

Embodying the Wisdom of Ancient Liturgical Patterns: Some Old-Fashioned Rudimentary Euchology for the Contemporary Church

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When many evangelicals approach the topic of worship, discussions tend to focus either on a biblical theology of worship or on the style of worship in a local congregation. Both are necessary projects. However, noticeably missing from most discussions is any critical engagement with the significance of forms or patterns that shape worship, and that provide a strategic means by which convictions can be reflected in contextually stylistically appropriate ways. This paper will analyze the significance of form in a sampling of ancient liturgical texts, and suggest why and how this can be a source of wisdom for contemporary practice.

Some Introductory Motifs (to be selected from the following)

1. Ancient Liturgical Shenanigans: erasing the halo from our picture of ancient worship

2. Liturgical form

- theological significance; like musical form in shaping how participants experience the unfolding of events in time,
- the halo around *ordo*, the inevitable development of conventions, expectations,
- evangelical practices, evangelical resistance to forms,
- improvisation in jazz, theater, and recent literature in practical theology

What we are looking at here is a little like looking at the sample “song sequence charts” in *Worship Leader* magazine. Those charts tell us nothing about tempo of the music, the phrases used to frame the music, the tone of voice or gestures of the leaders who guide a congregation through it. But those sequence charts do tell us a great deal about the working ideas of God, prayer, worship and sacraments that shape a congregation’s worship. . . . Or, think of this as a music theorist looking at how J.S. Bach used deceptive cadences—a study that would be surprisingly helpful even to Wynton Marsalis.

3. Encountering historic texts

- multidisciplinary awareness
- but renewed appreciation for “old-fashioned” textual structural analysis

4. The “uses” of history: receiving ancient texts as “wisdom literature”

- “wisdom” as a relatively accessible, parsimonious insurance policy to protect us from “hacking around in the garden of the early church with machetes” (Mathews-Greene, Facing East)

Allows for how a given topic is appropriated in contemporary contexts

- For all traditions: articulating, refining liturgical criteria and priorities
- For liturgical traditions: recalibrating priorities in the embodiment of ancient practices
- For Reformation/confessional and independent/non-liturgical traditions: reassessing continuities with ancient practices, general self-criticism, decisions about appropriating ancient practices

CASE STUDY 1: INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Serapion (mid 4th cent, Egypt)

We bless you, O God who loves mankind, we set before you our weakness, we pray you to be our strength. Pardon our past sins, forgive us our former faults, make of us new men, make of us servants pure and generous.

We consecrate ourselves to you. Accept us, O God of truth, accept this people, that it may be wholly (thy) true (people).

Make them live wholly in innocence and uprightness. Let them be joined to the heavenly spirits, let them be counted among the angels, let them all be chosen and holy.

We pray to you for those who believe and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ. May they be strengthened in faith, in knowledge and in doctrine.

We pray to you for all this people. Pardon them all, show yourself, reveal thy light, that all may acknowledge you, eternal Father, together with your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

We pray to you for all magistrates. May their government be peaceful, for the tranquility of the Church.

We pray to you, God of mercies, for free men and for slaves, for men and women, for the poor and the rich. Show thy goodwill to all; extend thy goodness to us; have pity on all; guide their steps towards yourself; give to all the grace of conversion.

We pray to you for travelers. Give them the angel of peace to accompany them; let no harm fall upon them, let them come to their harbor and their destination in great security.

We pray to you for the afflicted, the captives and the poor. Strengthen them all, save them from their bonds, deliver them from their wretchedness, console them all, You who are consolation and strength.

We pray to you for the sick. Give them health, relieve their sickness, grant to them perfect health of body and soul.

You are Savior and Benefactor, You are Lord and King of all!

To you we make our prayer for all through your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, glory to you and power, in the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Serapion of Thmuis (mid. 4th cent, southern Egypt), see trans. Lucien Deiss, *Early Sources of the Liturgy* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1967), p. 104-106 [alt.]

Apostolic Constitutions 8.10 (late 4th cent. Antioch)

All we, the faithful, let us bend the knee: let us pray to God through his Christ: let us all earnestly call upon God through his Christ.

3. For the peace and tranquility of the world and of the holy Churches, let us pray that the God of all may grant us his everlasting peace, which cannot be taken away, to the end that we may keep us persevering in the fullness of that virtue which is according to godliness.

4. For the holy catholic and apostolic Church of God, which is [spread] from one end of the earth to the other, let us pray: that the Lord would continually guard and preserve it, until the end of the world, unshaken by the waves and the storms [and] founded on the rock.

5. And for the holy parish in this place, let us pray: that the Lord of all may make us worthy unremittently to press after his heavenly hope, and without ceasing to pray to him as we ought.

6. For every episcopate which is under heaven, of those who rightly divide the word of your truth, let us pray.

7. For our bishop James, and for his parishes, let us pray; for our bishop Clement, and for his parishes, let us pray; for our bishop Evodius, and for his parishes, let us pray; for our bishop Amianus, and for his parishes, let us pray: that the God of compassion would vouchsafe to preserve them for the good of his holy Churches in safety, honour, and length of days, and afford them an honorable old age in godliness and righteousness.

8. And for our presbyters, let us pray: that the Lord may deliver them from every unseemly and evil deed, and grant them a safe and honorable presbyterate.

9. And for the whole diaconate and ministry in Christ, let us pray: that the Lord may grant them a blameless ministry.

10. For the eaders, singers, virgins, widows, and orphans, let us pray: for married women and for women with child, let us pray: that the Lord may have mercy on them all.

11. For ascetics who walk holily, let us pray: for those who by clean countenance and godliness, let us pray.

12. For those who bear fruit in the holy Church, and for those who give alms to the needy, let us pray: for those who bring offerings and tithings to the Lord our God, let us pray: that the God of all goodness may recompense them with his heavenly gifts, and give them in this world an hundredfold, and in the world to come life eternal, and bestow on them for their temporal goods, those that are eternal [and] for earthly goods, those that are heavenly.

13. For our brethren newly enlightened, let us pray: that the Lord may strengthen and confirm them [in the faith].

14. For our brethren afflicted by illness, let us pray: that the Lord may deliver them from all sickness and from all infirmity, and restore them in good health to his holy Church.

15. For those that travel by water or by land, let us pray; for those that are in the mines, in exile, in prison, or in bonds, for the name of the Lord, let us pray; for those that are oppressed in bitter servitude, let us pray.

16. For our enemies and for those who hate us, let us pray; for those who persecute us on account of the name of the Lord, let us pray: that the Lord would calm their anger, and scatter their wrath against us.

17. For those that are without and are wandering, let us pray; that the Lord may convert them.

18. Of the children of the Church let us be mindful; that the Lord may perfect them in his fear, [and] grant them length of days.

19. For one another let us pray; that by his grace the Lord would keep us and guard us to the end, that he would deliver us from the evil one, and from all the scandals of those that work iniquity, and would save us [and bring us] to his heavenly kingdom.

20. For every Christian soul, let us pray—21. Save us and rise up, O God, by your mercy. 22. Let us arise: praying earnestly, let us commend ourselves and one another to the living God through his Christ.

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Gelasian Sacramentary (5th Cent. West)

The Litany (*deacon*): Let us all say, Lord, hear and have mercy. Father Unbegotten, and Son of God Begotten not made, and Holy Spirit of God, the breath of the faithful, we pray, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For the spotless church of the living God, constituted throughout the whole world; we entreat the riches of divine gifts, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For holy priests and ministers of the Mighty God, and all people worshipping the true God, we pray Christ our Lord, *Kyrie eleison*.

- In particular, for all teaching rightly the Word of Truth, the manifold Wisdom of the Word of God, we pray, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For those who keep themselves chaste in mind and body for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven, and exert themselves in spiritual labors, we pray for plentifulness of spiritual gifts, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For all religious rulers and their soldiers, who prize justice and right judgment, we implore the Power of the Lord, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For agreeable weather and opportune rains and caressing vital winds and the prosperity of divers times rightly ordered, Lord of the world, we pray, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For those who for the first time into the name of Christian are initiated, whom now the desire for heavenly grace inflames, we pray for mercy to Almighty God, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For those who are involved in the weakness of the infirmities of humanity, in envy of spiritual wickedness or various errors of the world, we implore the mercy of the Redeemer, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For those who are of necessity traveling, or are oppressed by the powers of iniquity, or are vexed by hostile hardships, we pray the Lord the savior, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For those deceived by heresy or superstition, we pray the Lord of Truth, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For doers of good works, and those who assist in the necessary labors of brotherly charity, we pray the Lord to have mercy, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For all within this holy House of the Lord, that they may be turned to religious hearts and devout prayers, we pray the Lord of Glory, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For the cleansing of our souls and bodies, and forgiveness of sins, we pray the merciful Lord, *Kyrie eleison*.

- For refreshment of faithful souls, particularly of priests of the Holy Lord, who preside over this catholic church, we pray the Lord the spirit and judge of all flesh, *Kyrie eleison*.

- Mortification of sins of the flesh and quickening of the life of faith, *Grant, Lord, grant*.

- Holy fear and love of truth, *Grant, Lord, grant*.
- A pleasant ordering of life and a creditable end, *Grant, Lord, grant*.

