader typological arguments not only to derive the sequence of liturgical actions but also guidelines for the music and ceremony appropriate for engaging in those actions. At the most basic level, Meyers notes that apostles commanded the church to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in worship (Col. 3:16).¹⁰³ However, the Old Testament background furnishes additional material to guide the mode of liturgical song. Leithart observes that the account of David's introduction of music into the worship of the Temple included both singing and instrumental accompaniment. Indeed, the same Hebrew term for "song" (*shir*) refers to both vocal and instrumental music, which implies that no sharp liturgical distinction exists between these different forms in their biblical context.

According to Leithart, older Presbyterian arguments against the legitimacy of musical instruments in worship relied entirely upon an argument from the silence of the New Testament that presupposed an illegitimate semi-Marcionite view of the Old Testament Temple and its relation to the Christian church.¹⁰⁴ Since the Christian church is the new Temple and Christian worship continues the worship of the Temple (albeit in a different form), Leithart infers that the biblical ideal for liturgical singing includes the playing of music instruments.

The one main area of literal continuity between [the Old Testament Temple and the Christian church as the eschatological Temple of God] is in the area of music, and temple music was always performed with instrumental accompaniment. Indeed, Scripture contains no examples of unaccompanied singing. Instrumental music in worship is perfectly admissible, and even prescribed.¹⁰⁵

Leithart also argues that the music in liturgy ought to be concentrated in the latter parts of the liturgy following the opening penitential rites. For biblical support, he offers a typological interpretation of the liturgy described in 2 Chron. 29 where the account of Hezekiah's covenant renewal ceremony introduces a heavy concentration of song only after the completion of the sin/purification offering. Leithart argues that song is usually an expression of joy and a means of ascension into the special presence of God encountered in the liturgy. Therefore it is most appropriate for the congregation to burst into loud, joyful songs in an extended time of praise and thanks following the absolution.¹⁰⁶

On a more general and aesthetic note, Meyers argues that ideally the church should sing as many liturgical responses as possible because of the salutary effects of song.

¹⁰² As Geoffrey Wainwright explains, "Could not the contentious notion 'we offer Christ' paradoxically be seen as antipelagian? It could be an acknowledgment that we have nothing else to offer. It could be the equivalent of the publican's cry in the parable, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner'....[W]e are pleading Calvary, not repeating it. When in the eucharist we 'set forth' Christ's sacrifice before God, this is a sacramental action on earth corresponding to the fact that Christ is even now 'showing' himself, the once Crucified, to God in heaven on our behalf" (Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 272-273).

¹⁰³ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 178.

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., Thomas Peck's arguments against musical instruments in chapter 2 and the analysis of John Girardeau's anti-instrumental arguments in Leithart, "Synagogue or Temple," 120-122 and Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 110-111.

¹⁰⁵ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 111.

¹⁰⁶ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 127-128.

[Reformed congregations] typically *say* everything but the hymns. Colossians 3:16, however, commends us to let the word of Christ dwell in us “richly” by singing “psalms, hymns, and Spiritual songs.” The Word dwells in our midst richly or gloriously when it is sung. Singing glorifies and beautifies speech. When you love someone you use heightened, glorified poetic speech and you sing those words to your lover. . . . The Lord’s Day service is the context where we express our gratitude and love for God. Here we are called to glorify God with our speech. Adoration is a state of the soul that only singing can appropriately express. Follow the progression. Poetry is glorified words. Glorified words are glorified still more when they are sung. The union of many voices makes singing even more glorious. Still again, complex harmonies glorify congregational singing. Finally, the sung word is made yet more glorious when accompanied by instrumental music.¹⁰⁷

For Meyers and Leithart, the richly musical catholic ideal of singing the liturgy embodies a very fundamental biblical and theological principle about the value of music.

These conservative Presbyterians not only address the auditory but also the visual and kinesthetic modes of worship. Both wear robes and stoles when leading corporate worship to symbolize their ministerial office. The biblical-theological rationale again emerges mostly from Old Testament. There are numerous connections between clothing and vocation in Scripture, perhaps most obviously in the special robes worn by priests and Levites in leading Israel in worship. Furthermore, the explicit rationale given for these priestly robes in Exod. 28:2 (they are for “glory and for beauty”) is not a matter intrinsically limited to Israel’s unique circumstances. Since the church is the new Temple and since Christian ministers play an analogous function to that of the Aaronic priests by leading the church in corporate worship, Meyers contends that the catholic Christian tradition of wearing a ministerial robe during the liturgy is the most appropriate dress.

