**THE DOXOLOGY**

***Why The Doxology Is One Of The 21st Century's Most Powerful Anthems***

Sermon Manuscript

Dan Wilt, M.Min.

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**A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR**

Having pastored, in various roles and forms, for over 25 years, I understand the need for rich, effective message content for the discipleship of our communities.

This material was prepared with pastoral care in mind.

The following notes are for using as a sermon outline, and presented as an 8.5 x 11 version of the text of the eBook,

**THE DOXOLOGY**
**Why The Doxology Is One Of The 21st Century's Most Powerful Anthems**

While I have given a rough form for a message (or message series) on the *Doxology*, please feel free to copy this text into your own sermon material. I have intentionally given you more material than you can use for the purpose of flexibility.

In this **free Doxology Resource Download**:

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you will also find a *Doxology Litany, Responsive Reading, Slides, a Teaching Documentary video, the* Doxology Anthem *music and chord charts* (for worship), and many other resources that will be helpful to you in planning this message.

Blessings, and may the Lord give you insight as you prepare.

Dan Wilt, M.Min.
Author, *The Doxology*

## INTRODUCTION

### An Old Story

*It is a crisp, Autumn morning in the year 1674. An 18-year old student at Winchester College, with the rolling countryside of county Hampshire and the great Winchester Cathedral whispering to him from his window, is preparing for his day.*

*An open pamphlet on his desk, and the words of a* Morning Hymn *on his lips, the devout, singing student commits his day to his Lord with a sung prayer. Unknown to him, the last of the 14 stanzas of that song will go on to become, very possibly, the most-sung hymn in all of history.*[1]

The small pamphlet on that young man's desk was *A Manual Of Prayers For The Use Of The Scholars Of Winchester College*, written by curate Thomas Ken.

At the time, Thomas was responsible for the spiritual formation and care of the students at the school. In the Winchester Cathedral community, he would bring his poetic and pastoral skills to bear on the shaping of the devotional lives of his young charges.

While Thomas went on to live out an illustrious career as a Bishop, influencer, and challenger of kings (King Charles II and King James to be precise), perhaps his most enduring legacy is found in the concluding stanza of his long *Morning Hymn* and *Evening Hymn* that he wrote for the purpose of discipling the young people of his time.

"Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow…," the 14th stanza of the *Morning Hymn* begins. The lyrics are designed to be sung to the tune of the "Old 100th" – what will become one of the most widely-known melodies in all Christian worship.[2]

Penned by French composer Louis Borgeois in long meter and included in the 1551 *Pseaumes Octante Trois de David* in the 2nd Genevan Psalter, the melody has staying power.

The young man in our story will most probably hum this sticky tune all through his day – automatically and meditatively reflecting on the final lyrics with which he worships each morning before class.[3]

In fact, you may be humming it right now.

## I. A YOUNG BOY LEARNS TO WORSHIP

As a young boy, I had a powerful experience with what we now call the *Doxology* – 4 lines of verse that contend for the position of the most sung worship lyrics in all Christian history.

Raised in the 1960s and 70s in my small town of Middletown, Pennsylvania, my family attended a high United Methodist church in our area.

As a boy, I remember being enamored with the rising architecture, winsome stained glass, and prosaic Scripture lessons spoken from a raised pulpit that seemed to qualify the communicator to shepherd our souls. I remember the bells and the smells, the confident choir, the rhythms of the church year, and the *Guideposts* mini-magazines that sat in the foyer for the taking.

But nothing had more of a life-long, formative impact on my spirit as one, singular moment we would come to in virtually every service I ever attended.

The entire liturgy, for me, was a pre-chorus to that great, glistening point in the service when the sea of silver hair in the room (my family and a few others withstanding) would rise to its feet, and crack open the hymnals.

And as the organ immersed us in harmonies, they *sang*.

And what particular song did they sing that made such an impression on me? With the organ stops pulled, and a master musician filling our small-town cathedral with sonic majesty, we all, together, sang the *Doxology*.

### A Personal & Communal Anthem

To my young ears, hearing those voices was like hearing a sustained thunderclap in the room. Speaking of transcendent power and the call to praise, this song took root in my spirit as this normally fidgety youngster was utterly captivated by spiritual sonics that rested on my shoulders like the majestic arms of the Mighty Jehovah Himself.

I was rapt with wonder, soaking in every nuance of the experience – from the music, to the words, to the melody, to the exuberance with which the song rose from an otherwise seemingly sedentary congregation.

