



Love Takes Practice:

Christian Worship as a Pedagogy of Desire

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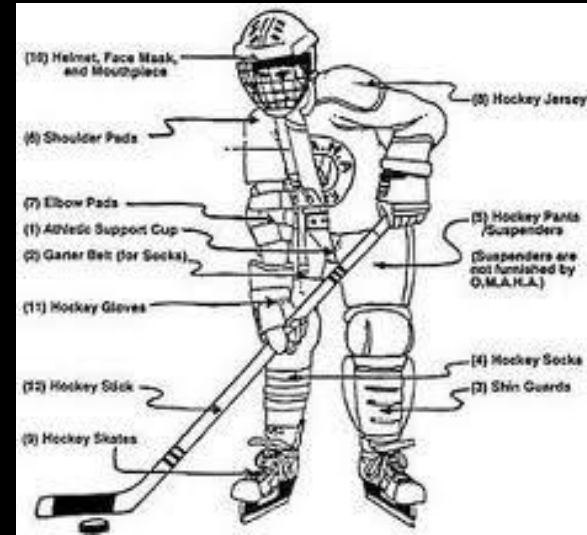
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I. Getting Dressed Takes Practice



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“Putting On Christ” Takes Practice

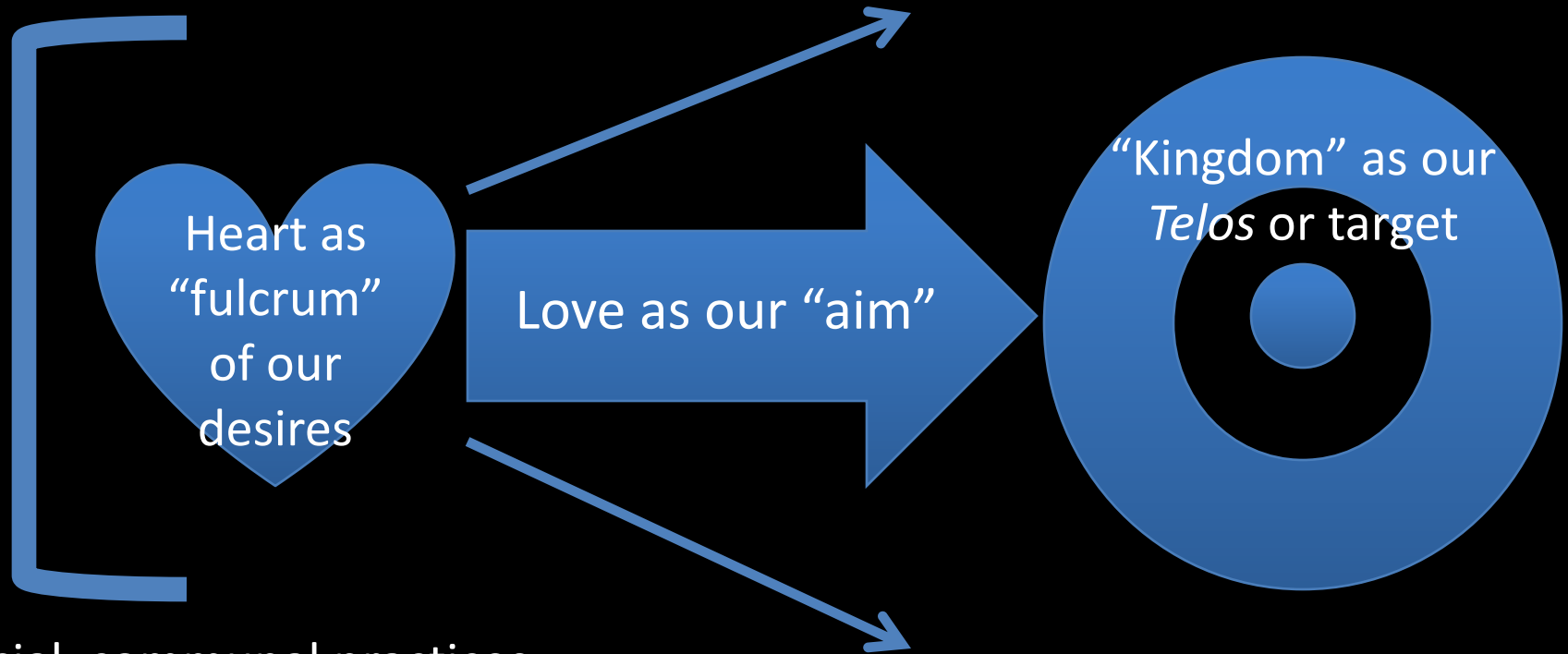
¹² As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

Colossians 3:12-16

We clothe ourselves in Christ's love (vv. 12-14) **by** letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, **by** teaching and admonishing one another, **by** singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God (v. 16).



II. We Are What We Love: On Liturgical Animals



*Social, communal practices
“channel” our love, aiming our
affective habits to different ends.

