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## FOREWORD

The experimental liturgies and liturgical reforms so widespread in the sixties can now be seen as attempts to "save the house by moving the furniture." These efforts were but symptoms of a deeper problem for Western society. In a "disenchanted world" (Max Weber) or a secular world, it is increasingly difficult to invest meaning in the concept of worship. In a world with countless superstitions but without true mystery, awe, or reverence--a world without transcendence--there can be little appreciation of what worship is about. Not surprisingly, some seek to reinvigorate worship by attaching it to the almost guaranteed acceptance of popular psychology in modern society; others openly abandon the importance of worship, preferring political action and other forms of involvement.

The essays in this issue of the Faculty Bulletin are presented with a view toward encouraging serious reflection on the nature and meaning of Christian worship.

Michael R. Weed, Editor

HOLDING THE AUDIENCE OR PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE:  
THE WORD IN WORSHIP

by James W. Thompson

Of the many changes which accompanied the Protestant Reformation, probably none were more immediately apparent to the observer than the developments in Christian worship. Among the churches of the Reformation, the rediscovery of the centrality of the Bible resulted in the replacement of the sacraments by the sermon as the center of Christian worship. As the sacraments declined in importance, the Protestant worship service increasingly became focused on the ministry of the word, which involved both the public reading of Scripture and the sermon. Protestant architecture, with its elevated pulpit, later reflected this changed emphasis in public worship. The sermon was clearly the center of activity when the community assembled.

These changes reflected the new theological insights of the Reformation. The reformers insisted that grace is fully mediated through the ministry of the Word, and not through the sacraments alone. The sermon became so much a focal point of worship that Protestants have been accused of minimizing the sacraments in the life of the church. Protestant worship services, with the emphasis on the sermon, often resembled the academic environment.

Protestants sometimes spoke of "going to the sermon." Indeed, this minimizing of the sacraments was to be seen especially in the lack of frequency with which the Lord's Supper was celebrated in some traditions.

In some respects, the Churches of Christ have not been totally the heirs of this Protestant emphasis. The weekly observance of the Lord's Supper in the Churches of Christ suggests a greater sacramentalism than in the major Protestant traditions. In addition, the belief that the purpose of the assembly is "to break bread," which has often been expressed in the Churches of Christ, suggests a renewed focus on the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, in other ways the Churches of Christ are heirs of the Protestant tradition, for the worship service focuses on the sermon. The major portion of the worship service is devoted to it. Our houses of worship are called auditoriums, and the architecture reflects the significance of the pulpit. Both morning and evening services are devoted principally to preaching.

What is the relation of preaching to the service of worship? One might ask if the Protestant emphasis on preaching has been a genuine recovery of something that had been lost from the ancient church. Or was it actually the introduction of an emphasis which resulted in a distortion of Christian worship? A reexamination of the life of the early church and of ancient Israel may provide some models for the experience of worship in the contemporary church and the place of preaching in this context.

#### Sermon and Worship in the Early Church

The New Testament offers little direct evidence about the

place of preaching in early Christian worship. Indeed, the direct evidence about preaching in the New Testament involves missionary preaching. Acts records sermons from both Peter and Paul, but they are all missionary sermons. When Paul refers to his preaching, the missionary situation is regularly in view. Indeed, C.H. Dodd, in his influential book, The Apostolic Preaching, has defined preaching as "the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world."<sup>2</sup> The verb kērussein ("preach") and the noun kērygma ("preaching," "proclamation"), according to Dodd, were used for the proclamation to those who had not heard (cf. Rom. 10:8, 14). Churches were formed in response to preaching, but we have little direct record of the place of preaching within churches which had assembled for worship.

Because the New Testament never provides a detailed order of worship, our knowledge of early Christian worship is necessarily based on the scattered allusions to the worship service and expressions which are undoubtedly derived from the worship service. The doxologies, hymns, and confessional statements which appear within Paul's writings are apparently taken from the worship service.<sup>3</sup> On numerous occasions Paul speaks in the poetic language which probably reflects the rich and moving expression of early Christian hymnody. The epistle to the Ephesians is so filled with the elevated speech that does not fit easily with normal prose that its setting must be in early Christian worship. References are made to the congregational cry, "abba" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), which comes from the corporate prayer of the church. The congregational "amen," to which Paul

refers (1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:20), also comes from congregational worship, as does the cry, "Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16:22), which is apparently known in the Greek-speaking church at Corinth.

The most complete description of early Christian worship within the New Testament is recorded in 1 Corinthians 11-14, in response to questions which had been raised about the exercise of the spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:1). Paul assumes that worship will include the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34), and that the members will spontaneously offer "a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation" (1 Cor. 14:26). Apparently no leaders exercise the authority of planning or presiding in the worship service, which consists of the sacraments, singing, and the various forms of teaching. While we do not know the precise distinctions between teaching, prophecy, and revelation in 1 Corinthians 14:26, together they constitute a ministry of the word which edifies the whole church. Indeed, Paul offers the major criterion for public worship when he indicates that the edification (oikodome) is indispensable to Christian worship. Only intelligible speech meets Paul's requirement for the edification of the church.

The other parts of the New Testament leave only indirect evidence about early Christian worship. The lyrical language that is scattered throughout 1 Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation is probably derived from early Christian worship. The singing of the heavenly worship in Revelation probably bears some resemblance to the singing of the church at the end of the first

century. However, little record is left of the sermon as a part of Christian worship.

### Paradigms for Christian Worship

The scattered references to worship in the New Testament suggest the importance of the community's response to God in its hymns, prayers, confessional statements and doxologies. Worship was the community's response to the saving deeds of God. The frequency in the New Testament epistles of poetic language suggests that the church's experience of salvation was the occasion for the new expressions of faith which could only be expressed in music. These references suggest that early Christian worship was filled with praise and adoration, and that one would not have mistaken it for a lecture room atmosphere. Through prayer, praise, and the sacraments, the saving deeds of God were remembered and celebrated.

The significance of praise and adoration in the worship does not suggest that the sermon was a dispensable part of Christian worship. Indeed, Paul's insistence that intelligible speech be given in the form of prophecy and teaching is a reminder of the importance of the ministry of the word in the worship service. The task of the prophet was to communicate a word from the Lord in the assembly.

Without the spoken word, the community's own response in worship would lose its significance. The community's response in prayer and song is possible only if it is sustained by the spoken word, which declares what God has done. The spoken message presents the words from the Lord and tells the Christian story.

It is the spoken word which illuminates the Lord's Supper and provides the church's memory.

While the respective tasks of prophets and teachers is never provided in detail, we know that prophets addressed the community with words from the Lord. Through the gift of the Spirit, they communicated God's mysteries. There were some in the early church who transmitted the words of Jesus, and there was intense activity in interpreting the Scripture for the church. This work was probably the task of prophets and teachers, who offered words in church which shaped the identity of the church.

#### Other Early Christian Paradigms

Although the New Testament leaves us no order of worship with a record of the sermon, it offers other important paradigms which suggest the importance of the ministry of the word in worship. Paul's epistles offer one very important model, for they were intended to be read in the assembly. As substitutes for Paul's personal presence before an assembled community, they are not literary works. They bear the characteristics of oral communication. Amos Wilder has written,

Even in writing he falls into the style of direct oral plea and challenge. The very nature of the Gospel imposes upon him ways of expression that suggest dramatic immediacy: devices and rhythms of the speaker rather than the writer; imagined dialogue; the situation of a court hearing or church trial with its accusations and defences; the use of direct discourse; challenges not so much to understand the written words but to listen and behold; queries, exclamations and oaths.<sup>5</sup>

Paul writes to his churches, not as an essayist, but as one who must respond to the crises of the church. He is the anxious parent who struggles to see that Christ is "formed" in the

community (Gal. 4:19). In his absence, the letters serve the purposes of community formation. At times he reminds his readers of the very proclamation which originally called the church into being (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-25; 15:3). He does not hesitate to recall what was apparently already known to his readers: that he preached Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:2); that he preached "Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5); and that his words were nothing less than the actual word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). In the context of responding to concrete situations facing the community, Paul holds before his community the gospel. He himself is only the steward of this message which he hands on (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1).

As one who speaks for God, Paul also writes to hand on ethical instruction (1 Thess. 4:3-8), to encourage, bear witness, and teach his communities (cf. 1 Thess 2:12). His ethical instruction places before the congregation concrete advice about their relationships to each other, to the world and government (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). Community formation thus depended on words which recalled the good news and instructed the community in its duties. These words were passed on when Christians assembled for worship.