- An angel of peace and holy consolation, *Grant, Lord, grant*.
- Hear, Lord, the voice of your family who cry for preservation, *Grant, Lord, grant*.

See trans. Marion J. Hatchett, *Seven Pre-Reformation Eucharistic Liturgies: Historic Rites Arranged for Contemporary Celebration* (Sewanee, TN: The University of the South, 1973), p. 48-49.

The Contents of the Intercession at the Synaxis (Between Word and Table) in the Historic Liturgies (East and West)

<i>The Roman rite: the Orationes Sollemnes</i>	<i>The Gallican rite: the Missale Gallicanum Vetus</i>	<i>The Milanese rite: the Longer Litany</i>	<i>The Byzantine rite: the Greater Litany of the Enarxis</i>	<i>The Syrian rite: the Litany at the close of the Synaxis of the 'Liturgy of S. Clement' in the 'Apostolic Constitutions'</i>
<p>For the Church. For the Pope. For all Orders of Ministers in the Church.</p> <p>For the Roman Emperor.</p> <p>For the Catechumens.</p> <p>For those in any trouble: including the Sick, Travelers, Sailors, Prisoners, etc.</p> <p>For Heretics and Schismatics. For the Jews. For the Heathen.</p>	<p>For the Unity of the Church. For the Priests and Clergy.</p> <p>For Rulers and for Peace.</p> <p>For Virgins. For Widows and Orphans. For the Sick. For Prisoners and Captives. For Travelers. For those who give alms. For the Penitents. For the Neophytes. For the <i>Competentes</i>.</p>	<p>For the Church For the Bishop and for all the Clergy.</p> <p>For the Emperors and for the Officers of the Household, or Army.</p> <p>For the Peace of the Churches, the Calling of the Nations (to the Faith), and the Tranquility of the Peoples.</p> <p>For this City and its Inhabitants. For Temperate Weather and a Good Harvest.</p> <p>For Virgins, Widows, Orphans, Captives, and Penitents. For Travelers, Sailors, Prisoners, and Exiles. For the Sick, and for those vexed by evil spirits. For those who bring forth the fruit of mercy in the Church (i.e. those who give alms).</p>	<p>For Peace for on high, and for Salvation. For the Peace of the World, for the Good Estate of the Churches (i.e. Dioceses), and for the Unity of all. For this particular church, and those who enter it. For the Bishop, Presbyters, Deacons, and all the Clergy and People.</p> <p>For the Secular Ruler, (for the Royal Household, if he be a King,) and for the Army. For this City, and for every City and Country side, and for the Faithful dwelling in them.</p>	<p>For the Peace of the World and of the Churches. For the Catholic Church. For the Parishes in this Place. For the Episcopate in general, and for the Bishop of this Place and his Flock. For the Presbyters. For the Deacons and other Ministers. For the Readers Singer; for the Virgins; for the Widows and the Orphans. For the Married. For the Eunuchs. For the Continent. For the givers of alms, and so forth. For those who bring offerings and first-fruits. For the newly illuminated. For the Sick. For the Travelers and Sailors, For Exiles, Prisoners, and so forth. For our Enemies. For those wandering outside the fold. For the Little Ones of the Church. For one another. For all Christians.</p>

Sources

- Several biblical injunctions re prayers for those in authority (I Tim 2:1-8), for enemies (Matt. 5:44), for laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 9:38), for the afflicted, and for rain (James 5), needs of the church (Phil 4), needs of fellow Christians (Eph 6)
- Jewish patterns for prayer
- Justin Martyr: we “offer prayers in common for ourselves, for those who have just been enlightened, and for all people everywhere.” (*First Apology* 65)
- Ambrose: prayers “for the people, for the king, and for the rest” (*De sacramentis* IV, 14)
- Tertullian: “we always pray for the emperors ...” (*Apology* 30.4)
- Augustine: “... you hear the priest at the altar admonish the people to pray for the nonbelievers, that they be converted to believing, for the catechumens that they be stirred up to desire new birth, and for the believers, that through faith they may persevere in that which they have begun” (*Letter* 217.2)
- John Chrysostom. : “in the prayers also, you see the people contributing much. For on behalf of the energumens, on behalf of those in penance, the prayers are offered in common by priest and them [the people], and all say the one prayer, the prayer full of mercy.” (*In 2 Cor* hom. 18.3)
- John Calvin, 1542, extended intercessions in “Form of Church Prayers after the use of the ancient church” (also Bucer)

Hughes Oliphant Old: “The Prayer of intercession is one of the clearest examples of the Reformer’s use of patristic literature in their liturgical reforms. With the help of Ambrose, Augustine, Tertullian, they were able to restore to the their worship an important form of prayer which had been lost from the Roman Mass.” (*The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, 250)

Overall (quite rudimentary) learning:

Some basic wisdom:

- a) breadth of concern
- b) implied range of divine activity
- c) implied sense of the church’s role
- d) varying priorities re churchly roles and offices, prominence of catechumenate (are some seem quite “missional”)

Some questions

- a) Often does not specify the nature of the petition, only the person being prayed for
- b) Does not allow for expressing our participation

An "Ancient Future" way of expanding intercessions?

Worship Sourcebook (Baker Books, Faith Alive Christian Resources, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2004)

SECTION 4: PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life
in all godliness and dignity.
This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
who desires everyone to be saved
and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

—1 Timothy 2:1-4, NRSV

- 15 As Christians, we believe that prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. We also believe that God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking him for them.

—from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Q&A 116

- 16 The first words of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven," teach us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with and for others, offering up our desires to God for things agreeable to his will in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

—from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q&A's 98, 100

- 17 God is the one who makes us, loves us, and sustains us.
God is the one who makes, loves, and sustains the world.
- 18 There is no joy that does not come from God's hand.
There is no pain that does not echo in God's heart.

4.2 GATHERING PRAYER REQUESTS

To live up to its name, the "prayers of the people" should express a broad range of both thanksgiving and petition that reflects the diversity of experience within the congregation. This prayer should also be specific and immediate, expressing the unique circumstances of a congregation at a given time and place. Prayer requests may be gathered in writing prior to a worship service; gathered through a discussion with congregational leaders, worship planners, or a representative group of congregation members; or gathered extemporaneously during the service itself.

4.3 PREPARING EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYERS

At times, lists of prayer concerns can become too narrow or self-centered. The following prompting questions can help expand the range of prayer topics suggested by members of the congregation. Leaders may choose to use a representative sample of these or similar questions each time requests are gathered.

Praise and Thanksgiving

- For which divine actions or attributes shall we bless God?
- For which blessings shall we thank God?
- For which aspects of biblical teaching shall we thank God?

Petitions

- For which country (or part of the world) shall we pray?
- For which ministry shall we pray?
- For which other congregations shall we pray?
- For which aspects of congregational life shall we pray?
- For which concerns in our town or city shall we pray?
- For which personal concerns shall we pray?
- For which voiceless and powerless persons shall we pray?
- For which spiritual gifts shall we pray?

See also "Bidding Prayers" (in section 4.4), which invite worshipers to name specific topics as part of the prayer itself.

4.3 PREPARING EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYERS

Extemporaneous prayer is a cherished part of worship in many Christian traditions. It allows for the specific circumstances of the community to be named in both thanksgiving and petition and for the emotions of the community to shape the language of prayer. But extemporaneous prayer can become predictable and cliché-ridden over time—just as can the use of set or written prayers. The following resources offer guidance in preparing extemporaneous prayers to help keep the language of such prayers fresh and thoughtful. With this material, prayer leaders can prepare an outline from which they can pray extemporaneously. These resources cover each main part of prayer: addressing God, praising and thanking God, offering petitions and intercessions, and closing (for prayers of confession, see section 2.2).

SECTION 4: PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Topics for Petitions

The following list of topics challenges prayer leaders to think of concerns that should be included regularly in public prayer but may be forgotten in light of a given leader's or congregation's experience. This list can serve well as a checklist over time to ensure that a balanced range of concerns is incorporated in a congregation's prayers.

For the Creation

Harvest
Environmental concerns
Natural disasters
Seasonable weather
Restoration

For the World

War
Injustice
Hunger
Disease
Racial strife
World governments
International crisis
International relief organizations

For the Nation

Courts and judges
National leaders
Upcoming elections
Military personnel
Lobbyists and advocates for justice and peace

For the Local Community

Local government
Housing
Racial strife
Poverty
Employment
Government services
Schools

For the Worldwide Church

Unity of the church
Holiness of the church
Missionaries and mission agencies
Christian education: schools, colleges, seminaries
Denominations

4.3 PREPARING EXTIMPORANEOUS PRAYERS

Denominational missions and programs
Other Christian traditions

For the Local Church

Pastor(s)
Elders and other leaders
Deacons and others who serve
Staff members
Teachers
Stewards of church finances
Musicians and artists
People leaving for service opportunities
Missionaries
All members in their witness in the community
Thanksgiving for faithful service
Local mission
Congregational anniversary
New or remodeled church building
Unity in the congregation

For Those with Special Needs

Those who suffer with physical illness, and those who care for them
Those who suffer with mental illness, and those who care for them
Those who are elderly and infirm, and those who care for them
Those who have suffered abuse, and those who support them
Those who suffer with addiction, and those who support them
Those who mourn a death, and those who minister to them
Those who are imprisoned, and those who minister to them
Those who are lonely, and those who support them
Those who are orphaned, and those who care for them
Those who are homeless, and those who care for them
Those who are victims of crime, and those who support them
Those whose needs cannot be spoken
Those who are facing temptations
Those who live as single persons
Those who are about to be married or who are newly married
Those who celebrate a wedding anniversary
Those who struggle with marital difficulties
Those who are divorced and separated
Those whose sexuality is a source of pain
Those who celebrate the birth of a child
Those who long for children
Those who adopt a child or children
Those who are adopted
Those who care for young children
Those who care for elderly or needy parents

Refrain: **God of all mercy, hear our prayer.**

LA TIMES

1:37 PM PDT, April 11, 2007



Army troops' Iraq tours extended by 3 months

From the Associated Press | 12:13 p.m.