Additionally, the robe signifies the general theological point that ministers are called and ordained by Christ to speak and act as his official representatives in the liturgy.¹⁰⁸ This is why Meyers turns not only to the Old Testament but also to the heavenly visions of the risen and glorified Christ in Revelation to justify the appropriateness of a white alb. A white alb visually instructs and reminds the congregation that in and through the pastor’s action they encounter the ministry of the resurrected Christ, and it most properly signifies the union of heaven and earth and the joy of promised marriage feast of the Lamb that Christians experience and anticipate in each liturgy.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 178. Meyers’s own upbringing in the Lutheran tradition of chanted responses could be shaping this line of argument to some degree. Some of these statements do seem subjective and culturally specific. Singing without instrumental accompaniment (e.g., Russian Orthodox chant) can be just as glorious in its own right as music with instrumental accompaniment, and of course singing done poorly is not really glorious at all. Nevertheless, the ideal of sung liturgy does have deep historical roots in Catholic, Orthodox, and Lutheran traditions.

¹⁰⁸ See his extended discussion in Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 263-282, 339-340. See also Jordan, *Sociology*, 259-277.

¹⁰⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 338, 340-341. Although black Geneva gowns have been the traditional ministerial garb for Reformed ministers who have worn robes, Meyers maintains that black robes are associated strongly in American culture with funerals, mourning, judges, and academic regalia, none of which are appropriate or desirable images or settings to associate with the minister and the event of corporate worship.

This eschatological focus is also Leithart's reason for "vesting" the altar-table with white cloth and candles. Although the Puritans objected to candles because of lack of explicit biblical warrant, Leithart argues from the scriptural analogy between the Lord's Supper and the eschatological wedding feast. The use of fine tablecloths and candles in our cultural context signifies that a meal is a festive and special event. The Bible itself identifies the Lord's Supper as a supremely festive and special meal in which the church feeds on Christ and enjoys a "foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the marriage Supper of the Lamb." In fact, Leithart suggests that celebrating the Supper with an unadorned table is less consistent with the biblical meaning of the sacrament:

Removing the candles and the tablecloth changed the meaning of a divinely established sacrament; instead of a feast it became a fast, a slab in the morgue rather than a table. Reasoning by analogy, therefore, we arrive at the conclusion that adornments are not only legitimate, but demanded by the nature of the event.¹¹⁰

these accoutrements are perfectly legitimate because they most accurately signify the type of meal that the Supper is.

Meyers and Leithart also argue for bodily postures in prayer that have been common in many Christian liturgical tradition for centuries. They both encourage kneeling and standing for prayer, and again their primary argument is a biblical one. The Bible is replete with references to bodily posture in prayer, and the positions consistently noted are prostration, kneeling, or standing (e.g., Exod. 32:10; Ps. 5:7; 22:27, 29; 63:2-3; 95:6; Matt. 2:2; 4:9; John 4:20-24; Heb. 11:21; Rev. 4:10) sometimes with the lifting of hands (e.g., Ps. 63:4; 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8).¹¹¹

Some features of Meyers's and Leithart's liturgies are not tied to directly to particular biblical texts. One prominent theme that governs their liturgical thought is that Christian worship is an inherently Trinitarian event.¹¹² In worship, Christians are welcomed to participate in the very life and fellowship of the Trinity. This encompasses both God's movement toward the church and the church's response to God. Worship is only possible because the Father sends the Son to establish the new covenant in his life, death, and resurrection, and the church can only receive Christ and the benefits of his work by means of the Holy Spirit indwelling the church. Furthermore, the church's response occurs because the Spirit unites the church with Christ her head and bridegroom and high priest who leads the church to the Father in worship.

Because the Trinity is the very basis for all worship, Meyers and Leithart are strong advocates of many catholic liturgical forms that emphasize Trinitarian themes. Their liturgies open with a Trinitarian salutation and call to worship. They lead the church in saying and singing the Apostles' and Nicene creeds as well as other ancient Trinitarian hymns (e.g., the

¹¹⁰ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 105. The inference that adornments for the communion table (candles and tablecloths are only culturally specific examples, not universal norms in his discussion) are "demanded" seems too strong. To be fair, we should note that this quote appears in a context where Leithart admits to being "frisky" in turning the tables on advocates of a praxis-oriented regulative principle. His discussion of the table adornments is an attempt (perhaps a poorly chosen one) to argue that biblical analogies can have the force of explicit biblical commands.