Although Christian assemblies were distinguishable from the lecture halls of the philosophers, they were nevertheless characterized by the spoken word. Indeed, E.A. Judge has written that ancient people would have perceived early churches as "scholastic communities" because of the place of written texts in their worship. The amount of time devoted to the ministry of the word was unique among ancient religions.

If Paul's letters have the characteristics of oral

communication while they are clothed in the form of letters, the epistle to the Hebrews is even more a paradigm of the ministry of the word. The author describes his work as a "word of exhortation" (13:22; cf. Acts 13:15), which was an ancient term for the sermon. Indeed, this book is probably the oldest recorded sermon to a Christian audience. The book is addressed to the concrete needs of a church which is struggling with the problems of the second generation. The author does not identify himself, for his personality is of far less significance than the words which he presents. What the author presents is the interpretation of Scripture. The community is confronted with the word of God, which remains "living and active" (cf. Heb. 4:12-13). The memory of past traditions belongs to the church as it addressed through the Scripture. Through this memory, the church recalls its own past (cf. Heb. 11). The Old Testament presents words which remind the church of the promises of God and of those who struggled to obtain them. At the same time, the words from the Old Testament are like a "two edged sword" which summon the church to obedience. Thus through the Scripture, the church is reminded of its past and confronted with the holy God who is a "consuming fire." The author of Hebrews is the preacher who addresses a gathered community with the words which alone can sustain it in moments of crisis. Old traditions are alive for the church.

#### A Legacy of Centuries

In summoning his community to recall its story, the author of Hebrews is continuing a legacy that extends for more than fifteen hundred years before him. The Old Testament canon came

into being through a long process in which communities were sustained by the stories which gave them their identity. Before written texts were delivered, sacred and authoritative traditions were preserved to remind God's community of their vocation. Israel approached God in song, prayer, and sacrifice, but Israel's worship was always accompanied by the words which preserved her memory. In 1 Samuel 12:7, Samuel is the spokesman who, in the context of a festival (cf. 1 Sam. 12:17), recites "all the saving deeds of the Lord which he performed for you and your fathers." At the feast of harvest, the Israelites were taught to recite their story, which included the mighty acts of God at the exodus. In Joshua 24, the people listen as their story is recited again. These recitals provide Israel's story, a summary of the entire Torah.

When Israel's institutions were destroyed, her story remained. She took it with her to captivity in Babylon. The story was the sustaining power which continued to form the community, give her an identity, and provide hope that the God who had acted before would act again. Just as Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof could keep his balance under the extreme duress of persecution because of the tradition which he could take with him, Israel maintained her identity through her story.

James Sanders has commented on the power of the biblical story to sustain the people of God. "While it is undoubtedly true to say that the Bible has survived because of the church and synagogue, it is also in varying measure true to say that these institutions have survived because of the Bible."<sup>7</sup> Even before

the shaping of the canon, sacred traditions reminded the people of God who they were.

God's servants, the prophets, remind Israel of the mighty acts of God and summon Israel to return to the covenant. In moments of despair, the prophetic voice recalls the sacred traditions in order to say that "God's word will not return empty" (Isa. 55:11). In periods when the community has forsaken the covenant, the prophets indict and threaten with a word from the Lord (cf. Jer. 7). Thus when the author of Hebrews relies on the ancient stories to encourage and to warn, he stands in a prophetic tradition which extends to the Old Testament.

#### The Closing of the Canon

For centuries, the people of God maintained their identity through the power of a story. When the law and the prophets were placed in their final form, the text itself became the normative word from the Lord, and the task of the interpreter was to demonstrate the continuing power of these texts in new situations. Thus when Jesus spoke at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), he spoke to the community from the text of Isaiah 61, and he demonstrated that the text was a living word which addressed his generation. His words were delivered in the context of worship, and they were based on the interpretation of Scripture. The fact that the crowd was outraged by Jesus' message suggests that he challenged the prevailing understanding of the text from Isaiah 61. The community was confronted with the old text in the new situation. Like the Israelites who were reminded of the ancient traditions which challenged their easy assumptions about the ways

of God, the synagogue at Nazareth discovered that the words from the text continued to speak to them.

Y. Brilioth has suggested that Jesus' sermon in the synagogue is the essential link in the "golden chain which unites the Jewish proclamation and the Christian sermon." The sermon of Jesus had, according to Brilioth, three distinguishing features which characterize Christian preaching. Jesus' sermon was distinguished by the liturgical element, as it was delivered in the context of worship. It was also distinguished by the exegetical element, inasmuch as it was based on an authoritative text. Finally, it was distinguished by the prophetic element in its declaration that the old text continued to speak to Jesus' own audience. ("Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.") Throughout the ages, these elements have been the distinguishing characteristics of Christian preaching. Where they have been omitted, Christian preaching has lost its essential character.

#### Paradigms for Today

Preaching has indeed lost its essential character when it has been dominated by paradigms of oral address which have omitted these distinguishing characteristics of Christian preaching. From the time of Augustine, who wrote the first textbook on homiletics, classical rhetoric has been an alternative paradigm for preachers. Homiletics textbooks, in the tradition of Augustine, have been modeled on classical rhetoric, and the teachers of preaching have come from that tradition. While the art of rhetoric may serve as an appropriate handmaiden for the preacher,

he must recognize that the distinguishing characteristics of preaching must be discovered in the liturgical, exegetical, and prophetic aspects of preaching. P. T. Forsyth was correct when he wrote,

The Christian preacher is not the successor of the Greek orator, but of the Hebrew prophet. The orator comes with but an inspiration, the prophet comes with a revelation.<sup>8</sup>

The preacher thus comes with words that are not his own, and, like Paul, he recognizes that it is God who makes his appeal through the medium of preaching.

Rhetoric is not the only tempting paradigm for the preacher, especially in today's culture. In a world where the congregation is shaped in an extraordinary way by the media, the tempting paradigm for the preacher is offered by entertainment. Neil Postman has convincingly demonstrated that television has altered our way of knowing.<sup>9</sup> Many of the religious programs on television demonstrate some of the more distasteful and egregious examples of the attempt to communicate the gospel through entertainment. The public worship service also offers the tempting invitation to follow the model of entertainment, for the ingredients of the entertainment world are present: the "audience," the high profile "personality," and the "program." Where entertainment is the dominant paradigm, the purpose of the assembly will be to satisfy the consumers. The purpose of the sermon will be to amuse and entertain.

The danger for Christian preaching is in following the wrong models. P. T. Forsyth said, "Where your object is to secure your audience, rather than your Gospel, preaching is sure to suffer."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Paul faced audiences which preferred

oratory to the word of the cross. The modern preacher will undoubtedly face a culture which prefers models from entertainment to the presentation of the prophetic voice which comes with a word that has addressed assembled communities for centuries, an old word which nevertheless speaks to the present moment.

The ancient paradigms suggest that preaching, together with the reading of Scripture, should be central to Christian worship, for the ministry of the word provides the story and the memory for the community. Without the memory, praise, singing, prayer, and the reenactment of the story through the Lord's Supper would have no meaning. Although the other parts of the worship service are not to be considered the "preliminaries" for the sermon, the ministry of the word is the part of the Christian worship which provides interpretation for the rest of the service. Just as the ancient Passover meal was accompanied by words of interpretation, the sermon is an indispensable part of the worship service. Indeed, John Knox has correctly said that preaching in itself is worship.

Unless we conceive of preaching as being itself an act of worship, we miss what is most essential in it and what distinguishes it most radically from other kinds of teaching, religious or secular. The real truth of the matter is not that preaching merely happens usually to be set in a context of worship or that it is most effective when it has that kind of setting. Rather, it cannot be really preaching except in that context. If the context of worship is not there already, the true sermon creates it. Either preaching contributes to, provides a medium of, worship, or it is not preaching at all.<sup>11</sup>

If the preacher and the congregation together understand that preaching is an act of worship and that it has continuity with the work of God's spokesmen in the past, profound

consequences should follow. The preacher who understands his role as a "steward" of the word of God (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1) will take seriously the time spent in preparation. He is likely to be, especially in the modern church, the primary if not the only source of the church's memory and identity. This self-understanding should reorient his priorities toward the study of the text. Even if the ministerial task has moved in recent years toward administration and management, the preacher will recognize the awesome responsibility of providing a word that is "sharper than any two edged sword." He will come to his congregation neither as master of ceremonies nor as manager, but as a spokesman for God. Congregations which recognize the importance of the ministry of the word will reorient their expectations in such a way that they are prepared for a word based on Scripture that will challenge the way their priorities and the way they will see the world.