Defense Department announces that active-duty units will see their current 12-month tours extended to 15 months.

'Girls Gone Wild' founder indicted

By Michael Muskal | 1:26 p.m.

The man made famous for videos of girls exposing themselves is charged with tax evasion.

Islamic terrorists strike in Algiers

By Borzou Daragahi | 11:51 a.m.

One of two blasts targets the main government building. At least 23 are killed.

[VIDEO](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

Foreclosure hits 1 in 86 Calif. homes

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske | 12:36 p.m.

State ranks 14th in the nation for foreclosures, according to a congressional report.

POLL: America's faith in home values solid

'Rush to accuse' reversed



Prosecutor says the Duke trio accused of sexually assaulting a stripper are innocent. [VIDEO](#)

MORE NEWS

- LAPD immigrant policy under increasing fire
- Beverly Hills property goes for \$500 million
- Google project highlights Darfur crisis

CASE STUDY 2: PRAYERS IN “COLLECT FORM” (might we call the early ones ‘proto-collects’?)

A chart that only serves to help us see some common tendencies, with the risk of implying too great a uniformity of form. What is certain is that hundreds of prayers reflect this structure, especially in the liturgical reforms of Leo and Gregory in the 5th century in the West (and later in Cranmer).

	Gelasian sacramentary (5th cent, West) See Marion Hatchett, “Seven Pre-Reformation Eucharistic Liturgies,” <i>St. Luke’s Journal of Theology</i> , XVI, 3 (June 1973).	Sacramentarium Veronense , ed. L. C. Mohlberg (Rome, 1956), item 1239, p. 157), (Weil, <i>Gathered to Pray</i> , 70)	Gregorian Sacramentary , (also 1549 BCP)	Gregorian Sacramentary , (also Sarum Missal, 1549 BCP)	Apostolic Tradition—ordination prayer for a bishop ; trans. Bradshaw, Paul F., Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. E. Phillips. <i>The Apostolic Tradition</i> . Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002. p. 30.	Acts 4:24-30
Address	Almighty and Everlasting God,	O God,	Almighty God,	God	“God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort,	Sovereign Lord,
Action/attribute	who because your tender love toward humanity sent our savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our flesh and to suffer death on the cross, that all humanity should follow the example of his great humility,	who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature:	which made your blessed son to be circumcised and obedient to the law for man,	who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only son Jesus Christ	who dwells on high and looks on that which is lowly, who knows all things before they come to pass, you who gave limits in the church through the word of your grace, foreordaining from the beginning a race of righteous ones [from] Abraham, appointing rulers and priests, and not leaving your holy place without a ministry, from the beginning of the age you were pleased to be given in those whom you chose;	who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: “Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.’ For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
Petition	mercifully grant that we both follow the example of his patience and be made partakers of his resurrection	Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ	grant us the true circumcision of your Spirit, that our hearers, and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, may in all things obey your blessed will	grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer,	now pour forth that power which is from you, of the spirit of leadership that you gave to your beloved Son Jesus Christ, which he gave to the holy apostles, who established the church in every place, your sanctification, for unceasing glory and praise to your name. Bestow, knower of the heart, Father, on this your servant, whom you have chosen for the episcopate, to feed your holy flock and to exercise the high priesthood for you without blame, ministering night and day; unceasingly to propitiate your countenance, and to offer to you the holy gifts of your church; and by the spirit of high priesthood to have power to forgive sins according to your command, to assign lots according to your bidding, also to loose every bond according to the power that you gave to the apostles, and to please you in gentleness and a pure hearer, offering to you a sweet-smelling savor;	And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”
Desired result				so we may with sure conviction behold him when he shall come to be our judge,		
Statement of mediation/doxology	through the same Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.	who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.	through the same your son Jesus Christ Our Lord”	who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.	through your Child, Jesus Christ, through whom [be] glory and power and honor to you, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, both now and to the ages of ages. Amen.”	

What does this form do? What “moves” does this form invite us into?

“Collect. A generic and ritualized prayer that doesn’t say anything.”
—a recent student final exam

“The genius of the collect lies in the apt pairing of attribute and petition, acknowledgment of a past action of God with petition for similar future action. The tight logical structure of the collect is a liturgical outworking of the confession of the unity of the divine economy.”
—the correct answer

Blessed are you, O Lord,
Who nourish me from my youth and who give food to all flesh,
Fill our hearts with joy and gladness,
That having always what is sufficient for us, we may use what is over for every good work,
In Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom glory, honor and worship be to you for ever. Amen.
—*Apostolic Constitutions* 7.49 (prayer for meals)

- a) It requires a form of personal address. It is, to use the language of Levinas, Ninian Smart, and Graham Ward, the “vocative dimension of worship.” (Ward, *Worship as Meaning*, 282).
- b) It gives a lot of attention to divine attributes and mediation. A lot of time in the prayer is spent simply getting it started and ended. Naming God and naming mediation on which the prayer depends. In fact, it is this prayer form, as much as any, that features the historical work behind James Torrance’s influential, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Intervarsity Press, 1997).
- c) It balances and holds together praise and petitions (the point is obvious, but not to be taken for granted).
- d) the prayer is an expression of divine constancy. The genius of the collect lies in the apt pairing of attribute and petition, acknowledgment of a past action of God with petition for similar future action. The tight logical structure of the collect is a liturgical outworking of the confession of the unity of the divine economy. The things God has done in the past are linked with what we pray for in the future. (In contrast, the ACTS acronym works to rebalance prayer, but not necessarily to help us think about the best flow or connection between one part and the others.)
- e) the correlative of this is that form at least puts up some resistance to some things we might pray for.
“Keeping providence figuratively grounded in Scripture and practically grounded in the liturgy can help constrain our distorted appeals to divine favor” (Scott Bader-Saye, “Figuring Time: Providence and Politics” in *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption*, ed Randi Rahskover and C.C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)
- f) the invites a kind of eschatological momentum. The form, when fully developed and utilized, pushes us toward eschatology. We are giving a lot of attention ultimate results or outcomes. We are forced to say why we want so-and-so to be cured from disease. We find ourselves adding clauses like “so that they may build your kingdom” or “so that we may truly be a blessing to those with whom we work.” Try adding a result clause to all your petitions and see what a difference it makes.
- g) when developed around specific texts and themes, the prayer fosters a theocentric hermeneutic which resists any supercessionism. A way to pray scripture that is not unlike *lectio divina* and “composition of place”. When they follow scripture, these little prayers foster a theocentric hermeneutic (drawing our attention to what God is doing in the text). This is not unlike the ‘grammar’ for preaching suggested in , Paul Scott Wilson, *Four Pages of the Sermon*]

Questions:

- a) The form can become too tidy, especially when yoked with one kind of rhetoric (5th century Latin, Cranmer, etc.)
- b) It certainly could be more elaborate: requiring both an attribute and action of God could balance out our working “doctrine of God” nicely, requiring mention to seemingly contrasting divine attributes could do the same

Still, all things being equal, if you can only teach your 8 year olds two prayer forms, this is not a bad place to go alongside the Lord’s Prayer.

**SOME ANCIENT FUTURE EXAMPLES:
One notch deeper than "ACTS"**

A Modest Congregational Liturgical Assessment

1. Transcribe five prayers that were prayed spontaneously in your church.
2. Identify each phrase as either "address," "action/attribute" "petition" "desired result" or "statement of mediation" (you may also find 'confession,' 'lament'—which is good!)
3. Try to identify the relative percentage of each type. Notice what a low percentage of "desired result" phrases you find. Discuss: What might be the result of "low eschatology indicator" in corporate prayer life?
4. Consider the implications of a corporate prayer life that is a bit low in one of these indicators.

Sample Seminarian Sermon Preparation Exercise

Consider this as one homiletical exercise to take students from text to sermon. Most texts give us a) a divine action or attribute to extol, b) a specific petition to pray, or c) an (eschatological) aim to seek. Faithful preaching depends in part on the ability to hook up the other parts of the prayer in a coherent and pastorally sound way

	In preparation for a sermon on John 14	In preparation for a sermon on John 17	In preparation for a sermon on Psalm 80
Address			
Action/attribute	Your Word became flesh and lived among us,		
Petition			Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine that we may be saved.
Desired result		So that we may be one as you are one.	
Statement of mediation/doxology			

Sample Youth Group or Sunday School Class Exercise

Here are three prayer requests that are not uncommon in church youth ministry. But learning to put together a prayer around these statements can be very spiritually nourishing.