¹¹¹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 137, 144; Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 2," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001103.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹¹² Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 105-130; Peter J. Leithart, "Trinity and Dialogue," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001034.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

Gloria, Te Deum, Gloria Patri, etc.). They explicitly formulate prayers to the Father through the Son in the Spirit, and prayers and songs conclude with Trinitarian doxologies.

This is not entirely separate from their focus on sacrifice. On the contrary, Meyers contends that rites of sacrifice are ultimately concerned with communion via acts of giving and receiving love and glory. Sacrifice therefore has its roots in the intra-Trinitarian relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who continually engage in a dynamic exchange of love and fellowship with each person always seeking to glorify the others. Leithart summarizes this perspective well:

If man is a sacrificing creature, and if man is made in the image of God, God must be a sacrificing God. And this is what we find in the passages in John. Each of the persons of the Trinity effaces Himself before the others, seeking not His own glory but the glory of the other. If this is taken as the “primordial” and essential form of sacrifice, then sacrifice is not necessarily associated with death or violence at all. Death, pain, and violence is an aspect of sacrifice in a fallen world. In its original form, sacrifice takes the form of not seeking one’s own glory but the glory of another. Sacrifice has to do not essentially and originally with atonement, but with glorification of the other, with self-giving love.¹¹³

Therefore, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is not only an emergency measure necessary because of human sin; rather, it also reveals something intrinsic about the very nature of the eternal Son who lives to seek the glory of the Father.

The Role of Tradition

Unlike the work of Allen, Daniels, and Brenner, the liturgical theology of Meyers and Leithart contains far fewer references to post-biblical liturgical developments. They have both read widely in the history and theology of Christian liturgy, and they are quite conversant with the literature produced by the ecumenical liturgical movements in the twentieth-century.¹¹⁴ However, in formulating an explanation and defense of their position they rely much less upon church traditions as sources of ideas and authority than their fellow Presbyterian catholic reformers.

Rather than relying upon the early church, they are keen to mine the Bible for its riches as much as possible because they believe that Christian liturgical scholars have neglected the liturgical gems lying hidden in the Old Testament. For Leithart, the tendency to turn quickly to post-biblical developments for concrete guidance sometimes occurs due to this lack of attention to the wealth contained in the Bible. By limiting themselves to the relatively sparse number of New Testament texts on worship, liturgists “operate with a thin liturgical theology, assume an atomistic view of liturgical practice, and often rely heavily on extra-biblical Jewish and Christian tradition to work out the details of worship.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Peter J. Leithart, “A Postscript to the Meyers Thesis,” *Rite Reasons* 43 (1995), [http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/rite-reasons/no-43-a-postscript-to-the-meyers-thesis/] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., the extensive bibliographic essay reviewing numerous contemporary Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and Anglican works in addition to Reformed sources in Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 397-431.

¹¹⁵ Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 106.

When they do appeal to church history, they rely on it primarily as a source of theological wisdom. It is not the antiquity or universality of a practice *per se* that impresses Meyers and Leithart; rather, they are chiefly concerned with the biblical-theological content. They favor many historical forms not because they are liturgical romantics but because they believe those historic practices conform better to biblical ritual patterns and theological principles. Compared to the content of much contemporary and extemporaneous worship prominent in many American evangelical and Presbyterian circles, Meyers and Leithart believe that the rituals and forms of historic Christian liturgies offer richer theological substance.¹¹⁶

Therefore, Meyers and Leithart use post-biblical traditions as resources to fill out the liturgical framework derived from their biblical-theological interpretation. Their biblical-typological construction provides them with the basic elements of worship and a general order of service. Particular historical traditions of Christian liturgy function mostly as repositories of forms and rituals to fit into this biblically based outline. Meyers and Leithart are thus rather eclectic in their use of liturgical resources. Rather than committing themselves to one particular liturgical text, rite, or prayer book, they draw upon prayers, acclamations, chants, and song/hymns from a variety of liturgical traditions to lead their congregations in worship.¹¹⁷ While their resulting practice aligns quite closely with catholic traditions of Christian worship, their liturgical theology clearly makes church tradition a handmaid to biblical theology. In their liturgical thought, tradition plays a ministerial role that is subordinate to biblical-theological interpretation, and thus Meyers and Leithart are somewhat less influenced by the historical consensus about the shape of eucharistic liturgy that emerged within the ecumenical liturgical movements of the twentieth century.