If communities maintained their identity in moments of despair and captivity only through the power of the words from God, the church today will maintain its own identity only when the Sunday sermon exists in continuity with the prophetic voice of the past. This prophetic voice today is allowed to speak only when the sermon is deeply rooted in rigorous study of the text of Scripture. Churches may prefer "junk food" to rigorous study of their heritage, but only the word from the Lord will sustain the church into the future. Only the word which addresses the assembled community in worship shapes a common identity and a common mission for the church.

Notes

1

Peter van Ness, "The Proclaimed and Visible Word," Word and World 7 (1987) 180.

2

C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) 7.

3

On doxologies, cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5; on confessional statements, cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; on hymns, cf. Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim. 3:16.

4

Cf. Gal. 4:20, "I could wish to be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you."

5

Amos Wilder, The Language of the Gospel (New York: Harper, 1964) 22-23.

6

E. A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," Journal of Religious History 1 (1960) 135; cf. Y. Brilioth, A Brief History of Christian Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965) 2: "The use of the oral lecture in the service is a trait that unites Judaism and Christianity. Where, in the world of religion, can we find a counterpart? . . . Only Judaism and Christendom make the freely spoken word, the personal testimony, an essential portion of the holy acts of the cult."

7

James Sanders, Torah and Canon (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 5.

8

P. T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, repr. 1964) 1.

9

Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves To Death (New York: Penguin, 1985) 16-29.

10

Forsyth, 2.

11

John Knox, The Integrity of Preaching (New York: Abingdon, 1957) 76.

SORTING THROUGH THE CONFUSION ABOUT WORSHIP:  
AN APPRAISAL OF TWO PARADIGMS

By Allan J. McNicol

The following story is told about a once well-loved professor at one of the theological schools in Austin. There had occurred in chapel something that many of us who gained our theological education in the sixties remember that passed under the euphemism of experimental liturgy. It involved a young lady doing a dance in the assembly. Later in the day, still bothered by the event, the professor came into class. "Let us pray," he said somewhat abruptly. "Lord, please forgive us -- for we sure do not have any idea what we are doing."

This incident well captures the sentiments of many who have watched views about worship ebb and flow in the churches of Christ over recent years. Ranging from such diverse areas as the architecture and furnishings to what we do on Sunday evenings or Wednesday nights, or whether our worship should be "low-church" or "high-church," we seem to be frustrated about our practices of worship.

Indeed, there are some who call into question the very terminology which we have traditionally used to describe our assembling together to praise God. For example, even our use of

the term "the worship service" has been criticized because it is said to promote the idea that Christian worship may be thought of as being confined to certain places and times; and this is contrary to the New Testament understanding of worship which cannot be limited to a particular place or time (John 4:21-24).<sup>1</sup> Given this level of confusion over the nature of worship it is clear that we have no consensus as to what we are doing, or ought to do, when we gather to praise God in our assemblies.

### Two Paradigms of Worship

At a more substantive level it seems to be the case that, at present, we are undergoing a paradigm change in our understanding of the nature of worship. We seem to be moving from one paradigm that may be described as keeping "the five acts of worship" to a new paradigm which can be called "all of Christian life is worship." As in all paradigm changes the process of transition is not smooth. Even now it is not clear which model will be the dominant one that will guide the thinking about worship in churches of Christ in the next decade.

Under the old paradigm it was argued that the worship service consisted of performing a set of distinctive acts commanded by God (singing, prayer, proclamation of the word, observance of the Lord's Supper, and the contribution). Without the regular and precise performance of these acts the will of God was not being followed and worship was illegitimate.

A central idea informing this paradigm was that just as God had given detailed descriptions as to how he should be worshipped under the provisions of the Old Covenant, and that minute varia-

tions from the precise pattern of obedience were subject to harsh punishment, so also under the New Covenant a similar standard of obedience was demanded in keeping the five acts of worship. These acts thus constituted a set of sacred rites that had an importance in and of themselves over and above anything else done. It was a matter of utmost importance that one attend "the worship service" and do everything in the correct manner while there ("decently and in order").

A corollary to this paradigm is the emphasis which has been placed on the need for authority for the acts of worship. Only those acts of worship clearly prescribed in scripture were considered to be legitimate activities for the worship of the church.<sup>2</sup> This has been interpreted to mean that not only is an additional act of worship (such as a sacred dance in the assembly) unwarranted but also that the procedure for observance of the acts of worship themselves must be warranted in scripture by either command, example, or necessary inference.<sup>3</sup> This paradigm for thinking about worship has been dominant in the churches for the past century.

During the past decade a new paradigm on worship has surfaced and come to preeminence in some churches of Christ. The new paradigm is still in a state of development and consequently only its general contours are clear. In the words of one of the framers of this paradigm

the concept of worship in the New Testament is in no way restricted to special acts but rather encompasses the believer's whole life offered as a sacrifice to God. Consequently whatever he does should be performed as an act of worship, to God's honor and glory (cf. Matt. 5:16; Col. 3:17).<sup>4</sup>

Here, evidently, is a position that is almost the direct opposite of the old paradigm. Instead of giving special weight to five carefully delineated acts of worship the adherents of this model argue that in a proper reading of the New Testament there are no limitations on our worship to time, place, or number of acts. Indeed, the central theological idea which informs this paradigm asserts that since God's special presence is no longer confined to a place (Jerusalem temple) but now resides in the heart of the believer, Christian worship thus takes place wherever and whenever the believer obeys Christ.

An obvious corollary of this position is that the function of the Christian assembly is very different under the new paradigm. For the adherents of this model the purpose of Christians gathering together is not to perform special acts but primarily to attain mutual edification or spiritual building up of the community (1 Cor. 14:26). The emphasis on the need to observe special acts in order to be pleasing to God disappears. It is far more important that the horizontal dimension - the Christians encouraging and edifying one another - be emphasized than the vertical dimension of our need to praise God.

The purpose of this paper will be to show that both paradigms, as they are popularly conceived, have major flaws and difficulties in providing an adequate model for worship in the church today. As we critique the paradigms an alternative to the two paradigms will emerge. Procedurally, we will analyze and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the two paradigms. The results of our study will be set forth in our conclusion.

## The Five Acts of Worship: An Assessment

It is seldom realized by those who hold observance of the five acts to be their foundational paradigm for worship how much this model is derived from developments within church history. The fact remains that a large amount of the form and structure of the worship service in the average church of Christ today is directly dependent upon developments that ensued in Western Church history since the Reformation. Especially relevant for our understanding of the emphasis that Restorationists place on the five acts would be knowledge about the history of worship in England in Puritan and Believers' church circles during the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Indeed it must be underscored that our present practices are influenced as much by the Puritans and their successors as by the first-century church.

As evidence for this claim it should be noted that the foundation of the Puritan movement was respect for the authority of the word of God.<sup>5</sup> As the radical Protestant party in Elizabethan England who were supplemented with exiles returning from Geneva after the Marian persecutions, the Puritans welcomed Calvin's teachings about worship. Calvin held that the human ordering of the worship of God was mere presumptuousness, since only God could dictate how he should be worshipped. This led the Puritans and their successors to a rigorous study of the Bible which they considered to be the infallible source on doctrine and a blueprint for everything that was to take place in worship.

The Puritans believed that the worship of the apostolic church was characterized by six ordinances: prayer, praise, proclamation of the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper,

catechising, and the exercise of discipline. The terminology of "ordinances" seemed to be preferred over the medieval "sacraments" because it connoted, in connection with the Bible, the idea of a divine command or decree placed in writing in the text. This was important because the Bible was the only authority to which the Puritans appealed in their debates with the Roman church and its sympathizers. Based on this well-substantiated outlook it is understandable that the nineteenth-century Restorationists, who came directly from this heritage, also put the identification of the ordinances at the center of their concern to discover the worship and practice of the church. Robert Milligan's Scheme of Redemption, one of the most influential biblical theologies produced by the nineteenth-century Restorationists, gave center stage to the ordinances and listed them as: prayer, praise, preaching the Word, fasting, baptism, Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Day -- a very similar list founded on similar hermeneutical principals as the Puritans. Twentieth-century Restorationists have refined this number into the five acts which are routinely listed in literature and handbooks.