Now, into my 5th decade of life, I have sung my personal iteration of the doxology, *Doxology Anthem (Lord We Praise You)*[4] with literally tens of thousands of worshippers on 5 continents and from myriad countries.

And every time I sing it, it becomes more precious and more a gift than each time before.

As a worship leader, it has become for me the perfect blend of both a wildly personal, and deeply communal, anthem of adoration.

## 2. A CREATIONAL HYMN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY WORLD

There are tens of thousands of hymns in Western hymnody alone (Charles Wesley wrote 8,989 of them himself), and potentially tens of more thousands of hymns and worship songs that leaders in every tradition invoke around the world today.

As a leader of corporate worship, I've been tempted to do the math on just how many songs are available for the singing in today's global worship settings – but neither counting stars nor sand is my passion.

But why did I choose, in one season of my life, to begin *every single worship set* with the *Doxology Anthem*?

Why do I go back to those same, simple words and memorable melody of the song again and again – whether I am leading the Eucharist/Communion, leading a congregation in worship, or (like Ken) leading university students in worship to prepare their hearts for a new semester (as I did each year at St. Stephen's University in New Brunswick, Canada)?

The secret is found in the lyrics of this simple, 4-line devotional treasure:

*Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,*
*Praise Him all creatures, here below;*
*Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,*
*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*

*[Anthem: Lord, we praise You, praise You (2x)*
*Amen (3x)]*

### Orienting The Soul To God: Analysis Of A Song

When Ken originally wrote the words to this final verse of both his *Morning Hymn* and *Evening Hymn* (eventually adding a *Midnight Hymn* as well – because everyone knows that high school age students stay up far too late),[5] he was intentional as all poets are.

Every word in this hymn is pregnant with meaning and, when coupled with its melody, stays in the heart and mind for good. Like yeast in a batch of dough, both words and music work their way through the singer.

Let's break down each line of the song, to highlight the unique discipleship jewels it holds for the singing soul.

***Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow***

*Praise* is an enduring word that resonates with the anthropologically ancient idea that to acclaim, honor, appreciate, and celebrate an individual is to elevate their attributes for others to remark upon, emulate, replicate, and affirm as good.

When we *praise* God, we do as the excelsian angels did in Luke 2:14, filling the heavens with words akin to, "Glory to God in the highest…." Our inner world is righted, ordered, lined up, in accord with praising rivers, praising mountains, praising oceans, and praising trees – as we *praise* God (Psalm 96:12).

And we praise *God* – a Person if there ever was one. God is a Person with Personality, from Whom comes every perfect gift (John 1:1; James 1:17).

We center the acclaim we could distribute to yet another celebrity, another talented speaker, another self-made dreamer, and we give it to *God*. To withhold worship is to invite a shadowed, stagnant clouding of the mind; to offer worship is to breathe – in and out – the freshest holy air.

And in affirming that a Person Who has a loving claim on our lives sits at the center of the seen and unseen cosmos, we affirm that nature is not an impersonal force that nurtures our lives.

Rather, we affirm that God is the one Who is the Generator of every blessing, every element we could count as a blessing – from the taste of good food, to our daily provision, to each encouraging friendship, to the sweetness of familial love, to the smallest of mercies that dot the landscape of our days and nights.

***Praise Him, all creatures here below***

Having set our posture to praise (note that the *Doxology* can be sung with high energy or sweet intimacy – working both ways), we are oriented to the physical, creational world all around us.

The book of Genesis portrays a flourishing bounty of material creation, leaping from its stall in full, multi-sensory glory. Sight and sound and taste and touch, and other tens of senses as neuroscience informs us, quicken to attentive perception as the blood and bone and color and light of creaturely experience can shake us with delight day in and day out.

But "creature" can speak of an animate being of any type if we allow our God-given imagination its broader reach. Creatures can be visible or invisible to our eyes.

All of creation, according to the Scriptures, is not always evident and visible. And celestial beings seem to exist in the biblical cosmology, ones that play in spaces beyond our most attuned sensors.

In fact, we could poetically stretch such a creaturely idea, without over-reach, to the sweetly animated creation that buzzes all around us in an atomic dance of protons and neutrons and electrons and quarks.

Not all may be *living* in the most narrow, animal sense – but all is *alive* in some manner, no one can deny.