Even though they have adopted and encourage the use of a number of patterns and forms from the early church, explicit references to patristic authors and liturgies are rare in Meyers's and Leithart's writings. Meyers does explain the origins of the ecumenical creeds,¹¹⁸ and he mentions the origins of ancient hymns like the *Gloria* and the *Te Deum*.¹¹⁹ However, these historical references are relatively infrequent.

A lack of citation, however, does not imply either a lack of knowledge or a lack of use. In their liturgical practice, they explicitly advocate forms of worship that have roots in the patristic and/or early medieval eras. The overall shape of the Christian service as a liturgy of

¹¹⁶ "No competent liturgical scholar or reformer wishes merely to 'imitate' the liturgy of any period of the historic Church...Pastors and churches are returning to liturgies modeled on historic Christian worship because they see how biblical these services are and how effective they can be in forming the prayer and praise of the Christian community" (Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 320-321). Meyers's examples focus particularly upon the biblical and theological content of prayers, songs, and creeds.

¹¹⁷ This same kind of eclectic use of various Christian liturgical resources is also evident in the 1993 PCUSA *Book of Common Worship*, which draws liberally on Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and Catholic service books. According to Harold Daniels, "emphasis [in a catholic Presbyterian liturgical reform] is placed upon unity in the ordering, or shape of the liturgy, and an embracing of variety in the way in which that shape takes root among congregations. The shape of the liturgy thus becomes more important than the precise wording of the liturgy, and it welcomes prayer that is ancient as well as modern, both prayer from a prayer book and free prayer. A common shape of the liturgy can be expressed in diverse ways and still remain faithful to the liturgical tradition" (*To God Alone Be Glory: The Story & Sources of the Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2003), 90). The only difference on this point between the Meyers/Leithart *ordo* and the *Book of Common Worship* (reflecting the patristic-ecumenical model of Allen and Daniels) is that the latter depends more heavily upon post-biblical tradition for its particular order or shape for the eucharistic liturgy.

¹¹⁸ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 253-261.

¹¹⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 198.

word and sacrament, the responsorial character of the liturgy, the regular singing of psalms, the tradition of three scripture readings (Old Testament, Epistle, Gospel), the creeds, ancient hymns, the liturgical year, their ministerial garb—these practices a profound continuity between the liturgies of Meyers and Leithart and the worship of the early church.

This continuity of practice therefore raises a question about the integrity and uniqueness of their method. If their biblical-typological approach to liturgy results in worship that does not differ from the patristic-ecumenical consensus in any substantive ways, one might suspect that their method is a type of fundamentalist proof-texting that downplays the actual and more proximal historical influences of one's thought and practice.

However, there are several key differences that distinguish Meyers's and Leithart's liturgical ideals from the patristic-ecumenical camp. These points of divergence in practice suggest that their practice is not fundamentally "patristic" to the degree as that of Allen, Brenner, and Daniels. They differ in their appropriation of pre-Reformation practices in ways that constitute a methodological difference in their theology of worship. At key points, their practice diverges from common patristic and ecumenical patterns on the basis of biblical reasons.

Some differences are rooted in practical objections. For example, Leithart rejects the use of a lectionary because of his dissatisfaction with the brevity of selected texts, the absence of some biblical texts, and the obscurity of the relation between lessons from the Old and New Testaments on particular Sundays.¹²⁰

Other differences are based on their interpretation of Scripture. The liturgical framework they derive from the Old Testament sacrificial economy leads them to reject some features commonly found in patristic liturgies. First, Meyers and Leithart place a corporate confession of sins and absolution in a prominent position at the beginning of their liturgies, and their biblical typology raises this penitential rite to a high level of importance. One of the three major sacrifices in the Old Testament sacrificial liturgy was a purification offering in which the offering of blood for the forgiveness of sins figured prominently. On the basis of this biblical pattern, Meyers and Leithart maintain (*pace* Brenner) that the Reformed tradition has solid biblical grounds to make corporate confession and absolution important parts of the liturgy proper. The penitential rite is not an insignificant or optional aspect of the Lord's service in corporate worship.

Second, building upon the last point, their explanation of the structure of the liturgy is more complex than the patristic-ecumenical outline. It is not fundamentally a twofold structure of word and sacrament. Rather, word and sacrament are subsumed within an overarching framework of covenant renewal that has five or six different major movements: call, cleansing/confession, consecration, communion, and blessing.

Third, Meyers and Leithart do not employ the traditional eucharistic prayer structures that emerged in the fourth and fifth centuries. Instead, they transfer portions of those ancient prayers to other parts of the liturgy, simplify its content, and split the long single prayer into two shorter ones.