Moreover, in respect to worship, this view that the scriptures provide certain ordinances which must be obeyed is also dependent in its particulars upon the Puritans and their successors. So, as far as singing is concerned, the Puritan view that the praise of the church should be unadorned, unaccompanied by instruments, and simple enough to enable joint participation by all, was heartily endorsed by the Restorationists. The emphasis of the early Puritans in singing only Psalms because

they were scriptural (and thus approved by God) has its analogue in the constant Restorationist concern to determine that the hymns which we sing must be scriptural. The habit in Restorationist churches of using spontaneous prayers in worship is a direct legacy of the Puritans who hated the formalism of the Anglican prayerbooks.<sup>11</sup> The strong emphasis of the Puritans on the centrality of preaching from the text of scripture, and the concern to keep the Lord's Supper precisely as a divine ordinance, has also clear analogues in our Puritan religious heritage.<sup>12</sup> Thus, formally and structurally, traditional corporate worship in churches of Christ with its strong emphasis on keeping certain acts of worship as ordinances are remarkably similar to the Puritan and Believers' church traditions.

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the Puritans and their successors, despite their professed intent to ground their worship in the practice of the early church, were, in essence, Reformers of the medieval or Constantinian church. Thus, their study of the scriptures to discover the biblical blueprint for worship was always done with an eye toward reform of abuses in an existing liturgy that was a perversion of New Testament practice.

The Puritans were good at compiling chapters and verses to serve as an impetus to make changes but were not so resourceful in reconstructing the ethos and theology of early Christian worship in its original setting as a means of getting the record straight. Since they understandably theologized on the bases of their immediate battles with the established church, it should be no surprise that the worship practices of the Puritans and their successors bore faint resemblance to that of the early church.

For example, their prayers of spontaneous utterance had little in common with the prayer forms of the early Christians who were heavily dependent for the structure and content of their petitions, on the Jewish synagogue of their era.<sup>13</sup>

The hymns of the early Christians were not the psalms of the Old Testament (as used by the Puritans) or the gospel songs of the nineteenth century, so loved by the Restorationists, but hymns of their own composition sung in praise to God or Christ their Redeemer. Furthermore, the way in which the Lord's Supper was observed also bore only passing resemblance to the practices of the early church. Reflecting the heritage of the past few centuries we never today take the Supper in the context of a meal. In the first-century house churches, the Lord's Supper was eaten regularly in the atrium of the home as part of a festive meal.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the setting and function of preaching in the early church was vastly different to what we are accustomed today. The fact is that the observance of the five acts of worship, as is commonly carried out in the modern era, bears only passing resemblance to the form and substance of what we can determine that took place in early Christian assemblies. In itself, after nineteen centuries of mammoth changes in customs and languages have passed, this is to be expected. But, since the Restorationists have made such a point out of viewing what takes place in the assembly as the observance of prescriptive ordinances which must be performed according to letter, it is somewhat disquieting to find how selective they have been in following the practices of the New Testament church. My explana-

tion for this state of affairs is that Restorationists have been more reliant on the Puritans and their successors for the form and structure of the worship than the New Testament.<sup>15</sup> The true Restorationist today must critically explore the milieu of early Christianity to determine the actual practices of early Christian worship. Then and only then will he be in a position to theologize carefully upon the results of his investigation. If he does that he will quickly discover that the kinds of questions about which we have been so often concerned were probably never asked by the earliest Christians. That should give us some pause as to the adequacy of the old paradigm.

#### All of Christian Life is Worship: An Assessment

Within the Restoration Movement it has been observed for some time that whatever early Christian worship was it was something more than one culture system (the Christian ordinances) replacing another (the rituals of the Jewish temple). The terminology and structures of worship dependent upon the highly developed cultic rituals of post-Constantinian Christendom often have led us astray. They have dubious warrant in the New Testament or earliest Christian practice and should be carefully scrutinized before being used in our assemblies today. It is a fact that after several centuries elapsed in the history of the church major changes were made in the practice of Christian worship. By the time of Constantine, in many quarters, the Lord's Supper was perceived as a sacrifice and the ministry of the church as the New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament priesthood (viz. Christian worship had become cult).<sup>16</sup> This is a

major departure from New Testament Christianity, and we should be aware of the great influence in Christian history of liturgies based on this perspective. Thus, we applaud the call of some to purge these relics of the post-Constantinian era from the Church.<sup>17</sup>

It is in this context that advocates of the new model for understanding early Christian worship came forward to present their case. At the heart of their position is the understanding that Christian worship is not a cult wherein the sacred and secular are radically separated but is something that embraces all elements of Christian existence.<sup>18</sup>

The fundamental axioms of the new paradigm are two-fold. First, it is a given of this view that early Christian worship was radically disjunctive with the Hebrew worship of the Old Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, throughout the history of Israel culminating in the temple cult of Judaism, God approached his people and revealed his will to the elect in special places and times. But upon the impact of Jesus' life God's special transcending presence, first in our Lord, and then later in the believer through the Spirit, rendered inoperative both the ancient Jewish and Hellenistic rites and places.<sup>19</sup>

For the Christian, worship is not a set of acts or rites anymore, but the day-by-day, situation by situation, living out one's dedicated life to God. Whenever language about cultic service is used with reference to the Christian life it must refer to all of it (Rom. 12:1).<sup>20</sup> Second, since the Old Testament cultic rites have been obliterated by the New Covenant a new role must be found for the assembly of the people of God. An

appropriate model for what should take place in the assembly is 1  
Corinthians 14:26, "Let all things be done for edification."<sup>21</sup>

Hence the conclusion that the proper function of the assembly is not for the believer to seek grace from or to be judged by the One of Absolute Worth (after all this can take place anywhere at anytime), but simply to be encouraged to live the Christian life by our mutual association and teaching of one another.

### The First Axiom

Since both of these axioms are important theological statements we will now proceed to examine them in some detail.

Given the fact that within the bounds of this paper we cannot survey the whole Old Testament concept of worship, we will commence our discussion by paying special attention to one crucial aspect of it: the cultic sacrifices of the second temple era. At the heart of temple worship was the cultic idea of service. The idea goes back into prehistory in the Ancient Near East. Service to the gods in ancient temples was modeled after service given to human sovereigns in their palaces.<sup>22</sup> Especially in pagan religions the image of the deity was the central focus of the temple and had servants (priests) who supplied food (sacrifices) in analogy with what took place in the palaces of ancient kings.<sup>23</sup>

In Judaism, of course, there was no image of the Divine One. But in the second temple era great stress was placed on the belief that the glory or presence of Yahweh rested in the holy place in a special way. Only the priests (the high priest in the case of the holy of holies) could come into the direct presence

of Yahweh through the bringing of a sacrificial offering as a statement of homage or dedication to him.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note that the ideas of service, worship, sacrifice, the bringing of praise and thanksgiving, and dedication of oneself to God are all intermingled in Judaism in the concept of bringing a sacrifice. As Hartmut Gese has pointed out, in his analysis of Deuteronomy 21:1-9, when the ancient planted his hands on the sacrificial victim, he was not so much transferring his sin to the victim but identifying himself with the life of the offering which was to be offered up as a dedication to God.<sup>25</sup> In short, to bring a sacrificial offering was to bring oneself as totally dedicated to God. Only by destroying one's old life and giving it over to God could one live and survive in God's holiness where alone there is a state of well-being (Lev. 19:1-2).<sup>26</sup>

Thus the offerings that were brought to Yahweh (Lev. 1-6) as sacrifices represented the dedicated service of the worshipper. The priest, the guardian of the place of the holy, was important because he was the one who was designated to take the offering into the direct presence of the Holy One. This, in essence, was what was involved in sacrificial worship in second temple Judaism.