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host**

The language of "below" and "above" can throw us off here, in that looking down, then up, feels like a quite limited way to take in our surroundings. But allowing poetry to be the metaphor it prefers to be, we can embrace the idea of "above" as turning the gaze of hearts toward the heavens, or heaven (whichever we choose – both in my view), and its inhabitants.

The heavenly hosts can speak of planetary objects, galactic arenas, or multi-verse possibilities. The heavenly hosts can speak of unseen creatures, again, such as angels and archangels and seraphim and cherubim (and more in the lineup, according to Revelation 4).

Finally, the heavenly hosts could speak of those realms within a heaven worth longing for, a heavenly space where God dwells, where all is filled with living creatures in concerted praise, a time yet to come that could be beyond time, as N.T. Wright supposes, happening even now as worship pulsing with "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord; God of power and might" (*Sanctus*) resonates in another dimension of the most real of realities.

***Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost***

And so we come to it, the final Trinitarian doxological silver thread, tying the lines together and committing us again to a God who cannot, and never will, be relegated to a religious box. The Trinity is disorienting, but in a continually gifting way.

We are wrested, by the doctrine of the Trinity, from our hungry theological categories, allowing God to be outside of the human boxes we construct as a controlling and defining tabernacle.

***The Father***, our Creator, and Life-Sustainer, Who holds all things on course and wraps His arms around all we know and all we do not, Who crafted the color of our eyes as surely as the *aurora borealis* itself, is to be praised.

***The Son***, our Rescuer, and Invading Life-Reclaimer, Who modelled the ways of the Father to us, Who revealed to us the mysteries of being fully human, Who was innocent and pinned to a cruel cross at the hands of scapegoat-seekers, who rose from death to sit at the right hand of the Father in interminable intercession for the human family, is to be praised.

***The Holy Ghost***, our Comforter, our Truth-Guide, Who indwells the disciple of Jesus, Who moves in response to prayer, effecting change and making new that which Jesus has come to renew, Who advocates for us within in our own minds as we turn our face to the world, Who leads us in empowered mission to join the Son in seeking and saving that which is lost (Matt. 18:11), is to be praised.

## 3. WHY IS THE DOXOLOGY ONE OF THE 21ST CENTURY'S MOST POWERFUL ANTHEMS?

Having reflected on these enduring lyrics, I have asked a question that simultaneously contains my perspective on the vitality of the song for such a time in history as this: "Why is the Doxology one of the 21st century's most powerful anthems?"

I not only contend that the *Doxology* is a deeply important song for our faith communities to be singing, but I also believe we should consider singing it *every Sunday we are gathered* because of what the song speaks into the spirit of our age.

### A Song That Affirms The Nature Of Reality

Our age is beautiful, yet ill, an ensign of a God-alive, and an augury of death-approaching.

To sing praise, to acclaim, and laud, and magnify the personal, loving God who is in pursuit of every member of the human race – is to affirm the nature of reality and the remedy for the broken state of its dwellers.

- *In the Doxology*, we affirm a personal, living God.
- *In the Doxology*, we affirm that the animate world has both an origin and praising (doxological) purpose.
- *In the Doxology*, we affirm that worlds beyond our apprehension and comprehension are united in that same essential, adoring posture.
- *In the Doxology*, we affirm the Father's loving creation, the Son's restoring acts, and the Spirit's renewing breath.

But why do each of these affirmations and orientations matter? And why does it matter that we sing them; Sunday after Sunday, week after week, and year after year?

Let's explore, first, the formation of the heart, the mind, and the spirit through repetitive worship acts, then let's apply those formational worship acts to the conflicting dialogues a human individual is experiencing daily internally each day.

Through our interactions – through the internet (social media, podcasts, blogs, news, video), and through relationships with others both in person (friends, co-workers, family) and through media (movies, music, and the celebrities/personalities attached to them) – we are being formed.

Worship is the way that God forms us in resistance to the malformations inherent in the world's undiscerned influence.

### Worship & Spiritual Formation

One grave misunderstanding about spiritual formation is that it is focused solely on, primarily on, the toning of the bedrock of our inner, hidden life.

But what is true is that what you see on the surface of a person, on the surface of you, speaks of what is happening in the holy deeps. One shift beneath the surface – will completely change the entire landscape.

*Spiritual formation occurs in worship* – there is a reshaping of our inner and outer ways that is compelled and precipitated both by unseen movements deep within the soul and physical and speech acts that shape our hearts.