Contrary to patristic liturgies, Meyers and Leithart locate the *Sursum corda*, preface, and *Sanctus* just prior to the reading of Scripture.¹²¹ These elements express the "ascent" of the congregation to participate in the worship of heaven along with angels, departed saints. According to their reading of the Old Testament sacrifices, the idea of ascension to the heavenly

¹²⁰ Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 3," [http://www.leithart.com/archives/001118.php] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹²¹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 196-198.

presence of God is more explicitly symbolized in the ascension offering (hence the name), which occurs in the middle of the liturgy and not at the end with the eating of the meal. Meyers and Leithart find the typological fulfillment of this sacrifice in the ministry of the word, and so they associate the *Sursum corda* and *Sanctus* with this central portion of the liturgy.

The theological effect is to stress the unity of word and sacrament in the liturgy. The early church severed this unity and elevated the importance of the liturgy of the Eucharist over the liturgy of the word by forcing unbaptized catechumens to leave the assembly prior to communion. In this context, the placement of the *Sursum corda* at the beginning of the Eucharist proper (the “liturgy of the faithful” in Brenner’s terminology) reinforced the idea that communion was an event of far higher and holier significance than the ministry of the word.

While they affirm the distinctive roles of word and sacrament in the service, Meyers and Leithart reject the idea that the church draws nearer to heaven in the Eucharist than in the liturgy of the word. On the contrary, the covenant renewal structure they derive from the Bible suggests that the purpose of the confession and cleansing at the beginning of the liturgy is to prepare worshippers to enter the heavenly throne room of God. In particular, the symbolism and placement of the ascension offering in the sacrificial liturgy shows that this special heavenly audience with God includes the ministry of both word and sacrament.

We don’t ascend to the mountaintop for the Supper only; we ascend to hear the word of God as well. Putting the ascension at the beginning of the Eucharist divides the service into a liturgy of the word (on earth) and a liturgy of the table (in heaven)...Putting the ascension here emphasizes the unity of the service, the fact that the service as a whole takes place in heavenly places.¹²²

Thus, by placing the *Sursum corda*, preface, and *Sanctus* hymn just before the Scripture readings, Meyers and Leithart wish to express that the whole service is one seamless whole and the different moments or movements in the liturgy all take place within the same heavenly sphere before the throne of God.¹²³

In their liturgies, the minister offers prayers of thanksgiving separately over bread and wine rather than offering one single eucharistic prayer like those found in liturgies from the fourth and fifth centuries. They are primarily prayers of thanksgiving to the Father for the person and work of Jesus that call upon the Father to grant the church communion in the body and blood of Christ on the basis of Christ’s work. (This is very similar to the post-*Sanctus* thanksgiving, the anamnesis, and the epiclesis of ancient eucharistic prayers).¹²⁴ In the usual Reformed fashion, the words of institution are not part of the prayer itself; rather, they are recited along with the actions of taking, breaking, and pouring, and the prayers of thanksgiving are embedded within the ritual action and recital of the narrative.

They base their decision to have separate rites for bread and wine in this fashion upon a close reading and imitation of the eucharistic institution narratives in the gospels in which Jesus prayers separate prayers of thanks over bread and wine.¹²⁵ Meyers and Leithart believe that the

¹²² Leithart, “A Walk through Trinity’s Liturgy, Part 2,” [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001103.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹²³ See also Jordan, *Theses on Worship*, 98-103.

¹²⁴ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 221-223.

¹²⁵ See Jordan, *From Bread to Wine*, 3-8, and James B. Jordan, “Doing the Lord's Supper,” *Rite Reasons* 42 (1995): [<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/rite-reasons/no-42-doing-the-lords-supper/>] (accessed February 26, 2007). This was also a common practice of English and American Puritans who were Congregationalists or Independents

church ought to maintain this distinction for several biblical reasons. First, they argue that the narration of separate acts and their order in the ritual of the Last Supper and their location in the Christian canon suggests that these actions are a norm for the church to follow.

Furthermore, they maintain that the separation of bread and wine rites embodies various theologically significant symbolic patterns in the use of bread and wine in the Old Testament. The separation of bread and wine is first a symbol of the separation of body and blood that occurred in the process of offering animal sacrifices.¹²⁶

The temporal movement from bread to wine in the ritual also symbolizes the progression from old covenant to new covenant. Bread and wine have different sets of symbolic associations. In the Old Testament, priests eat the bread from the Tabernacle and Temple, but they are forbidden to sit and drink wine.