Address			
Action/attribute			"we are astonished that you made this service project possible"
Petition	"help my family survive this divorce"		
Desired result		"so that this church can finally be united"	
Statement of mediation/doxology			

An Ancient-Future Example: . . . helping lay (and clergy) prayer leaders think a more broadly about ways to identify divine actions and attributes
Worship Sourcebook (Baker Books, Faith Alive Christian Resources, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2004)

SECTION 4: PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The following actions or attributes can be included briefly in a form of address to God (such as "Almighty God, you have given us the gift of the Holy Spirit to lead us to Christ") or in an extended prayer of thanksgiving. These lists merely offer suggestions on the many actions and attributes of God we can refer to in prayer.

Actions

Gracious God,
 you created the world in beauty . . .
 you created us in your image and yet more wonderfully restored us
 in Christ . . .
 you are re-creating the world in Christ . . .
 you revealed yourself to us in Christ . . .
 you allow us to glimpse your glory in the face of Christ . . .
 you teach, comfort, and challenge us by your Word . . .
 you govern this world in power and love . . .
 you lead us faithfully . . .
 you led your people by fire and cloud . . .
 you prepared the way for the coming of your Son . . .
 you sent your Son to the world for its salvation . . .
 you led the Magi by a star to worship your Son . . .
 you anointed Jesus your Son with your Spirit at his baptism . . .
 you raised Jesus from the dead through the power of the Spirit . . .
 you send us out into the world to make disciples . . .
 you sent your Holy Spirit to point us to Christ . . .
 you send your Holy Spirit to empower the church . . .
 you hear our prayers in Jesus' name . . .
 you promise always to be with us . . .
 you promise the coming of Christ's kingdom . . .
 you alone can bring healing . . .
 you alone can bring unity out of dissension . . .
 you alone can conquer evil . . .

Attributes

Gracious God, we praise you as the one who is . . .

abundant in truth	good	just
almighty	gracious	living
beautiful	holy	long-suffering
eternal or everlasting	incomprehensible	loving
ever present	infinite	perfect
faithful	invisible	wise

For extended expressions of praise, each attribute may be linked with a particular text, a narrative of God's actions in history, or an experience (such as "Gracious Lord, we praise you as the one who was faithful to Abraham and Sarah, Boaz and Ruth, Joseph and Mary, and even to us . . .").

4.3 PREPARING EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYERS

Each of these attributes is complementary. Consider pairing attributes that we might otherwise think of as opposites (for example, "We praise you, Lord God, as the one whose justice is expressed in love, and whose love is expressed in justice . . .").

Scriptural Openings of Prayer

Scripture includes many prayers offered by God's people. While these prayers don't speak of specific contemporary needs or concerns, they provide beautiful and faithful language for addressing God. One way to draw from this language is to use a short, responsive verse of Scripture at the beginning of an intercessory prayer.

- 1 We pray to you, O Lord;
 you hear our voice in the morning;
 at sunrise we offer our prayers
 and wait for your answer.
 —based on Psalm 52:3
- 2 May the words of our mouths
 and the meditations of our hearts,
 be acceptable in your sight,
 O LORD, our Rock and our Redeemer.
 —from Psalm 139:14, NIV
- 3 To you, O LORD, I lift my soul.
 O God, in you I trust.
 —from Psalm 25:1-2, NRSV
- 4 Our prayer is to you, O LORD.
 At an acceptable time, O God,
 in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer us.
 —from Psalm 68:13, NRSV
- 5 O God, come to our assistance.
 O Lord, hasten to help us.
 —based on Psalm 70:1
- 6 Hear our prayer, O LORD;
 let our cry come to you.
 —from Psalm 102:1, NRSV
- 7 Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,
 and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.
 —Psalm 141:2, NRSV
- 8 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
 give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
 answer me in your righteousness.
 —Psalm 143:1, NRSV

CASE STUDY 3: EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

“The ability to pray a biblically sound, coherent, orthodox, pastorally contextualized prayer of thanksgiving like these is, indeed, one of the best exit requirements I can imagine for a seminary education.”

—James F. White, frequently repeated, off-the-record comment

For today, let us avert our gaze from traditional major issues of sacrifice and consecration (though there is much to discuss), and notice especially:

1. structure of historical narrative
2. the presentation of a theological view of history in a comprehensive, integrated whole
3. some intentional Trinitarian correctives in St. James to avoid modalism

My categories of creation-fall-OT-“life of Jesus” are indeed anachronistic, and they do not fit the usually liturgical structural units of “sursum corda, preface, sanctus, anamnensis, epiclesis, etc.” But they may help those of who have read and like recent books by N.T. Wright, Michael Goheen, Craig Bartholomew, and Al Wolters (among many), see the obvious similarities.

On your next systematic theology exam, consider asking students to:

- assess a given section of the prayer in terms of a specific doctrinal theme,
- propose an improved, pastorally contextualized version.

	Liturgy of St. James (Jerusalem, c. 390-400)	Apostolic Constitution (Antioch, c. 380)
Creation (and providence)	<p><i>The bishop.</i> The love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord [and] God and Savior Jesus Christ, and the fellowship [and the gift] of the [all-] Holy Spirit be with you all.</p> <p><i>People:</i> And with your spirit. <i>The bishop:</i> Let us lift up our minds and our hearts. <i>People:</i> We have them with the Lord. <i>The bishop:</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord. <i>People:</i> It is fitting and right.</p> <p><i>The bishop, bowing, says:</i> It is truly fitting and right, suitable and profitable, to praise you, [to hymn you,] to bless you, to worship you, to glorify you, to give thanks to you, the creator of all creation, visible and invisible, [the treasure of eternal good things, <u>the fountain of life and immortality</u>, the God and Master of all.]</p> <p>You are hymned by [the heavens and] the heaven of heavens and all their powers; the sun and moon and all the choirs of stars; earth, sea, and all that is in them; the heavenly Jerusalem, [the assembly of the elect,] the church of the first-born written in heaven, [the spirits of righteous men and prophets, the souls of martyrs and apostles;] angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, and awesome virtues. The cherubim with many eyes and seraphim with six wings, which cover their own faces with two wings, and their feet with two, and fly with two, cry one to the other with unwearying mouths and never-silent hymns of praise, (<i>aloud</i>) [singing] with clear voice the triumphal hymn of your magnificent glory, proclaiming, praising, crying, and saying:</p>	<p>The grace of almighty God and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.</p> <p><i>All say together:</i> And with your spirit. <i>The bishop:</i> Up with your mind. <i>All:</i> We have it with the Lord. <i>The bishop:</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord. <i>All:</i> It is fitting and right.</p> <p><i>The bishop:</i> It is truly fitting and right to praise you before all things, essentially existing God, existing before created things, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named, alone unbegotten, without beginning, without lord or master, lacking nothing, provider of all good things, greater than every cause and origin, always being in one and the same mode, from whom all things came into being as from a starting-point.</p> <p>[note: combination of apophatic/cataphatic phrases, communicable/incommunicable attributes, etc.]</p> <p>For you are knowledge, without beginning, eternal vision, unbegotten hearing, untaught wisdom, first in nature, alone in existence, too great to be numbered. You brought all things from non-existence into existence through your only-begotten Son, the Word, God, living wisdom, the firstborn of all creation, the angel of your great purpose, your high-priest [and notable worshipper], king and lord of all rational and sentient nature, who was before all, through whom are all.</p>