With the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek in this era two general terms were used to describe this worship. They were latreia (worship or service) and leitourgia (priestly service or worship). These terms are found many times in the Greek translations of the Old Testament and are very important in discussions about worship in the New Testament era.<sup>27</sup>

In the Old Testament only a priest could stand at the altar and in cultic holiness raise the offering of the dedicated one to Yahweh. But for the Christian community, after the death of Christ, the cultic role of the priest was transferred exclusively to Christ. As leitourikos, Christ by his death has gained access to the heavenly temple and has offered the perfect dedication and obedience of his own life, and proleptically, of his followers who were to come (Heb. 3:1; 4:11; 5:9-10; 6:20; 8:2-3; 9:14; 10:10-14). Thus, since Christ has offered the perfect sacrifice of his life at the altar of the heavenly sanctuary the whole earthly cult carried on at the second temple was rendered inoperative. Therefore the altar was conspicuously absent from the sparse furnishing at early Christian assemblies. Its absence, as compared to its vital role in Judaism and the Hellenistic cults, spoke volumes as to early Christian belief in the all sufficiency of the death of Christ.<sup>28</sup>

But in place of the altar and its service there was one very important item of furniture in an early Christian assembly. This was the table. What was its significance? To put it simply, it was thought that when the one presiding at the table took the loaf of bread and broke it (as Christ's body was broken) the one body (i.e., the church) was spiritually joined in vital union with her Lord jointly to praise God in thankfulness for the wonder of redemption.

Paul describes this activity at the table as an anamnēsis (remembrance - 1 Cor. 11:24-25). By this he does not mean a mere remembrance of the historical event of Christ's death in the past but a concrete re-experiencing of the perfect service of Christ

and dedication of ourselves in Christ's holiness before God. At the table, by eating the bread and drinking the cup, the believer is able to bring his dedicated life directly into God's presence through sharing in the benefits of the death of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17). This is Christian service (worship) at its most essential level; because, through his action at the table, the Christian is brought into a vivid union with the heavenly service of his Lord that mutually excludes any other cultic involvement on his part (1 Cor. 10:15-18).<sup>29</sup> As one who stood exclusively and directly under God's claim, as the priest functioned in the Jewish temple, all of the life of the Christian now is to be lived in holy service (latreia) to God.<sup>30</sup>

As the new priesthood (priesthood of believers), the Christians would go out from their household assemblies and demonstrate their holy calling in other ordinary settings in the world. Paul, who was very conscious that both pagan and Jewish intellectuals had taken the central terms (e.g., latreia and leitourgia) from the cultic service of ancient temples and applied them to one's spiritual praise to God in prayer and thanksgiving, was now able to refer to himself as a priestly minister (leitourgon) in his service to God among the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16; Phil. 2:17).<sup>31</sup> And, of course, in keeping with this thinking he considers that this holy service extends to all areas of our lives (Rom. 12:1). As such, the visible body of Christ constitutes a massive spiritual temple of God in the world where the service of the holy life is performed continually to God (1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Pet. 2:5,9). The cultic service of God's people (temple) is not confined to a particular place or time anymore.

It exists wherever believers live in conformity to God's claim.

As a result of this analysis of the biblical material we find ourselves in basic agreement with the first axiom of the paradigm that "all of Christian life is worship," namely: that early Christian worship marked a radical disjunction from the cultic service of the Jewish temple. But an important qualification to this agreement must be stated. Our analysis indicates that there are, as well, important continuities between the Old and New Testaments in their respective understandings of worship. For example, there is the idea, present in both Testaments, that the essence of worship is to offer oneself as totally dedicated to God. Under the Old Covenant the culminating point of dedication to God was localized at the altar in Jerusalem. But it should be remembered that for the early Christian the culminating point of the offering of oneself in worship takes place at a table - albeit that it may be found in diverse places scattered around the Greco-Roman world. In short, the new temple is the spiritual body of Christ: the church scattered throughout the world, but visibly present to an ancient each time a local assembly met at table.

#### The Second Axiom

On the basis of our analysis of the context of worship in the scripture we are now in a position to assess the second axiom of the new paradigm on worship, "the central purpose of the assembly is to edify one another." We will argue that this axiom is founded on a misconstrual of the function of an early Christian assembly. In place of this distorted view, we will defend the position that the central purpose of an early

Christian assembly was to present oneself before God in dedicated praise and service to him as a result of his redemptive act in Christ.

The issue is joined when we observe a comment on the purpose of the Lord's Supper made by an advocate of the new paradigm.

It should be noted that all of its purposes, as they are presented in the New Testament, are directed not to God, but are rather aimed toward the edifying of "the body."<sup>32</sup>

At best, this gives a minimalist view of the central role of the Lord's Supper for early Christian worship. It entirely misses the point that the Supper was for early Christian believers a concrete re-presentation and participation in the once-and-for-all perfect service of Christ. As Paul tells us what happened in the household assemblies, the one presiding at the table would break the loaf (1 Cor. 10:16) thus concretely, picturing the death of Christ. After the prayer of thanks (to God) the broken pieces were eaten by the many believers. Thus, by eating the bread and drinking the cup, they were spiritually nourished by their common participation in the perfect service of Christ.

As 1 Corinthians 10:17 indicates, the many believers, by all participating from the one loaf constitute the one visible body which is the earthly correspondent to the heavenly action of Christ. Here, pledging the same commitment to God as Jesus showed in going to the cross, the eschatological community awaited the final triumph of God's rule over his creation. As "the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. 12:23), where it was believed the angels to be present, it seems preposterous to assert that what takes place in the assembly

primarily is "directed not to God." Indeed Paul claims that the presence of the Divine was so powerful that some in Corinth, who acted in an unworthy way at the table, became sick and died (1 Cor. 11:30). He charges the Corinthians to "discern the body," which contrary to a number of exegetes, does not refer to relationships between believers but to the crucified Christ.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, what took place in the early Christian assembly was done with a sense of the direct presence of God.

This view is substantiated when we examine other activities which took place at an early Christian assembly. When they met together they sang poems of their own composition (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs)<sup>34</sup> in praise to God or Christ for bringing salvation.<sup>35</sup> Acts 2:47 refers to this as praising God. In the Pauline communities, with their strong emphasis on the presence of the Spirit, the songs inspired by the Spirit become the functional equivalent to use of the Old Testament psalter in the synagogue. The Christians sang their hymns as praise to God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:18-20) as well as using them to exhort one another. Since they were inspired by the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:26) it was fitting that they be sung in the assembly where the sense of transcendence was most evident in the experience of the community.<sup>36</sup>

Besides observance of the Lord's Supper, singing of songs, and the offering of prayers, a number of other things also took place when the early Christians assembled. These ranged from such things as the holy kiss and the saying of Maranatha (1 Cor. 16:20-21) to the exercise of discipline and instruction to

believers from the scriptures on the true meaning of the coming of the Messiah.

A small glimpse of what went on in the Pauline churches may be taken from 1 Corinthians 14:26. Under the deep conviction that they had received gifts from the Spirit various believers would present a lesson, speak an ecstatic utterance, or say something that had been revealed to them by the risen Lord. In reference to this Paul exhorts the believers to use all these special gifts (panta) to attain the edification of the community.<sup>37</sup> Evidently, an important contributing role of the Spirit in providing these gifts was to produce spiritual growth (1 Cor. 14:3-5; 12, 17, 26; Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:29).

But, of course, this did not mean that the edification of believers was the dominant purpose or goal of everything that took place in the assembly. When Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:26 that "all things should be done for edification" this is no more an absolute statement about the entire purpose of the assembly than when he says in Colossians 3:9 that a believer who "has died to all things" (panta) after baptism must therefore renounce everything that took place in his life before becoming a Christian. In both cases (1 Cor. 14:26 and Col. 3:9) the context indicates clearly that "all things" must be modified. With the latter Paul modifies "all things" by saying he means that the Christian should renounce wrath, anger, and similar things from his past. In the case of the former the exercise of the various gifts (all things) are not to hinder but contribute toward the edification of the community. The context of 1 Corinthians 14 indicates that this had not always been the case in the past.

Thus, we conclude that the goal of edification of believers was an important complement to what took place in the assembly -- but it was dependent upon the fundamental purpose of gathering: to meet around the table and participate in the once-and-for-all perfect service (latreia) of Christ.

Finally, as evidence of this point, we need to look at Hebrews 10:19-25, a passage that is quoted in favor of the view that the central purpose of the assembly is to promote mutual edification.<sup>38</sup> Yet, when one looks at the passage it turns out to favor the position that the point of the assembly is for the believers to gather together to praise God. The central argument of the unit is that through Christ the believer has free access to God and therefore we should not neglect the opportunity to draw near to Him.<sup>39</sup> For the writer of the epistle God dwells in his heavenly sanctuary surrounded by his ministering angels (1:6-14; 8:1-2,5; 9:8-10, 23-24; 12:22-25). The believer has been given permission to enter this sanctuary on the basis of Jesus' death who, by the shedding of his blood, consecrated and inaugurated the way for our entrance into heaven (10:10-20).