Priests and people were encouraged to rest from their labors and rejoice together with wine and strong drink in contexts *outside* of the sacramental worship instituted by God that took place *within* the tabernacle and temple. Wine and strong drink are not to be consumed when priests and kings are engaged in their official capacities (Lev. 10:9; Num. 6:1ff.; Prov. 31:4; Isa. 28:7), and since no one who was not a priest was allowed into the tabernacle and temple's sacred space, no Israelite laymen ever drank wine in the special presence of God.¹²⁷

Wine is associated with kingship and rest in many Old Testament narratives (e.g., Gen. 9:21; 14:18, 43:34; 2 Sam. 16:1-2; Neh. 1:11; Esther 7:1, 2, 7, 8), and it comes to be a powerful prophetic symbol of the new covenant in the coming Messianic kingdom (e.g., Isa. 25:6; 27:2; 55:1; Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:22; Joel 2:19, 24; 3:18; Amos 9:13-15; Zech. 9:15, 17; 10:7).

Jesus affirms this prophetic symbolism when he associates feasting and wine with the kingdom of God (Matt. 8:11; 22:1-14; 25:21, 23; Luke 13:29, 14:15; 22:28-30).

Now that Jesus has completed His priestly work once and for all, He sits at the Father's right hand, resting from His work and inviting His bride into His presence to participate in His joyous and festive rest by eating bread and wine. The dinner Table that Jesus spreads before His people and at which He officiates is a Table of thanksgiving and rest, a covenantal memorial of His finished work (1 Cor. 11: 25-26). The New Covenant believer in Christ has full access to God's special presence and he can joyfully rest in His presence by drinking the sacramental wine.¹²⁸

the seventeenth century, although neither Meyers nor Leithart mentions this as a precedent for their actions. See Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (London: Dacre Press, 1948; reprint, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 208-209 and Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990; reprint, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999), 189, 192.

¹²⁶ Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 4," [<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001150.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹²⁷ Jeffrey J. Meyers, "Concerning Beer and Wine, Part 1," *Rite Reasons* 48 (1996), [<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/rite-reasons/no-48-concerning-wine-and-beer-part-1>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

¹²⁸ Jeffrey J. Meyers, "Concerning Beer and Wine, Part 1," *Rite Reasons* 49 (1997), [<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/rite-reasons/no-49-concerning-wine-and-beer-part-2>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

Therefore, maintaining a temporal sequence in the Lord's Supper from the bread rite to the (separate) wine rite with its own distinct prayer preserves one important layer of meaning embedded in the rite. The Supper mirrors the progression of redemptive history and signifies that the promised new covenant has come with the death and resurrection of the Messiah. In the words of James Jordan, the Supper is a "microchronic" replica of biblical history.¹²⁹

Fourth, Meyers and Leithart follow the Reformed tradition in deviating from several ancient customs in their practice of communion. In their congregations, the people receive communion while seated in their pews or chairs rather than moving to the front of the sanctuary or nave. Again, their rationale is a biblical-theological one. They believe that the canonical presentation of the Lord's Supper ritual in the institution narratives are a normative example for Christians to imitate, and the ritual itself is laden with theological significance.

In the gospel accounts of the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples eat the bread and drink the wine together in a reclining position. Jesus therefore establishes the Eucharist as a (symbolic or ritualized) meal,¹³⁰ and Meyers and Leithart believe that it is important not to obscure this feature of the rite because it is a key to its theological meaning. In the Bible, eating a meal with God is a symbolic means of enjoying the presence of God and celebrating reconciliation, peace, and friendship with God. Since sitting and relaxing at table is the most common way that Americans cultures eat special meals, Meyers and Leithart commend sitting to receiving communion because that posture follows Jesus' own example and expresses the nature of the event most clearly in their cultural context.¹³¹

Meyers and Leithart also follow the most historically common Reformed custom by separating the distribution of bread and wine according to the pattern of the institution narratives. As I previously noted, they separate the bread and wine rites by offering a prayer of thanksgiving over the bread and then receiving it before turning to give thanks and receive the wine.