	<p>People. Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that comes and will come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</p> <p><i>And the bishop, standing up, seals the gifts, saying privately:</i> Holy you are, King of the ages, and [Lord and] Giver of all holiness; holy too is your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, [through whom you made all things;] and holy too is your [all-] Holy Spirit, who searches out all things, even your depths, O God and Father. <i>(He bows and says:)</i></p> <p>Holy you are, almighty, omnipotent, awesome, good, [compassionate,] <u>with sympathy above all for what you fashioned.</u></p> <p>[humanity:]</p> <p>You made man from the earth [after your image and likeness,] and granted him the enjoyment of paradise;</p>	<p>For you, eternal God, made all things through him, and through him you vouchsafe a fitting <u>providence</u> over everything. Through him you granted existence, through him also a good existence; O God and Father of your only-begotten Son, through him before all things you made [the heavenly powers], the cherubim and the seraphim, the ages and the hosts, virtues and powers, principalities and thrones, archangels and angels; and through him after all these things you made this visible world and all that is in it.</p> <p>For you are he who set out heaven as a vault, and stretched it out as a screen, and established the earth on nothing by your sole intent; you fixed the firmament, and arranged night and day; you brought light out of your treasures, and by its contraction you brought on darkness (to give) rest to the living things that move in the world. You appointed the sun in heaven to begin the day and the moon to begin the night, and you inscribed the chorus of the stars in heaven to the praise of your magnificence.</p> <p>[lots of Job, plus Psalm 104 in this section]</p> <p>You made water for drinking and cleansing, life-giving air for breathing in and out, and for the production of sound through the tongue striking the air, and for hearing which is aided by it to receive the speech which falls upon it. You made fire for comfort in darkness, for supplying our need, that we should be warmed and given light by it. You divided the ocean from the land, and made the one navigable, the other fit to be trodden by our feet; you filled the one with creatures small and great, the other tame and wild; you wove it a crown of varied plants and herbs, you beautified it with flowers and enriched it with seeds. You constructed the abyss and set a great covering on it, the piled-up seas of salt water, and surrounded it with gates of finest sand; now you raise it with winds to the height of the mountains, now you level it to a plain; now you drive it to fury with a storm, now you soothe it with a calm, so that it gives an easy journey to travellers in ships. You girdled the world that was made by you through Christ with rivers and flooded it with torrents, you watered it with ever-flowing springs and bound it round with mountains as an unshakable and most safe seat for the earth. For you filled the world and adorned it with sweet-smelling and healing herbs, with many different living things, strong and weak, for food and for work, tame and wild, with hissing of reptiles, with the cries of variegated birds, the cycles of the years, the numbers of months and days, the order of the seasons, the course of rain-bearing clouds for the production of fruits and the creation of living things, a stable for the winds that blow at your command, the multitude of plants and herbs.</p> <p>[humanity:]</p> <p>And not only have you fashioned the world, but you have also made man in it, the citizen of the world, displaying him as the ornament of the world. For you said in your wisdom, "Let us make man in our image and likeness, and let him rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air." So also you made him from an immortal soul and a perishable body, the one from what is not, the other from the four elements. And you gave him in respect of the soul, logical reason, discernment between godliness and ungodliness, observance of right and wrong, and in respect of the body, the five senses and the power of motion. For you, almighty God, planted by Christ a garden eastward in Eden with adornment of every kind of plant for food, and in it, as in a costly home, you placed man; and in making him you gave him an inborn law, that he might have in himself and of himself the seeds of the knowledge of God. And when you had brought him into the paradise of delight, you allowed him authority to partaker of everything, and forbade him the taste of one thing alone, in the hope of better things, that, if he kept the commandment, he should receive immortality as a reward for that.</p>
Fall	and when he transgressed your commandment and fell, you did not despise him or abandon him, for you are good,	But when he neglected the commandment and tasted the forbidden fruit, by the deceit of the serpent and the counsel of the woman, you justly drove him out of the paradise; but in your goodness you did not despise him when he was utterly perishing, for he was the work of

		<p>your hands, but you subjected creation to him, and granted him to provide food for himself by his own sweat and labors, while you caused everything to shoot and grow and ripen. And in time, after putting him to sleep for a short while, you called him to rebirth by an oath; and after destroying the limit of death, you promised him life after resurrection.</p>
<p>OT</p>	<p>but <u>you chastened him as a kindly father</u>, you called him through the law, you taught him through the prophets.</p>	<p>Nor was this all, but you poured out his descendents to a countless multitude; you glorified those who remained faithful to you, and punished those who rebelled against you; you accepted the sacrifice of Abel as being a righteous man, and rejected the gift of Cain, who slew his brother, as being a man accursed; and in addition you received Seth and Enosh, and translated Enoch.</p> <p>For it is you who fashion men and provide life and fill need and give laws and reward those who keep them and punish those who break them; you brought the great Flood upon the earth because of the multitude of the ungodly, and saved righteous Noah from the Flood in the ark with eight souls, the end of those who dwelt there, but the beginning of those who were to be; you kindled the terrible fire against the five cities of Sodom, and turned a fruitful land into salt for the wickedness of those who dwelt in it, and snatched holy Lot from the burning. It was you who rescued Abraham from the godlessness of his forefathers and made him inheritor of the world; and revealed your Christ to him; you chose Melchizedek to be high-priest of your service; you declared your long-suffering servant Job to be the victor over the serpent, the origin of evil; you made Isaac the child of promise; you made Jacob the father of twelve sons, and his descendents to become a multitude, and brought him into Egypt with seventy-five souls. You, Lord, did not despise Joseph but, as a reward of his chastity for your sake, gave him the rule over the Egyptians. You, Lord, because of your promises to their Fathers, did not despise the Hebrews when they were oppressed by the Egyptians, but you rescued them and punished the Egyptians.</p> <p>And when men destroyed the law of nature and taught that the Creation had created itself, or honored it more than they should, making it equal to you, God of all, you did not allow them to go astray, but revealed your holy servant Moses and through him gave them the written law in aid of nature, you showed that the Creation was your work and <u>expelled the error of polytheism</u>. You glorified Aaron and his descendents with the honor of priesthood, you punished the Hebrews when they sinned, and received them when they turned back.</p> <p>You avenged them on the Egyptians with the ten plagues, you divided the sea and led the Israelites through, you drowned and destroyed the pursuing Egyptians. You sweetened the bitter water with wood, you poured water from the precipitous rock, you rained manna from heaven, and quails as food from the air. (You set up) a pillar of fire for light by night and a pillar of cloud for shadow from the heat by day. You declared Joshua to be leader, you destroyed through him the seven nations of the Canaanites, you parted Jordan, you dried up the rivers of Etham, you laid walls low without machines or human hands.</p> <p>For all things glory be to you, almighty Lord. You are worshipped [by every bodiless and holy order, by the Paraclete, and above all by your holy child Jesus the Christ, our Lord and God, you angel and the chief general of your power, and eternal and unending high priest,] by unnumbered armies of angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, virtues, eternal armies. The cherubim and the six-winged seraphim with two wings covering their feet, with two their heads, and with two flying, together with thousands of thousands or archangels and myriads of myriads of angels say unceasingly, never resting their voices:</p> <p><i>All the people say: Holy, holy, holy (is the) Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of his glory; blessed (is he) for ever. Amen.</i></p> <p><i>The bishop continues: Truly you are holy and all-holy, most high and exalted above all for ever.</i></p>

Life of Jesus

Later you sent your only-begotten Son, [himself, our Lord Jesus Christ,] into the world to renew [and raise up] your image [by coming himself.] He came down [from heaven] and was made flesh from the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Holy [ever-] Virgin Mother of God. He dwelt among men and ordered everything for the salvation of our race.

And when he was about to endure his voluntary [and life-giving] death [on the cross,] the sinless for us sinners, in the night when he was betrayed, [or rather handed himself over,] for the life and salvation of the world.

(He stands up, takes the bread, seals it, and says:) he took bread in his holy, undefiled, blameless [and immortal] hands, [looked up to heaven, and] showed it to you, his God and Father; he gave thanks, blessed, sanctified, and broke it, and gave it to his [holy and blessed] disciples and apostles, saying, *(he puts the bread down, saying aloud:)* "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken and distributed for you for forgiveness of sins." *People:* Amen.

(He takes the cup, seals it, and says privately:) Likewise after supper [he took] the cup, he mixed wine and water, [he looked up to heaven and showed it to you, his God and Father; he gave thanks,] blessed, and sanctified it, [filled it with the Holy Spirit,] and gave it to his [holy and blessed] disciples and apostles, saying, *(he puts it down, saying aloud:)* "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed and distributed for you and for many for forgiveness of sins." *People:* Amen.

(Then he stands and says privately:) "Do this for my remembrance; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Son of Man and confess his Resurrection, until he comes."

And the deacons present answer: We believe and confess.

People: Your death, Lord, we proclaim and your Resurrection we confess."

Then he makes the sign of the cross, bows, and says: We [sinners,] therefore, [also] remembering

- [his life-giving sufferings and his saving cross and]
- his death [and his burial] and
- his Resurrection from the dead on the third day and
- his return to heaven and his session at your right hand, his God and Father,
- and his glorious and awesome second coming, when he [comes with glory to] judge the living and the dead, when he will reward each according to his works [-- spare us, Lord our God (*thrice*)—or rather according to his compassion.]

we offer you, [Master,] this awesome and bloodless sacrifice, [asking you] that you "deal not with us after our sins nor reward us according to our iniquities," but according to your gentleness and [unspeakable] love for man to [pass over and] blot out [the handwriting that is against us] your suppliants, [and grant us your heavenly and eternal gifts, "which eye has not seen nor ear heard nor have entered into the hearer of man, which you, O God, have prepared for those who love you." And do not set at naught your people on account of me and my sins, O Lord, lover of men (*thrice*),] (*aloud*) for your people and your Church entreats you.

People: Have mercy on us, [Lord, God,] Father, the almighty.