Consequently, the Christians were exhorted to "draw near" to God (10:22). This term (proserchesthai) comes from the Old Testament cult and referred to entrance into the temple to do service or worship.<sup>40</sup> Hebrews argues that those who have their "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and their bodies washed with pure water," that is having been baptized,<sup>41</sup> have permission to enter the heavenly sanctuary or direct presence of God. The means by which the believers may draw near to God come through those things which take place in the assembly whereby God is

spiritually thanked and praised (4:16; 7:25; 9:14; 12:25-28; 13:16).

As a result of what our heavenly High Priest has accomplished the believer may now participate in the heavenly worship and, proleptically, experience the wonders of the age to come (12:22-29; 13:10-16). The point that is important is that for Hebrews, the setting and context of "drawing near" to God is worship in the assembly (10:25; 13:10).<sup>42</sup> To forsake the assembly is to leave behind the place where our salvation is provisionally experienced (6:4-8; 12:12-17, 25). Therefore, Christians are to exhort one another not to forsake the assembly; and, it should be noticed, that the exhortation is not the province of the assembly itself (although that is not precluded) but is something to be done at all times.

It is a total distortion of Hebrews 10:19-25 to claim that this passage teaches that the central role of the assembly is for the edification of believers. Rather, upon analysis, the unit confirms other passages in the New Testament which indicate that when Christians gather together to praise God they engage in the praise and worship of the Transcendent One as a result of the perfect service of Christ.

Therefore, the second axiom of the new paradigm that the central role of the assembly is edification is not confirmed. Manifestly, nothing should be done at the assembly that discourages the mutual edification of believers. But, in the end, Christians can only have a basis for edifying one another after they have come before and jointly submitted to the claims of their risen Lord in praise.

## Conclusion

In this essay we have assessed two paradigms for worship which are widely held within the churches of Christ. Both have been shown to be inadequate.

The first paradigm "the five acts of worship," as it is popularly conceived, has very thin warrant in the practices of the early church. Such a view often comes close to viewing Christian worship as a set of cultic acts analogous to those of the Old Testament and thus does not give full recognition to the radical new understanding of worship that came with the New Covenant.

The second paradigm adequately accounts for the radical newness of Christian worship but does not give enough attention to continuities with the Old Testament. The net result is a total misconstrual of the role of the assembly wherein edification of believers is given greater prominence than the praise of God when the reverse should be the case.

Perhaps adherents of both paradigms have become victims of failing to escape the banal effects of the shifting sands of history. Those who follow the first paradigm have not taken sufficient account of how dependent they are upon the Puritan reforms of liturgy that still left intact many questionable assumptions about worship held within the post-Constantinian church. Adherents of the second paradigm appear to have succumbed to the very prevalent modern tendency to give much more prominence to matters of interaction between believers rather than focus on transcendence.

At any rate, the churches of Christ need to get several

foundational points clear about worship. Foremost, our coming together, on the basis of our common Story, around the table each first day for the purpose of joining in spiritual praise to our Lord and God, is the most central and important contributing factor in giving us identity as the people of God today. This is worship par excellence. In order to facilitate the importance of these assemblies for worship we should rethink our view about both the facilities in which we assemble and the theologies and practices that inform what takes place in them. With regard to the former, to be closer to the practice of the early church, we should meet in places that accentuate the fact we are gathered around a table--not sitting before an altar. And with reference to the latter, we should give a lot more attention to fulfilling the intention of the early Christians when they gathered at the table. This has been beautifully stated by our late English brother G.Y. Tickle.

Jesus our great High Priest, our Sacrifice,  
Our Passover, rich gift of love divine,  
With thee we would into the Holiest rise  
Communing with thee in the bread and wine.<sup>43</sup>

Manifestly, when the early Christians met around the table, they were on earth, but they also entered into the spiritual world as well.

#### NOTES

1

Ervin Bishop, "The Christian Assembly," Restoration Quarterly 18 (1975) 222.

2

Jack P. Lewis, "New Testament Authority for Music in Worship," The Instrumental Music Issue, Bill Flatt, ed., (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1987) 14-15.

3

Ibid., For example, this has been the essence of the claim of those within the Restoration Movement who have argued

strenuously against the use of musical instruments to accompany the approved act of singing in the assembly. Playing an instrument was an act of corporate worship in the Old Testament (1 Chron. 23:6). As something that is not intrinsic to the act of singing the instrument appears not to have been used in early Christian worship and it is claimed, on the basis that it is an additional act of worship not warranted by the New Testament, that it should not be used today. As Lewis, alluding to an earlier writer says," either show where is New Testament authority for the use of an instrument or show why New Testament authority is not needed."

4

Bishop, "The Assembly," 224.

5

Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948) 49.

6

Ibid., 51.

7

Richard Harrison, "Early Disciples Sacramental Theology: Catholic Reformed and Free," Classic Themes of Disciple Theology, Kenneth Lawrence, ed., (Fort Worth: T.C.U. Press, 1986) 90.

8

Robert Milligan, An Exposition and Defense of the Scheme of Redemption as it is Revealed and Taught in the Holy Scriptures (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 14th printing of the 1868 edition) 361-442.

9

A good example is Everett Ferguson, The New Testament Church (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1968) 54-56.

10

Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England 1: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) 259.

11

Ibid., 191.

12

Harrison, "Early Disciples," 71-83. An interesting case in point noted by Harrison is the emphasis by Campbell and Stone on the Fraction, (i.e., the breaking of the bread) by the one presiding at the Lord's Supper. This reflects a direct continuation with an important emphasis in Reformed eucharistic theology. This emphasis appears to be forgotten in modern day churches of Christ.

13

Roger T. Beckwith, "The Daily and Weekly Worship of the Primitive Church in Relation to its Jewish Antecedents," Evangelical Quarterly 56 (1984) 69-80.

14

It is worthy to note Paul's condemnation of the abuse of this practice. Perhaps an elite group ate in the dining room while others had to eat leftovers in the atrium. This presumes the regular custom of eating the Lord's Supper with a meal. Wayne Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 158-159

documents this custom as being widespread in the early church despite Paul's objection to what was taking place at Corinth. J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great, E.A. Brunner, Trans. (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1959) 15 gives good information about ancient residences but goes too far when he claims that the clergy used the tablinum (dining room) and the ordinary believer was confined to the atrium.

15

Perhaps because of the strong use of the Old Testament by the Puritans Restorationist preachers have picked up many examples from this material to illustrate their view that worship involves obedience to a set of prescriptively demanded ritual acts. The cases of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2) and Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:3-8) are well known cases in point.

16

J.D.G. Dunn and J.P. Mackey, New Testament Theology in Dialogue: Biblical Foundations in Theology (London: S.P.C.K. 1987) 122.

17

As with any new movement in the church this view is being put forward today mainly in sermons and seminars. Bishop, "The Assembly," 219-228 is the most important statement of this position that I know of in the literature.

18

Bishop, "The Assembly," 221-222, 225.

19

Walter Harrelson, From Fertility Cult to Worship: A Reassessment of the Worship of Ancient Israel (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1970) 36-37; Franklin W. Young, "The Theological Context of New Testament Worship," Worship in Scripture and Tradition, Massey H. Shepherd Jr., ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963) 93.

20

Young, "Theological Context," 81-99.

21

Bishop, "The Assembly," 226.

22

Harper's Bible Dictionary, Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985) 1143.

23

Ibid.

24

Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions 2 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965 paperback edition) 415.

25

Hartmut Gese, Essays on Biblical Theology, Keith Crim, trans. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 94-107.

26

Paul D. Hanson, The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986) 228.

27

In the inter-testamental period a major change in understanding the role of sacrifices occurred. Fueled by widespread intellectual criticism of the idea that a spiritual being could

be appeased by a material offering, many Jews began to reinterpret the cultic language of the Bible. For example, Philo of Alexandria, who lived about the time of Christ, considered that the Jewish sacrifice in the temple was a major symbolic system which parabolically expressed the offering of the dedicated prayers and lives of the Jews to God. Building on earlier tendencies to spiritualize the cult (Hos. 6:6; Isa. 1:11-17; Ps. 51:14-19), writers in the Hellenistic and Roman eras argued that keeping the Torah, almsgiving, prayer and praise, that comes from the Spirit, is the functional equivalent of the dedication of oneself to God through offering a sacrifice at the temple (Sir. 35:1-10; Let. Arist. 169-170; 234. T. Lev. 5:5-6; Jud. 16:16). Thus the latreia and leitourgia of the temple took on a broader meaning of "spiritual worship." This understanding of Old Testament cultic terminology clearly was a contributing factor to early Christian thinking on the subject of worship.