Thus, Meyers and Leithart do not follow patristic traditions as closely as other catholic Presbyterians. When they do appeal to history, they favor the early Reformation as a source for liturgical inspiration and concrete models for practice. As in the work of Allen and Daniels, references to John Calvin outnumber all other historical figures combined. Meyers usually draws upon Calvin's as a Reformed authority to demonstrative the authentic Reformed pedigree of various practices that later Calvinists have neglected or rejected. For example, he points out that the early Reformed ideal in Geneva was for maximum congregational participation in the liturgy itself, which was realized by frequent congregational singing of various parts of the liturgy (as well as psalmody) and the use of fairly fixed liturgies so that congregational responses could be learned well.¹³² Meyers especially emphasizes the importance of a largely sung liturgy for the Genevan Reformation:

¹²⁹ Jordan, *From Bread to Wine*, 2. On this point, Jordan, Meyers, and Leithart have supplied biblical-theological reasons that escaped the American Puritan John Cotton. In Cotton's account of communion practices in *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (1645), he defends the custom of praying separate prayers of thanks over bread and wine in imitation of Jesus' example, but he honestly admits that "for what reason the Lord himselfe best knoweth." See Davies, *American Puritans*, 189.

¹³⁰ They do not pit this emphasis against the reality of Christ's real presence or its sacrificial and memorial aspects, however.

¹³¹ See Jordan, *From Bread to Wine*, 3-8, and Jordan, "Doing the Lord's Supper," [<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/rite-reasons/no-42-doing-the-lords-supper/>] (accessed February 26, 2007). Jordan, Meyers, and Leithart favor sitting over kneeling because kneeling has strong associations with penitence. In their view, penitence is appropriate at the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy during corporate confession of sin, while the Eucharist is an occasion for joyful celebration of forgiveness, peace and fellowship with God in Christ.

¹³² Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 140-141.

You didn't just come to Geneva in the 1500s to learn doctrine; you came to learn how to worship God. You came to be formed into a worshipping community. You were trained to sing. To sing your faith. To sing the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. To sing the Te Deum. To sing your prayers. To sing the Lord's Prayer. Especially, to sing the inspired hymnbook of the Church, the Psalter. You were trained in a new manner of living fitting for the Gospel. You were trained to be incorporated into a Christian army of Psalm-singing worshippers....This is what it means to be a Reformation Christian. You are a singing Christian, a participant in a congregation of singing, justified, believers.¹³³

Meyers also relies on Calvin to buttress his view of the minister's unique liturgical role and authority as the ordained leader of the church's worship. He notes Calvin's strong theology and practice of declaring God's forgiveness of sins in response to prayers of corporate confession.¹³⁴ He also cites Calvin along with early Scottish and Continental Reformed precedents to establish the legitimacy of ministerial robes¹³⁵ as well as a highly sacramental theology of preaching and the ministry of the word in general.¹³⁶

Meyers's lengthy bibliographic essay devotes more space to works on the early Reformation and contemporary authors influenced by the twentieth-century liturgical movements (e.g., J. J. von Allmen, Richard Paquier, Hughes Oliphant Old, Robert Rayburn, James Jordan, and Peter Leithart)¹³⁷ than to later English, Scottish, and American liturgical thought. One exception is the attention he gives to John Nevin and the Mercersburg liturgical program.¹³⁸ Calvin's eucharistic theology and related secondary works receive special extended treatment.¹³⁹

John Calvin is not above critique, however. Meyers rejects Calvin's placement of the *Sursum corda* in his eucharistic prayer,¹⁴⁰ his preference for black robes,¹⁴¹ and also his opposition to admitting young baptized children to the Lord's Supper until they were capable of making a more mature profession of faith.¹⁴²

The handful of references to Puritans are almost entirely negative. He critiques their overly narrow construal of the regulative principle¹⁴³ and their rejection of ministerial robes.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, his references to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and catechisms are positive.¹⁴⁵ Meyers is a confessional Presbyterian, and he is opposed not to the general statements of principle in the Westminster standards but rather to the narrow way that those standards have been received and applied by various individual Presbyterians.

If references to post-biblical liturgical traditions are relatively rare in the work of Meyers and Leithart, explicit concern for ecumenical cooperation and church unity are even harder to find. Unlike Brenner, Allen, and Daniels, neither Meyers nor Leithart have participated in

¹³³ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 178-179.

¹³⁴ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 189-190.

¹³⁵ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 343-344.

¹³⁶ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 285-294.

¹³⁷ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 402-406, 409-410.

¹³⁸ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 401, 424.

¹³⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 423-429.

¹⁴⁰ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 197.

¹⁴¹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 340-341.

¹⁴² Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 368-369.

¹⁴³ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 304-305.

¹⁴⁴ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 342-344, 352-352.