And the bishop stands up and says privately: Have mercy on us, [Lord,] God the Father, almighty; [have mercy on us, God, our Savior

Holy also is your only-begotten Son, our Lord and God Jesus the Christ, who ministered to you, his God and Father, in all things, in the varieties of creation, and in appropriate forethought. He did not despise the race of men as it perished; but after the law of nature and the warnings of the Law and the reproofs of the prophets and the guardianship of the angels, when they were violating the natural and written law, and casting out of memory the Flood, the burning (of Sodom), the plagues of the Egyptians, and the slaughter of the Palestinian, and were all about to perish as never yet, *by your counsel it pleased him who was maker of man to become man, the lawgiver to be under the law, the high-priest to be the sacrifice, the shepherd to be a sheep.* [**nab. Recapitulation of earlier history in terms of Jesus, highly paradoxical formulations**]

And he propitiated you, his won God and Father, and reconciled you to the world, and freed all men from the impending wrath. He was born of a virgin, God the Word made in the flesh, the beloved Son, the firstborn of all Creation, according to the prophecies spoken beforehand by him concerning himself, from the seed of David and Abraham, of the tribe of Judah. *He who fashions all who are begotten was made in a virgin's womb; the fleshless became flesh; he who was begotten outside time was begotten in time.*

He lived a holy life and taught according to the law; he drove away every disease and every sickness from men; he did signs and wonders among the people; he who feeds those who need food and fills all things living with plenteousness partook of food and drink and sleep; he made known your name to those who did not know it; he put ignorance to flight; he re-kindled piety; he fulfilled your will; he accomplished the work which you gave him. [**nb. The pare of Jesus story missing from the creeds**]

And when he had achieved all these things, he was seized by the hands of lawless so-called priests and high-priests and a lawless people, by betrayal through one who was diseased with wickedness. He suffered many things at their hands, endured all kinds of indignity by your permission, and was handed over to Pilate the governor. The Judge was judged and the Savior was condemned; he who cannot suffer was nailed to the cross, he who is immortal by nature died, and the giver of life was buried, that he might free from suffering and rescue from death those for whose sake he came, and break the bonds of the devil, and deliver men from his deceit.

And on the third day he rose from the dead, and after spending forty days with his disciples, he was taken up into heaven and sits at your right hand, his God and Father.

Remembering therefore what he endured for us, we give you thanks, almighty God, not as we ought but as we are able, and we fulfill his command.

[What follows is the institution narrative "out of order"]

For in the night he was betrayed, he took bread in his holy and blameless hands and, looking up to you, His God and Father, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is the mystery of the new covenant: take of it, eat; this is my body which is broken for many for forgiveness of sins." Likewise also he mixed the cup of wine and water and sanctified it and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood which is shed for many for forgiveness of sins. Do this for my remembrance; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death, until I come."

Remembering then his Passion and death and resurrection from the dead, his return to heaven and his future second coming, in which he comes with glory and power to judge the living and the dead, [**n.b. remembering the future**]

and to reward each according to his works, we offer you, King and God, according to his

		commandment, this bread and this cup, giving you thanks through him that you have deemed us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as priests.
Pentecost	<p>. Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy,] and send out upon us and upon these [holy] gifts set before you your [all-]</p> <p>[note: historical recapitulation here re work of the Holy Spirit]</p> <p>Holy Spirit, <i>(he bows)</i> the Lord and giver of life,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who shares the throne and the kingdom with you, God the Father and your [only-begotten] Son, consubstantial and co-eternal, • who spoke in the law and the prophets and in your new covenant, • who descended in the likeness of a dove upon our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan [and remained upon him,] • who descended upon your holy apostles in the likeness of fiery tongues [in the Upper Room of the holy and glorious Zion on the day of the holy Pentecost;]<i>he sands up and says privately:</i>) <p>send down, Master, your all-Holy spirit himself upon us and upon them, [and by his holy and good and glorious coming may sanctify them,] and make this bread the holy body of Christ, <i>(People: Amen.)</i></p> <p><i>The bishop stands up and says privately:</i> that they may become to all who partake of them [for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life]</p> <p>for sanctification of souls and bodies, for bringing forth good works, for strengthening your holy, [catholic, and apostolic] Church, which you founded on the rock of faith, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, rescuing it from every heresy, and from the stumbling-blocks of those who work lawlessness, [and from the enemies who rose and rise up]</p> <p>until the consummation of the age.</p> <p>[n.b. the mini doctrine of sanctification here]</p>	<p>And we beseech you to look graciously upon these gifts set before you, O God who need nothing, and accept them in honor of your Christ; and to send down your Holy Spirit upon this sacrifice, the witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that he may make this bread body of your Christ, and this cup blood of your Christ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that those who partake of it may be strengthened to piety, • obtain forgiveness of sins, • be delivered from the devil and his deceit, be filled with the Holy Spirit, • become worthy of your Christ, • and obtain eternal life, after reconciliation with you, almighty Master. <p>[n.b. the mini doctrine of sanctification here]</p>
Life of the church	<p><i>Then he makes the sign of the cross, bows, and says:</i> We offer to you, [Master,] for your holy places also, which you glorified by the theophany of your Christ [and the descent of you're all-Holy Spirit;] principally for [holy and glorious] Zion, the mother of all the churches, and for your holy, [catholic, and apostolic] Church throughout all the world: even now, Master, grant it richly the gifts of you [all -] Holy spirit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember, Lord, also our holy [fathers and] bishops [in the Church,] who [in all the world] divide the word of truth [in orthodoxy]; principally our holy Father N., [all his clergy and priesthood]: grant him an honorable old age; preserve him to shepherd your flock in all piety and gravity for many years. • Remember, Lord, the honorable presbytery here and everywhere, the diaconate in Christ, all the other ministers, every ecclesiastical order, [our brotherhood in Christ, and all the Christ-loving people. • Remember, Lord, the priests who stand around us in this holy hour, before your holy altar, for the offering of the holy and bloodless sacrifice; and give them and us the word in the opening of our mouths to the glory and praise of your all-holy name.] • Remember, Lord, [according to the multitude of your mercy and your pity,] me also [your humble, sinful and unworthy servant, and visit me in mercy and pity; save me and deliver me from those who persecute me, Lord, Lord of hosts;] and since sin abounded in me, your grace shall greatly exceed it. • [Remember, Lord, also the deacons who surround your holy altar, and grant them a blameless life; preserve their ministry unspotted and provide for them good degrees. • Remember, Lord, our God, your holy and royal city, and every city and region, and those who live in them in orthodox faith and reverence for you, for their peace and safety,] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further we pray to you, Lord, for your holy Church from one end of the world to the other, which you redeemed with the precious blood of your Christ, that you would guard it unshaken and sheltered until the consummation of the age; and for all bishops who rightly divide the word of truth. • And we entreat you also for my worthless self who offer to you, and for all the priesthood, for the deacons and all the clergy, that you would instruct them all and fill them with holy Spirit. • And we entreat you, Lord, for the Emperor and those in authority and all the army, that they may be peaceable towards us, that we may live the while of our life in quietness and concord, and glorify you through Jesus Christ our hope. • And we offer to you also for all those holy men who have been well-pleasing to you from everlasting: patriarchs, prophets, righteous men, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, readers, singers, virgins, widows, laymen, and all whose names you know. • And we offer to you for this people, that you would make them a royal

- Remember, Lord, our most pious [and Christ-loving] emperor, his pious [and Christ-loving] empress, [all his court and his army, for their help from heaven and their victory:] lay hold upon weapon and buckler, and stand up to help him; subject to him all the warlike and barbarous nations that delight in war, [moderate his counsels,] that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and gravity.
- Remember, Lord, [Christians at sea, on the road, abroad] our fathers and brothers in chains and prisons, in [captivity and] exile, [in mines and tortures and bitter slavery; for a peaceful return home for each of them.
- Remember, Lord, those in old age and infirmity, those who are sick, ill, or troubled by unclean spirits, [for their speedy healing and salvation by you, their God.
- Remember, Lord, every Christian soul in trials and afflictions, in need of your mercy and help, O God, and recovery of the lost.
- Remember, Lord, our holy fathers and brothers who live in chastity, piety, and self-discipline, and those who struggle among mountains, dens, and caves of the earth, and the orthodox communities everywhere, and our community in Christ here.
- Remember, Lord, our fathers and brothers who labor and serve for your holy name.
- Remember, Lord, all men for good; on all have mercy, Master; reconcile us all, bring peace to the multitudes of your people, disperse the scandals, abolish wars, end the divisions of the churches, speedily put down the uprisings of the heresies, cast down the insolence of the heathen, exalt the horn of the Christians, grant us your peace and your love, God our savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth.]
- Remember, Lord, mildness of climate, [peaceful showers, [good] dews, [abundance of] fruit, [a perfect harvest, and] the crown of the year [of your goodness]; for "the eyes of all wait upon you, and you give their food in due season; you open your hand and fill every living thing with blessing." (*Here he nods towards the arch-deacon.*) Remember, Lord, [those who have brought and bring forth fruit in your holy churches, O God, those who remember the poor, and] those who have bidden us make mention of them in our prayers.
- Vouchsafe yet to remember, Lord, those who have offered the offerings today on your holy altar, and those for whom each one offered or whom he has in mind, and those who are now read to you.
- *And he makes mention of those whom he wishes who are in this present life.*
- [Remember, Lord, also those our parents and friends and relations and brothers.]
- Remember all these, Lord, whom we have remembered and those we have not remembered, [of the orthodox]; give them heavenly things for earthly, imperishable for perishable, eternal for temporal, [according to the promise of your Christ,] since you have authority over life and death.
- Vouchsafe yet to remember, Lord, those who have been well-pleasing to you from the beginning, [from generation to generation:] the holy Fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, [martyrs, confessors, holy teachers, and every righteous spirit perfected in the faith of your Christ.
- Hail, highly favored' the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you bore the Savior of our souls. (*thrice*)
- *He says aloud:* [Especially our all-] Holy, [Blessed, and spotless Lady] Mary Mother of God [and ever-Virgin. *And the clergy alone answer secretly:* Remember, Lord, our God.] *And the bishop bows down and says:* Holy John, the [prophet,] forerunner and Baptist.
- [The Holy Apostles Peter, Paul, Andrews, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James Simon, Jude, Matthias; Mark and Luke, the evangelists.
- The holy prophets and patriarchs and righteous men.]
- Holy Stephen, the first deacon and first martyr.
- [The holy martyrs and confessors, who for Christ our true God witnessed and confessed the good confession.
- The infants who were put to death by King Herod.
- The holy martyrs Procopius, Theodore, Cyrus, John, George, Leontius, Sergius, Bacchus, Cosmas, Damian, Sabinianus, Paul, Babilas, Agathangelus, Eustratius and his fellow-fighters.
- The holy forty, the holy forty-five.
- Holy Thecla, the first woman martyr.
- The holy women who brought the myrrh.
- The holy women martyrs Tatte, Febronia, Anastasia, Euphemia, Sophia, Barbara, Juliana, Irene, Faith, Hope, and Charity.]
- Remember, Lord God our holy [Fathers and] archbishops who, from [holy] James the apostle and brother of the Lord and first archbishop down to Leo and Athanasius, have been orthodox archbishops of the holy city of Christ our Lord.
- [And those who have been archbishops from the beginning, from our holy and blessed Father