Those cultural practices that orient our *love* can be described as **liturgies**, rituals of ultimate concern that:

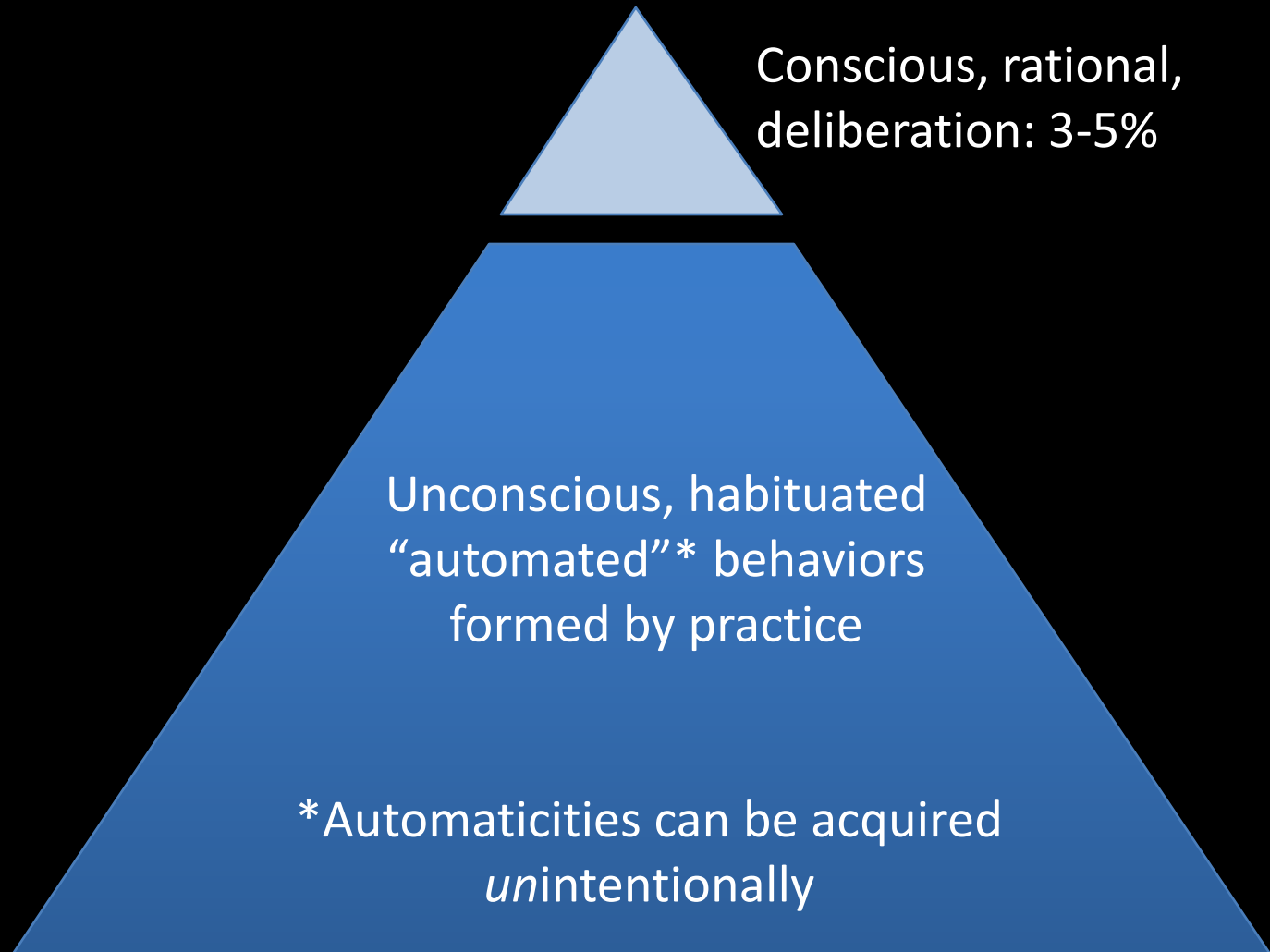
- form our loves
- inculcate in us particular visions of “the good life” (or “the kingdom”)
- and do so in a way that means to **trump** other ritual formations



II. Secular Liturgies as Pedagogies of Desire

- Worship is everywhere: an “apocalyptic” reading of cultural practices
- The **social imaginary** “carried” in cultural practices
- The habits of love acquired through cultural rituals

What we love is not what we (might) think



Exegesis of secular liturgies:

- What vision of “the kingdom” is implicit in this secular liturgy?
- What story is embedded in this cultural practice?
- What does it envision as “the good life?”
- What does this cultural institution want us to love?

Case Study:
The Mall as Temple



The “understanding” implicit in mall worship:

1. I’m broken, therefore I shop.
2. I shop (in competition) with others.
3. I shop (and shop and shop...),
therefore I am.
4. Don’t ask, don’t tell.

What “secular liturgies” are operative in
your cultural context?



Cathedrals of learning?



The military-entertainment complex?

What “secular liturgies” are operative in
your cultural context?



The sacred spaces of narcissism?



The cults of connectivity?



III. Love Takes Practice: Christian Worship as Counter-Formation



Worship is a battle.

*An affective “understanding” of
God’s kingdom is “carried” in the
practices of Christian worship.*



*The practices of Christian worship are
“habitations of the Spirit” (Dykstra).*