28

Bernard Cooke, Ministry to Word and Sacraments: History and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 528-529.

29

Krister Stendahl, Meanings: The Bible as Document and Guide (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 189.

30

Cooke, "Word and Sacraments," 528-530.

31

Cooke, Ibid, puts it well, "Christians are a priestly people because they are the Body of him who is the one high priest; in joining their lives and persons to his sacrifice they are giving to the Father the worship that is his due."

32

Bishop, "The Assembly," 226. Bishop's interpretation of the Supper as edificatory follows strongly in the Zwinglian tradition. At the Supper one reflects on the past salvific death of Christ, proclaims the death of Christ in the present, and for the future reflects on the eschatological hope of the return of Christ.

33

As well stated by I.H. Marshall, Last Supper and Lord's Supper, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 114. Clearly in 1 Corinthians 11:27 the reference to body is not to the church but to the crucified Lord. The close proximity of this verse to 11:29 must govern the meaning of the latter and not the various meanings of body in other places in Paul.

34

I agree with Martin Hengel, Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity, John Bowden, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 80 that the threefold term psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs does not refer to different genres of song but to one and the same kind. The most important Greek translations of the Old Testament for religious songs are simply picked up and used here.

35

Frances Young, Sacrifice and the Death of Christ (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975) 61-62.

36

Jack Lewis, "New Authority," 41-42, gives a good list of commentators who see Colossians 3:16-17 and Ephesians 5:18-20 as emerging from a description of what happened in an early Christian assembly. To his list one should add the influential Catholic commentators, Schnackenburg and Schlier. Note Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Church in the New Testament, W.J. O'Hara trans. (New York: Crossroad, 1965) 40-47 for details.

37

Cf. "oikodomeō" in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology 2, Colin Brown, ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 251-253.

38

Bishop, "The Assembly," 225. The argument that is made is as follows: Hebrews 10:23 sums up the paraenetic theme in the letter by exhorting the community to "hold fast the confession of our hope." This is linked to 10:24 with another injunction encouraging the Christians to spur one another to love and good works. It is argued that the call not to forsake the assembly (10:25) is important, because it is at the assembly where the encouragement takes place.

39

Nils Dahl, "A New and Living Way: The Approach to God According to Hebrews 10: 19-25," Interpretation 5 (1951) 401.

40

Ibid., 408.

41

Ibid., 406-408. Dahl points out that in later Rabbinic exegesis the sprinkling of blood on the people to ratify the covenant at Sinai was juxtaposed with ritual washings for the initiation of priests to purify them to enter the sanctuary, and various other ritual baths. Hebrews seems to draw a similar linkage between the inauguration of the New Covenant with the death of Christ and "the application of the work of Jesus to the individual, who in baptism is sanctified and consecrated by his blood."

42

Ibid., 409.

43

Great Songs of the Church (Revised) (Abilene, Texas: A.C.U. Press, 1986) 370.

## AMUSING THE SAINTS: EDIFICATION WITHOUT TRANSCENDENCE

By Michael R. Weed

Observers of the American religious scene have been telling us for some time that there is considerable confusion and uncertainty among the churches regarding the meaning and practice of worship. This observation holds true not only for the broader religious world but also for churches in the Restoration tradition.

In the following discussion I will note certain broad societal factors which shape the modern climate and affect all religious groups, including those in the Restoration tradition. Subsequently, I will indicate tendencies within Restoration churches which are presently having a negative impact upon the understanding and practice of worship. In this regard I will give attention to the increasingly popular view that the purpose of the assembly is edification rather than worship. Finally, I will conclude with some general observations relevant to the present situation in churches of Christ.

### Societal Factors

It has long been recognized that religions tend both to reflect and to sanction the values and beliefs of the particular

society in which they exist. Religion provides a "sacred canopy" which serves to authorize and legitimate the various values and aspirations of a given society (e.g., "the American Way of Life"), nation ("ein Gott, ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fuhrer"), or ideology (" . . . let no man him abuse, comrade Jesus has paid his dues"). In this fashion religions have come to serve as vassals to the countless kings of this world.

Church history vividly illustrates that Christians have not been immune to this temptation. The church under Constantine, Luther's relationship with the German princes, and countless other examples stand as stark reminders of damaging misalliances. It would be naive to assume that contemporary Christianity does not continue to face the temptation to accommodate faith to the modern environment--and to do so occasionally with the best possible motive (e.g., relevance, contextualization, etc.).

American society is rapidly becoming a highly individualistic, self-indulgent, relativistic, and secular society. It is a society in which religion--religious concepts and religious institutions--plays an increasingly marginal role. Surprisingly, however, religion in America has managed to survive (even thrive) in this climate by accommodating itself to its environment--i.e., reflecting and legitimating the dominant values and beliefs of its surroundings.

Obviously all of this compromises the integrity of a religion that recognizes no God but Yahweh and would steel the faithful against all idolatries. The history of the Christian movement also indicates that the only defense against such fatal compromises lies in an unswerving awareness of God's

transcendence. The prophetic word overturns false gods and exposes our constant tendencies to manipulate and use the true God as if he were at our disposal.

And this is precisely the ingredient of Christian faith that is most often missing or distorted in contemporary American religiosity, viz., a sense of awe and reverence before the Transcendent One. Commenting on religious programs on television, Neil Postman asserts:

Religious programs are filled with good cheer. They celebrate affluence. Their featured players become celebrities. Though their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings, or rather, because their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings.<sup>1</sup>

He continues:

I think it both fair and obvious to say that on television, God is a vague and subordinate character. Though His name is invoked repeatedly, the concreteness and persistence of the image of the preacher carries the clear message that it is he, not He, who must be worshipped.<sup>2</sup>

Postman concludes, chillingly, that in our society so much under the influence of television, the content of all religion threatens to become the shallow, self-centered, entertainment-oriented stuff of television religiosity.<sup>3</sup> Postman suggests that the creed underlying all this is best described by the traditional term "blasphemy."<sup>4</sup>

Obviously this process has tremendous impact on what is envisioned as the heart of the Christian faith and what is understood to be the nature and purpose of Christian worship. In essence, however, it amounts to a crowding out of God--a muffling of the radical claim and a dimming of the blinding light of the One who is totally Other from ourselves. It promotes a

religiosity in which God becomes but a vague and subordinate reality at best.

### Worship in the Church of Christ

It would be a mistake to assume that churches of Christ are immune to the social pressures and influences shaping American religiosity. In fact, it may be argued that churches of Christ are doubly vulnerable to these influences--both because of an assumption of being invulnerable and because of certain factors--attitudes and tendencies--at work within churches of Christ. Several of these factors may be identified.

First, many have recognized that attempts to understand worship solely as the observance of five specific acts are a bit artificial and promote a somewhat mechanical understanding of worship.

Second, a lack of attention to the Old Testament (a functional "Marcionism") has led to a tendency to deemphasize and to ignore the Jewishness of the early church--especially with regard to the influence of the synagogue on Christian worship.

Third, however unintentionally, there is a certain irreverence almost built into the Restoration heritage. Unlike those in many other traditions, Restorationists have no special representatives, no vestments, no sacraments, no sanctuary. Correlatively, it is not surprising that one frequently finds Restorationists with very little reverence for or sense of the sacred.  
5

Fourth, among churches of Christ there is a stout resistance to anything that appears intentionally formalized, ritualistic,

or "high church." That is, one finds a resistance to any formally fixed liturgical practices or terminology, e.g., invocation, benediction, eucharist, and so forth.

These internal tendencies have contributed to a climate of considerable uncertainty and even confusion among churches of Christ. Unfortunately, the situation has inspired few serious and responsible attempts to recover the true meaning and practice of Christian worship and to revise contemporary worship accordingly. More often than not, the lack of clarity regarding worship has simply left churches uncertain and doubly vulnerable to countless innovations, fads, and gimmicks designed to make worship more "meaningful."