priesthood, a holy nation, to the praise of your Christ; for those in virginity and chastity, for the widows of the Church, for those in holy marriage and child-bearing, for the infants among your people, that you may make none of us a castaway.

- And we ask you on behalf of this city and those who live in it, for those in illness, those in bitter slavery, those in exile, those whose goods have been confiscated, for sailors and travelers, that you would become the help of all, their aid and support.
- And we entreat you for those that hate and persecute us for the sake of your name, for those who are outside and have gone astray, that you would turn them back to good and soften their hearers.
- And we entreat you also for the catechumens of the Church, for those distressed by the Alien, and for those in penitence among our brothers, that you would perfect the first in the faith, and cleanse the second from the works of the devil, and receive the repentance of the third, and forgive them and us our transgressions.
- And we offer to you also for a mild climate and an abundant harvest, that we may partake of the good things from you without lack, and unceasingly praise you, who give food to all flesh.
- And we entreat you also for those who are absent for good cause, that you would preserve us all in piety, and gather us without change, without blame, without reproach in the kingdom of your Christ, the God of all sentient and rational nature, our King.

	<p>Eneas, the apostolic man and first of the bishops down to Sophronius and John.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember, Lord, our holy Fathers and teachers Clement, Timothy, Ignatius, Dionysius, Irenaeus, Gregory, Alexander, Eustathius, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, Gregory, Ambrose, Amphilochius, Liberius, Damasus, John, Epiphanius, Theophilus, Celestinus, Augustine, Cyril, Leo, Proclus, Proterius, Felix, Hormisdas, Eulogius, Ephraem, Anastasius, Theodore, Marein, Agathon, Sophronius. Remember, Lord, the six holy, great and ecumenical councils: the three hundred and eighteen (Fathers) of Nicaea, and the one hundred and fifty of Constantinople, and the two hundred of the first Ephesus, and the six hundred and thirty of Chalcedon, and the one hundred and sixty-four of the fifth holy council, and the two hundred and eighty-nine of the sixth holy council, and the other holy councils and bishops who in all the world in orthodoxy divided the word of truth. Remember, Lord, our holy Fathers and ascetics Paul, Antony, Charito, Paul, Pachomius, Hamoun, Theodore, Hilarion, Arsenius, Macarius, Macarius, Sisois, John, Pambo, Poemen, Nilus, Isidore, Ephrem, Symeon, Symeon, Theodosius, Saba, Saba, Euthymius, Theoctistus, Gerasimus, Pantaleon, Maximus, Anastasius, Cosmas, John. Remember, Lord, our holy Fathers who were put to death by the barbarians in the holy mountain of Sinai and in Raitho, and our other holy Fathers and orthodox ascetics and all the saints; not that we are worthy to make mention of their blessedness, but that they themselves indeed, standing by your awesome and dread judgment-seat, may make mention in turn of our misery.] Remember, Lord, presbyters, deacons, [deaconesses,] subdeacons, readers, exorcists, interpreters, signers, monks, virgins, [widows, orphans, the continent, those who have been perfected with faith in the fellowship of your holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Remember, Lord, the pious and faithful emperors Constantine, Helena, Theodosius the Great, Marcianus, Pulcheria, Leo, Justinian, Constantine, and those who reigned after them in piety and faith,] and all the [Christ-loving] orthodox laymen who now sleep in the faith [and seal of Christ. [Remember, Lord, our parents and friends and relations.] <i>And after them he makes mention of those orthodox whom he wishes.</i> Remember, all [these orthodox], Lord, the God of the spirits and of all flesh, whom we have remembered and whom we have not remembered; give them rest yourself there, [in the land of the living, in your kingdom, in the pleasure of paradise,] in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, [our holy Fathers,] whence pain, sorrow, and sighing have fled away, where the light of your countenance looks on them [and lights them for ever.] Guide the ends of our lives to be Christian [and well-pleasing] and sinless [in peace, Lord]; collect us under the feet of your elect, when you will and as you will, but without shame and transgressions, through your only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, for he alone has appeared on earth without sinning. <i>Deacon:</i> And for the peace and stability of the whole world and the holy churches of God; and for those for whom each one has offered or whom he has in mind, and for the people that stand round, for all men and all women.] <p><i>The bishop says aloud:</i> Through whom, [as a good God and a Master that loves men,] to us and them, <i>(People:)</i> remit, forgive, pardon, O God, our transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, witting and unwitting.</p>	
<p>Eschatological motif (though not the only one in the prayer)</p>	<p><i>The bishop alone says:</i> By the grace and compassion and love for men of your Christ, with whom you are blessed and glorified, with your all-Holy and life-giving Spirit, now and always and to the ages of ages. Amen.</p>	<p>For [through him] (is due) to you all glory, worship, and thanksgiving, [and through you and after you to him in] the Holy Spirit honor and adoration, now and always and to the ages of ages, unailing and unending.</p> <p><i>And all the people say:</i> Amen.</p>

Rudimentary Wisdom of this Tradition

1. Prayer as Recitation of Historical Narrative / Toward a Tethered Mysticism

The Juxtaposition of apophatic and cataphatic, mystical and 'historical' moments in prayer. The late fourth century Eucharistic prayers combine and alternate moments of mystical contemplation (*via negativa* attributes, Psalmic doxology, Sanctus), and historical recitation.

Some Orthodox attempts to resist poor popular uses of the terms "mystical" and "mysterious."

Patrick Henry Reardon in *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed, James S. Cutsinger (Intervarsity, 1997): "today's *via negativa vulgaris* or popular apophaticism" . . . speaking of God as mysterious and incomprehensible with no sense of what that means or has meant; with the result that the *mysterium tremendum et fasinusum* becomes *mysterium nebulosum sed multum flexibile et valde accomodans*. . . where mysterious means simply "blurry." . . "If Christians speak of the incomprehensibility of God, it behooves them to be certain that they are talking about the true and living God manifest in Jesus Christ" (108).

Kallistos Ware, "The Trinity: Heart of Our Life," in *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed, James S. Cutsinger (Intervarsity, 1997): "our approach to God the Trinity is cataphatic as well as apophatic. A mystery, in the proper theological sense, is much more than a conundrum or an inexplicable puzzle. A mystery is something revealed to our understanding into the limitless darkness of God (Ex. 20:21, Ps. 18:11). Where then do we find the mystery of the Trinity revealed? We find it revealed in Jesus Christ." (See also Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 56-58).

Karl Barth: "True worship is not the turning to a *Deus absconditus* in his naked majesty. It is not the well-known idolatrous cult of a remote and alien 'holy' which in its negativity is as such the *fascinatum* and *tremendum* to which divine service and prayer must be offered in the form that is ultimately a solemn stupor. If it is not this evil thing, it must be a turning to the *Deus revelatus* who is the God of all comfort and the Father of all mercies." (CD 3/4, 100).

Robert Webber: "Spirituality, which was once a contemplation of God's saving acts, now contemplated the self and the interior life. What was once a journey to God became a journey to self. . . Instead of contemplating on God's mighty acts of creation, incarnation, and re-creation . . . contemplation shifted to a focus on 'my inward journey.'" (*Divine Embrace*, 51; see also 235ff).

The Sanctus—like labyrinths, centering prayer, contemplative silence—can be means by which we call to mind and pray to the God of the Bible, or they can be means by which we pray to another kind of god. Even the Sanctus needs a narrative context, lest we define "holy, holy, holy" in terms of our own experience, and thus fashion a god of our own making.

2. Wide-Angle Vision

"Our services are so long on Sunday because when people show up here, all their internal time-lines are messed up. They don't know what is worth remembering and what they can realistically hope for. It takes us here about 2 or 3 hours just to get this timeline put back together."