In this view, our worship is *tectonic* – it is constructive and architectural in its influence on our hearts and minds.

When an attitude in our heart changes, our actions and demeanor change. When our actions and demeanor change, our heart can follow suit. As a tectonic shift of plates occurs underground and a complete reshaping of a visible landscape is evident, so too worship can precipitate a complete re-rendering of personality over time.

Singing a song, like the *Doxology*, is both an inner and an outer experience. It is a spiritual, physical, and speech act. Our *entire body sings* – not just our mouths – and our outer and inner person is literally changed.

The Holy Spirit shapes us through the singing, and the thinking, and the community experience, and we participate by saying "Yes" to the engagement.

C.S. Lewis explored the idea that what we do with our bodies affects our spirits in his famous work, *The Screwtape Letters*. The more experienced demon, Wormwood, teaches the younger demon how to foul up a Christian, saying: "At the very least, they can be persuaded that the bodily position makes no difference to their prayers; for they constantly forget, what you must always remember, that they are animals and that whatever their bodies do affects their souls" (Letter IV).[6]

Engaging holistically in worship – body, mind, spirit, emotions, will, focus – *matters*, and engaging in worship through a song like the *Doxology* matters all the more because of its content.

**Many Voices, Mighty Songs**

Today, many voices are either subtly, or overtly, pounding on our souls demanding our attention. Spiritual formation practices across history offer us tools for focusing our mental energies, enriching our experiential theology, minding the rhythms and patterns of our days, and orienting our spirits toward gratefulness and thanks.

*Songs are one of those tools of spiritual formation – tools that delight the heart, inform the mind, retrain the emotions, and refresh the spirit.*

They are deeply physical acts that involve mind, breath, spirit, body, and faith that mingle with transformative power when we *sing* our faith. As good friend Adam Russell reminds me, when we sing something we believe, we believe it again – only *more so*.

Singing is an *embodied* act of worship that integrates many parts of the follower of Christ, leading us to become more of what we want to become – a disciple of Jesus in the world.

The *Doxology* stands as one of those spiritual formation tools – affording us the opportunity to sing our faith, breathe our words, and fix our spiritual-physical eyes on what is good, right, true, lovely, and pleasing to God (Philippians 4:8).

**Everyone's Talking About It**

There is a spoken and unspoken doxological (meaning *relating to praise*) conversation going on between people of every age, language, and nation in our generation. It is going on over dinner tables, in school classrooms, in places of work, and on social media.

"How will you *see* the world, how will you *see yourself in* the world, and who or what will you worship as your narrative unfolds?" are the questions rumbling in these conversations.

It is in exposing the truth-treasures in the *Doxology*, and the despair-producing disorientations in the culture, that we can rise from the ashes of our own self-reliance, self-fixation, self-hatred, and self-absorption – to follow Christ.

While there is no singular, comprehensive *zeitgeist* (meaning *spirit of the age*) in any generation, I will select one or two attitudes that seem common to some Western thinking in our age that directly resist allegiance to biblical, enduring truths.

We'll do this to see how the repetitive act of singing the *Doxology* can *form us* toward Christ-like thinking in what can be a confusing cultural environment – even for devoted disciples of Jesus.

> ***What the Doxology says…***
>
> *Praise God: We afford dignity and honor to an unseen Person due to His love for us, and His attention toward, and care for, the world He created (John 3:16). Magnify, with your words and life, One who can make a prostitute pure in heart once again, One who can lift an abused child to believe they are loved and valued for the gift that they are. And who is this God? The God who has self-revealed in Jesus Christ, the Father of us all, the Secret Fire, the Holy Spirit, who burns at the heart of the world*[7]*.*
>
> ***What the spirit of the age says…***
>
> *Dignity and honor are reserved for talented celebrities (unless they fail you), charismatic public communicators (unless they fail you), the rich (unless they fail you), political figures (unless they*

*fail you), and, potentially, parents and grandparents (unless they fail you). And as for God, just pick from all the gods you've ever heard of and create a mashup that works for you. No one is right; everyone is right. Expressive individualism is where it's at;[8] you are, put simply, your own.*

***What the Doxology says…***

*From Whom all blessings flow: We live in a gifted and gifting world. As the book of Genesis images for us, all things are given to us for our benefit, and thankfulness is the optimally operative spiritual attitude of the human being. The One who loves us is a Giver, and a blessing is simply anything that draws us nearer to God. We live in a narrative shaped and formed by a self-offering God.*