¹⁴⁵ E.g., Meyers affirms the *Westminster Confession's* statements about the regulative principle and also the minister's authority to declare forgiveness of sins. See Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 189, 298.

formal ecumenical committees or conferences. However, this is not because Meyers and Leithart are unaware of the broader ecumenical world of scholarship or because they are personally uninterested or opposed to learning from other Christians in other traditions and promoting the unity of the church in doctrine and mission.

Just the opposite is true. Meyers's liturgical theology has developed in conversation with a wide variety of liturgical scholars. He strongly urges his Reformed readers to interact (critically) with and learn from the liturgical service books and theological works by numerous Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox scholars.¹⁴⁶ He has also engaged in personal dialogue with Lutheran scholars in the course of his doctoral work at Concordia Theological Seminary. Leithart writes regularly for magazines and journals with a broad, ecumenical readership, including *First Things*, *Touchstone*, and *Pro Ecclesia*, and his own works demonstrates the same breadth of scholarship that characterizes Meyers's work.

The influence of ecumenical scholarship and concerns is especially apparent at several points in Meyers's and Leithart's liturgical works. First, they vindicate ancient and ecumenical appropriation of sacrificial language to describe the Eucharist. By interpreting the Lord's Supper as the new covenant peace offering, Meyers and Leithart argue that it is a sacrifice precisely because it is a covenant meal in which union and fellowship with Christ is known and celebrated.¹⁴⁷

Second, they draw upon the work of scholars highly regarded in recent ecumenical liturgical renewal movements to defend a God-ward direction to the eucharistic memorial. Citing the arguments of Max Thurian, Louis Bouyer, and Joachim Jeremias, Meyers affirms the idea that Eucharist is an act performed in union with Christ's ongoing high priestly ministry in heaven before the Father that calls the Father to remember his covenant with the church and bless the church on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection.¹⁴⁸

Third, Meyers also utilizes a wide range of ecumenical scholarship on Trinitarian theology to explicate the Trinitarian basis and content of Christian liturgy. He even roots the sacrificial basis of the liturgy ultimately in the relations of the persons of the Triune God.¹⁴⁹

A concern for tangible forms of church unity across time and space also emerges in Meyers's discussion of the ecumenical creeds. He commends the liturgical use of the creeds not only because of their biblical-theological content but also because

These creeds have been confessed by the universal Church (East and West) with only minor variations, for thousands of years...When you recite the Apostles' or Nicene Creed in church on Sunday morning, you are verbally joining the venerable communion of saints, ritually confessing your solidarity with the Church of all ages.¹⁵⁰

Thus, for Meyers, the creeds are examples of the "universal, historic faith of the Church" that come closer than any other confession of faith to expressing the catholic faith (according to the famous criteria of Vincent of Lerins) that has been believed "everywhere, always, by all."

¹⁴⁶ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 175-177, 411-418.

¹⁴⁷ See e.g., Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 52-53.

¹⁴⁸ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 216-223

¹⁴⁹ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 117-130.

¹⁵⁰ Meyers, *The Lord's Service*, 239. Leithart, "A Walk through Trinity's Liturgy, Part 4,"

[<http://www.leithart.com/archives/001150.php>] (accessed February 26, 2007).

Summary and Conclusions

Although Meyers and Leithart are as equally well versed in the post-biblical history and theology of Christian liturgy as their mainline counterparts, they rely far more heavily upon their construction of biblical theology than upon historical theology for specific models of liturgical practice. Their work places a relatively higher premium on tracing the concrete biblical foundations and theological rationale for their liturgical convictions. Thus, the emphasis in their writings falls upon biblical exegesis and theological reflection rather than recounting the post-biblical story of Christian liturgy.

Historical models are important for Meyers and Leithart, but primarily as a source of biblical and theological arguments and as a buttress for views already firmly established on the basis of biblical reasoning. Allen, Daniels, and Brenner tend to emphasize more strongly both antiquity and ecumenical agreement for their own sake, and they adhere quite closely in their liturgical ideals to patristic models widely adopted within the ecumenical guild of liturgical scholars. Because Meyers and Leithart instead most strongly emphasize biblical-theological reasoning, they feel free to diverge from that ecumenical consensus when they believe it lacks sufficient biblical grounding.

All of these authors share a commitment to a theologically oriented regulative principle. However, Meyers and Leithart demonstrate a more thorough commitment to developing a biblical theology of worship that draws upon the resources of the entire canon. Thus, their method is a biblical-typological one, and it becomes the standard by which to judge the patristic-ecumenical movement on whose shoulders they stand.