--a wise pastor from a charismatic congregation

- Prayers that are "spacious"/comprehensive in scope
 - Prayers that unite and stereoscopically integrate creation/redemption, Word/Spirit, already/not yet
- a) Here is a theological vision of space/time, good/evil, history/eschatology, but all done in a vocative and evocative mood. It is a natural complement to the project of Christian worldview formation of Francis Schaeffer, Arthur Holmes, James Sire, David Naugle, Al Wolters, Charles Colson, David Wells, and others. Perhaps it should be a non-negotiable part of the project. See Frank Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical Worldview* (Fortress Press, 2000).
 - b) a natural complement to any scriptural hermeneut that believes that "scripture should interpret scripture," the Bible conveys one overarching narrative

N.T. Wright: "the whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story which is the story of the whole world" (*New Testament and the People of God*, 41-42); Also recent books by Craig Bartholomew, Kevin Vanhoozer, and others.

- c) a starting point for discussing emerging skepticism about systematic theology

3. Trinitarian excellencies (St. James)

- a) re immanent/economic trinity
- b) artful recapitulations of history to avoid modalism

4. The inter-relationship of prayer, theology, creedal statements, and catechesis ("oh to re-join what has so long been divided")

5. A prayer form capaciousness enough for multiple complementary (scriptural) images and metaphors/engagement with the imagination, surely something that can slake the Ancient-Future thirst for truth-bearing metaphor.

- a) Redemption as the move from sin to forgiveness, from death to life, from disease to healing, from oppression to liberation, from addiction to freedom,
- b) The Lord's Supper itself as a meal of remembrance, communion, hope, nourishment, unity, covenant renewal, etc.

"I left there parched. . . parched for metaphor"

--comment by worshiper, spoken while exiting an evangelical congregation which shall not be identified

The peace of Christ be with you always!

And also with you.

—based on John 20:19-21

8.2.9 Additional Complete Prayers

Readers familiar with the Bible will notice that the following prayer texts draw from a variety of Scripture passages, perhaps most notably Psalm 118:26; Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 22:19-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

- 1 *This outline is provided as a guide for praying the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving extemporaneously. The most common congregational responses, which may be sung or spoken, are included in boldface in brackets.*

[Address of God]

Thankful praise to God, and remembrance of all God's works:
for God's work in creation and providence, and in covenant history;
for the witness of the prophets;
for God's steadfast love in spite of human failure;

[Acclamation of Praise, such as "Holy, holy, holy . . ."]

for the ultimate gift of Christ—
his birth, life, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension,
his present intercession for us and
the promise of his coming again—
as well as the gift of the sacrament, which Christ instituted.

*[May include the words of institution,
if not used as part of the invitation.]*

*[Memorial Acclamation, such as "Christ has died,
Christ is risen, Christ will come again."]*

The Holy Spirit is called upon
to lift all who share in the feast into Christ's presence;
to make the breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup
a participation in the body and blood of Christ;
to unite us in communion with the risen Christ
and with all God's people in heaven and on earth;
to nourish us with the body of Christ so that we may mature
into the fullness of Christ;
to keep us faithful as Christ's body,
representing Christ in witness and ministry in the world,
in anticipation of the fulfillment of the kingdom Christ proclaimed.

[Lord's Prayer]

[Closing doxology and Amen]

Conclusions

1. Some provisional synthetic historical assessments: what we might suggest for the next edition of *Worship Old and New*

a) **Clergy:** worship leadership/presidency as improvisatory (freedoms inside of various patterns and forms) even if that improvisation become more constricted

Apostolic Tradition: “Let the bishop give thanks in the manner we indicated earlier. It is not necessary, however, that he repeat the same words we provided, as though he had to try to say them from memory in his thanksgiving to God. Let each one pray according to his ability. If he is capable of praying at length and offering a solemn prayer, well and good. But if he prays differently and pronounces a shorter and simpler prayer, he is not to be prevented, provided his prayer be sound and orthodox.”

Origen: “when praying, we must abide by what is agreed upon . . . If it seems good to you, let these conventions be in force” (*Conversation with Heraclides* 4—see Bouley, 140)

Gregory of Nazianzus: Basil was gifted at “arrangements of prayers” (*Funeral Oration for St. Basil*, 43); See also Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27, 66.

Imagine juxtapositions among:

a) Allen Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution for the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts* (Catholic University of America, 1981); R. P. C. Hanson, “The Liberty of the Bishop to Improvise Prayer in the Eucharist,” in *Vigilae Christianae* 15 (1961): 173-176; And note the metaphor in this title: John Fenwick, *Fourth Century Anaphoral Construction Techniques* (Grove Books, 1986), which ends “We have in recent years go used the ‘scissors-and-paste’ and ‘back-of-an-envelope’ techniques of liturgical revision, but the thought of Basil the Great slicing up sheets of parchment or scribbling in the margin of his manuscripts takes a little getting used to . . . “ (37).

b) Paul Bradshaw on how all of this is a sign of inculturation and disintegration (“The Effects of the Coming of Christendom on Early Christian Worship” in Alan Krieder, *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001).

c) Kevin Vanhoozer, “Faithful Improvisation” in *The Drama of Doctrine* (Westminster John Knox Press, 335); Sam Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Brazos); Michael Horton, “Community Theater: Local Performances of the Divine Drama,” in *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

d) Charles Taylor: “Much of our intelligent action in the world. . . is carried on unformulated. It flows from an understanding that is largely inarticulate” (170) . . . We. . . we live all the time by inherited patterns. . . without them “we need an infinite number of thought in our heads even to follow the simplest instructions. Plainly this is crazy” (166). [“To Follow a Rule,” in *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard University Press, 1995), 165-180]. With connections to Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1977): “the habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” closely linked with “a community of dispositions” (78).

b) Laity: liturgical participation as 1) assent, 2) historically mystical/"iconic"

In contrast to: "We are no longer constituted liturgically by prayer. We constitute for ourselves the liturgy that best expresses our interior psychic life. Liturgy becomes style. It does not produce me; I produce it. In consequence, when I say that it 'feels right' I am saying that it fits an interior disposition I already have—if I think about it at all."

—Laurence Paul Hemming, "The Subject of Prayer: Unwilling Words in the Postmodern Access to God," in *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 444-457.

"Communal prayer indeed presents some serious difficulties as anyone who has led in such a prayer or who participated in it has experienced. A prayer properly arises from the heart and is expressed by the mouth. But what happens with spontaneous communal prayer if you keep silent? Then you listen while you present yourself to God. In that prayerful mood thoughts and sensations rise up from your own heart, but you cannot express them. And while you thus deny your own heart more or less, your ears catch certain sounds and sentences that often are not very clear and often are lengthy and complex. Yet they are intended to generate and stimulate a desire in your heart for fellowship with God. Such prayer takes more mental effort than most people are capable of, even when the prayers are meaningful. It all goes too fast. People have barely understood the intent of a previous sentence, and pondered its thought, and then they hear part of a new sentence which then has to be digested mentally before they can make it part of their own genuine prayer. This is too much for most listeners. And if such a prayer, as happens quite often, is stretched out for fifteen minutes, the effect is often that people give up after the first five minutes. When this happens they merely listen to sounds without their hearts being involved. After a while this becomes so tiresome that they long for the end, and they welcome the "Amen" spoken by the prayer-leader as a release. Such experiences happen even when a meaningful prayer is spoken by a true prayer leader."

—Abraham Kuyper, *Our Worship*, trans. Harry Boonstra, forthcoming from Eerdmans

2. Some provisional constructive/prescriptive pastoral recommendations

Articulating wisdom, phronesis—proverbs for pastors (plus youth group workers and parents)

Wise is the church that forms its children of all ages to pray:

- *for both local and global concerns,*
- *for both the local and worldwide church,*
- *in praise for both the attributes and actions of God,*
- *for the whole sweep of salvation history,*
- *with awareness of the Trinitarian beauty of God's nature,*
- *in ways that see creation and redemption as inextricably intertwined,*
- *in ways that help us perceive coherence and beauty of Word and Spirit,*
- *a sense of wonder and participation in cosmic story of divine redemption,,*
- *in ways that picture God not only receiving our prayer, but also prompting and perfecting it*
- *[the list could go on]*

Embodying this wisdom in multiple settings

1. **in liturgical churches:** insisting that catechesis attend to this wisdom, rather than less consequential matters
2. **in confessional churches:** insisting that we see the how Reformed confessional documents, theologies, and practices were shaped by awareness of patristic sources (perhaps this euchology is more adequate to our confessions than current practices; perhaps it prompts us to imagine more adequate practices)
3. **in free church, low church, alternative, and other contexts:** Is your current practice of prayer embodying this wisdom? If not, how could it?

In sum, many ancient orthodox liturgical practices slake our thirst for mystery, metaphor, transcendence, spaciousness, breadth, and symbol. They also, however, protest our resistance to metanarrative and accountability, and our attachment to certain forms of creativity, variety, celebrity, and love for individual autonomy. More specifically, they also protest recent enthusiasm for ahistorical mysticism.