***What the spirit of the age says…***

*Life is not primarily a gift, but a right. We live thankful only to the people who have done something for us. Or we can be thankful to an impersonal, non-descript spiritual entity, whether we name it God, Nature, or Life. Either way, our thankfulness can be mitigated and civil. If we have Someone to thank, then we are acknowledging we are in some way indebted for these gifts.*

***What the Doxology says…***

*Praise Him all creatures here below: The animate world has come from somewhere, and is going to somewhere. The earth and cosmos as we know it were created by a divine Person with Personality, rather than spontaneously appearing by non-divinely-initiated, natural means. Animals, plants, trees and living things should be regarded as sacred gifts to us, and are to be cared for and curated with dignity (even if they are used as food sources). The earth is to be tended and seen as a precious, symbiotic treasure to be passed on, rather than as real estate or as a form of god. It is "…this fragile earth, our island home"[9] on which all creatures live.*

***What the spirit of the age says…***

*The earth is here for us to use as we see fit. It's a resource, and a beautiful one at that, but nothing more. Or the earth is our utter focus of worship. We divinize rocks, and trees, and cows, and land, and place them all equally on the same level of significance as that of a human person (see Gen. 1:1-12 for a further vision of the special-ness of human beings as curators in the creation).*

***What the Doxology says…***

*Praise Him above ye heavenly host: There is both a seen and an unseen world. Heaven and earth are intersecting, interlocking spheres of the same creation, joined together as envisioned by the Old Testament's connected and integrated cosmology. There is truly more than meets the eye. Physically and visibly, the universe is vast and mysterious. Metaphysically and invisibly, there are beings and creatures and narratives taking place that are beyond our vision. All of these, the Doxology calls to praise.*

***What the spirit of the age says…***

*What we see is what we get. Science (which the Bible powerfully affirms in its celebration of discovery[10]) is not an act of faith (actually, it always will be; ask Stephen Hawking or any scientist worth their philosophical salt), it is rather an objective (there is the unfortunate deification of science and human learning again) way of talking about a simple, material reality. Spirituality is nothing more than hocus-pocus and psycho-babble, or a misreading of the more mysterious workings of physics.*

***What the Doxology says…***

*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: The God of the seen and unseen cosmos, the Creator of our lives, the Reclaimer of our hearts, and the Counselor of our dreams has self-revealed at many points in history, and ultimately through the Lord Jesus Christ. God is one, as the ancient Hebrew Shema[11] reminds us, yet has self-revealed (that is what Love does) as "God in three Persons, blessed Trinity."[12]*

*God has self-revealed as Trinity to, quite literally, both blow our minds and constrain them at once. He will be known as the Unpredictable-And-Mysterious God, and He will be known as the Specific-And-Particular God. He will have it no other way. The Trinitarian God will keep us on our toes.*

***What the spirit of the age says…***

*Any God that can't be coalesced into one, homogenous, easily understood Being can't be real. To be so specific about who God is, especially the idea of the God-Man Jesus Christ, appearing among a particular tribe in a particular place, is untenable. A generic God, a God who is not tribal, who lays no claim to my life, offers no moral framework for living, and can be invoked only when or where I desire, is far more appealing to my self-dependence. A generic God means everyone is sort of right, even if darkness flows from their view of God, and enables me to elevate my own vision of Love as the end goal of my human experience. If I can make my own faceless God, I can make my own religion, and set my own rules. I can be like God.[13]*

And so, the conversation continues. Who knows how today's cultural trends will shape the Christian faith for generations to come.

What we can be confident in is this; the worship practices we use, both individually and corporately, will orient us on the wild waters of this billowing sea.

The *Doxology* is one worship resource that points us to the true North of a Loving God – even when the sun has hidden itself behind the clouds.

**CONCLUSION**

**Why We Must Sing The Doxology**

The *Doxology* – and songs, liturgies, and prayers like it – becomes a vital instrument of worship for re-orienting the soul to Christ in what can be a vertiginous, spinning season of history.

When we sing the *Doxology* and live its biblically-resonant truths in the world, we choose to see the world through the narrative of a loving, creating God, pursuing His beautiful-yet-wandering creation, to heal, redeem, and restore all things as history moves toward the New Creation that is our inheritance.

And if we want to remain rooted in the Gospel of Christ as the world works to reshape our thinking daily, then we must *sing hard* – and we must sing the *remedy*.

I am convinced that the *Doxology* will remain one of the 21st century's most powerful anthems of worship.

I am convinced, not only because it has stood the test of time, but also because, in its singing, I have been conformed to the love and the likeness of Christ.

I hope the same is true for you. +

**Free Doxology Resource Download**
Please take a moment, if you would, to see the resources I have created to help you implement the Doxology in fresh and creative ways in your worship environment.

http://www.danwilt.com/free-doxology-anthem-resource-download/

**HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR REFLECTION**

**From The Author:** Becoming an applied theologian and worship practitioner takes "feeding at a thousand tables" for depth and breadth to our creative work, reflection, leadership, and personal devotional pursuit.

Here are just a few sources that have recently breathed fresh insights into my own journey that may prove encouraging to you in yours.


III, James D. Smith. "Where Did We Get The Doxology?" Christian History | Learn the History of Christianity & the Church, www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/where-did-we-get-doxology.html.

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**AUTHOR BIO**



**Dan Wilt, M.Min.** is the founder of the 40K member www.WorshipTraining.com, and has taught in universities, conferences, and seminars on the topics of spiritual formation, worship, and the creative arts for over three decades.

His early studies in Religion and Philosophy led him to pursue graduate work in Classical Christian Spirituality and Formation, as he continued to serve in various capacities as a trainer and developer of artists and worship leaders from many streams of the Church.

Dan is an advocate for an ancient-future vision of worship, best expressed through the life and work of Robert E. Webber (see www.iws.edu for more information). He has taught at St. Stephen's University in New Brunswick, Canada, and as an adjunct with Indiana Wesleyan University | Wesley Seminary.

Dan lives in Thompson's Station, TN with his wife Anita, and their three grown children Anna, Abigail, and Benjamin.

**AUTHOR RESOURCES**

Dan's blog can be found at www.DanWilt.com, where he writes on spiritual formation, creativity, and the life of worship. He is available for speaking engagements and extended Eucharistic experiences based around creative collaborations with local artists, as well as for devotional teaching events centered on the Doxology. (Dan also is fond of speaking in beautiful church buildings, so he's very flexible when it comes to sharing in chapels and cathedrals.)

For Doxology & Eucharist events, Dan can be contacted at danwiltresources@gmail.com.

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## ENDNOTES

[1] This fictional story is based on historic elements appearing in multiple resources on Thomas Ken, the Doxology, and Winchester College.

[2] See Wikipedia's excellent brief on "The Old 100th" here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_100th

[3] See Daniel Levitin's work, *This Is Your Brain On Music: The Science Of A Human Obsession*, for a complete exploration of the connection between music and memorability.

[4] *Doxology Anthem (Lord We Praise You)*, Dan Wilt | Jeremy Dunn, 2017 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing. For the song and Doxology Anthem Resources for local churches, see: http://www.danwilt.com/The-Doxology-Anthem

[5] See "Where Did We Get The Doxology?" by James D. Smith III, Christian History Magazine online – http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/where-did-we-get-doxology.html

[6] From Lewis, C. S. *The Screwtape Letters*. London: HarperCollins, 2001.

[7] In the Silmarillion, J.R.R. Tolkien speaks of the "Secret Fire" that is part of his mythos of creation. Clyde S. Kirby, author of the following book, notes that Tolkien told him that the Secret Fire was indeed his image of the Holy Spirit. Clyde S. Kilby, *Tolkien and The Silmarillion* (Berkhamsted: Lion Pub., 1977), p. 59.

[8] Philosopher Charles Taylor calls this the "age of authenticity." The term "expressive individualism" means "identity comes through self-expression, through discovering one's most authentic desires and being free to be one's authentic self" (Tim Keller). It is one of a constituency of narratives, reinforced in the culture by movies, music, media, and celebrities, that must be addressed by biblical thinkers and pastoral voices in the 21st century.

[9] From the *Book Of Common Prayer*, Eucharistic Prayer C, The Great Thanksgiving. *The Book Of Common Prayer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

[10] Proverbs 29:2 – "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings."

[11] Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – "Sh'ma Yisra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad" (Hebrew)– "Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

[12] From the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy" by Reginald Heber and John Dykes. http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/h/o/holyholy.htm

[13] Does this sound familiar? *"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).*


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