#### The Edification Thesis

An exception to the lack of serious attempts to reexamine the nature and meaning of Christian worship has appeared in the last two decades.<sup>6</sup> Essentially, this view holds that "all of life" is worship and that the primary purpose of the assembling together of Christians is not "worship" but "edification" ("upbuilding," or occasionally "one-anothering"). That is, Christians gather not to worship God--which they do in the whole of their lives--but rather to edify one another.

Obviously this thesis has far-reaching influence on what is done when the church assembles. One does not speak of the "worship service" or gathering "to worship." Many hymns are deemed inappropriate for the assembly (e.g., "The Lord is in His Holy Temple"; "Lord, We Come Before Thee Now"; the Doxology<sup>7</sup>). Further, it is said with regard to the Lord's Supper, a focal

point of the Christian gathering, that "all of its purposes . . . are directed not to God, but are rather aimed toward the edification of 'the body.'"8

While it is not my intention to engage in a detailed analysis of this view, I do suggest that, no doubt contrary to the intent of its framers, this understanding of Christian assemblies and worship has led to serious distortions of the nature and meaning of Christian worship--and even defeats its own best intentions.

### Three Ironies

Three closely related ironies resulting from the edification thesis capture the difficulty of its understanding of the nature and purpose of Christian assemblies. They also indicate the severity of the problems it promotes.

#### First Irony: The Exclusion of Worship from the Assembly.

The edification thesis can be said not merely to extend worship to include daily life; it also excludes worship from what has traditionally been called "the worship service."

"Reverence" and "awe" in the New Testament refer to the proper response of the disciples to God's working in their lives (Acts 2:43). These qualities relate to our daily worship of God (Heb. 12:28) in the "real tabernacle," and not to an artificially contrived "atmosphere" in a building "made with hands."<sup>10</sup>

Thus the edification thesis suggests that there is less justification for awe, reverence, and an awareness of the mystery and majesty of God in Christian assemblies than when at work, mowing the lawn, or playing golf.

Second Irony: The Americanization of the Assembly. While criticizing the Restoration tradition for reflecting Catholic and

Protestant corruptions of the real meaning of Christian assemblies, the edification thesis itself not only permits but actually promotes the "Americanization of the church," i.e., accommodation to various fads of American religiosity in general.

"Edification" in a climate severed from any openness to transcendence degenerates into multiple distortions. Without any clear transcendent point of reference, edification simply legitimates the social impulse at best. One remembers sociologist Peter Berger's observations regarding American religiosity over a quarter of a century ago as he noted the tendency for American religiosity to degenerate into countless activities other than confronting the reality of God:

Petty-bourgeois gregariousness is regarded as Christian koinonia and the back-yard barbecue takes on the aroma of the agape meal in countless church picnics or ladies'-aid gatherings.<sup>11</sup>

At its worst, "edification" degenerates into a highly subjective self-indulgent pragmatism:

The individual no longer asks, "What is the Truth?" Instead, he asks, "What do I feel?" And that is but one step to the next question: "How does this make me feel?" Emotional pragmatism now takes the place of the honest confrontation with the Christian message.<sup>12</sup>

Without any clear criterion or standard, or transcendent point of reference, "edification" inevitably reflects the shifting tastes and values of the surrounding society. Not surprisingly, in numerous churches Christians assemble to be "edified" as they are amused, entertained, and pursue their own interests.

Consequently,

the way is opened for the attitude of the religious consumer, who shops around the denominational supermarket for just the right combination of spiritual kicks and thrills to meet his particular psychological needs.<sup>13</sup>

In short, the edification thesis has amounted to opening the door to society and society's values. It has amounted to permission if not license, for individual and group tastes to dictate the shape and direction of Christian assemblies along the lines of society's confused values.

Third Irony: Transcendence is Irrelevant. The edification thesis, concerned to show that all of life is worship, has, by its removal of transcendence from the center of Christian assemblies, cut off the very avenue through which the assembly--as worship--is relevant to the daily living of faithful lives. By default, attention shifts to the edification offered by amusing and entertaining social activities, group dynamics, and various therapeutic techniques.

#### Concluding Observations

I will conclude this discussion with four observations which appear relevant to the situation within churches of Christ.

The Influence of the Edification Thesis. It must be recognized that the edification thesis is popular for several reasons. Not the least of these is that it attempts to take the biblical record seriously. It also has the admirable intent of claiming the relevance of all of life to be the zone of Christian worship and to avoid distinctions between "sacred" services and secular life. Nonetheless, there are other ways of showing the relevance of Christian faith to daily life, and one is led to

suspect that there are other explanations for the widespread popularity and attractiveness of the edification thesis.

Employing a "sociology of knowledge" approach,<sup>14</sup> one may suggest that the edification thesis has proven attractive for reasons perhaps foreign to the conscious intentions of its first advocates. Namely, the edification thesis appears to solve two problems: (a) it offers a way out of the uncertainty of what to do with worship for those who, dissatisfied with the "five acts" approach and with little sense of the sacred or reputation for reverence, are thrashing about for ways to make the assembly more "meaningful"; and (b) it legitimates an irrepressible temptation to draw on the popular and seemingly successful techniques and devices of TV religion to put on a good show and have a "little something for everyone."

In short, the edification thesis seems to provide biblical warrant for us to do what we already want to do, viz., to accommodate ourselves to what is going on in surrounding religious groups and in society at large. It is not by accident that the edification thesis should appear among churches of Christ at a time when Jews, Catholics, and Protestants write Ann Landers complaining that their respective services are more like amusement parks than worship services.<sup>15</sup>

All of Life is Worship. Advocates of the edification thesis assert that Christians do not assemble for worship, since all of life is worship. This view is best responded to by paraphrasing C. F. D. Moule. Moule agrees that all work done and life lived for God's sake is worship. However, he also observes that

the surest way to profane the whole week would be to try to make every day equally holy.<sup>16</sup>

For

(o)ur work and recreation would be less efficient and worthy if we tried consciously to think of God while working out a mathematical problem or shooting a goal.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently,

. . . here on earth it is necessary to set aside specific times for the rendering to God of articulate praise and for the conscious dedication to Him of our whole life and work.<sup>18</sup>

Thus Christians set aside a portion of time consciously to hallow the whole, just as our participation in the collection recognizes God's claim on all our possessions.

The Relevance of Transcendence. Worship points us beyond the realities of this world to the transcendent reality of that one who is totally Other. In so doing, worship puts all the other realities of the world in their proper place. In this, worship unmask and dethrones the false absolutes which absorb our time and dominate our lives. It releases us from thralldom to the various gods of the nation and the market place. Ultimately, worship frees us from the chief idol, the self--the bloated ego which transforms and distorts all that it surveys. Before the awesome reality of God--his majesty and mystery--one is released from self-absorption. Thus true worship has nothing to do with the creation of an artificial atmosphere and the manufacture of various moods and the titillating of emotions.

Paradoxically, it is in its very irrelevance that worship proves relevant for the living of faithful--and worshipful--lives.

Fellowship in Christ. First John 1:3 states that our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Christian fellowship is not founded on the social impulse; it is not the esprit of old comrades in arms, teammates, or school chums. Christian fellowship is not even the conviviality of Christians. Our fellowship with one another is founded upon the cross and the blood of Jesus Christ (vs. 17). It is this selfless love which Christians are called to emulate in their daily lives.

Christians assemble in the name and presence of the one who said, "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." To deny, diminish, or make incidental the presence of the Father or the Son in the Christian assembly, much less at the Lord's Supper, cuts the very ground out from under Christian identity and faithful living; it makes the Christian assembly merely an assembly of Christians.<sup>19</sup>

Presumably, for Christians, worship is edifying. The answer to the problem that many modern Christians do not find prayer and praise to God edifying does not lie in arranging assemblies that are more entertaining or in spawning Christian interest groups--skit shooting and art shows--for those who do not find the cross "their thing." Rather, the answer lies in fuller instruction in the Christian faith.

#### NOTES

1

Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. (New York: Penquin, 1985), 121.

2

Postman, 122.

3

Postman, 124.

4

Postman, 123.

5

I illustrate this point simply by citing the frequency with which one hears supposedly humorous stories about misadventures occurring during Christian baptisms.

6

Ervin Bishop, "The Christian Assembly," Firm Foundation (series of five articles in 1973); also see "The Assembly," Restoration Quarterly, 18:4, 1975, 219-228.

7

Bishop, "The Christian Assembly," 5:503.

8

Bishop, "The Assembly," 226. See also "The Christian Assembly": "Although the Lord's Supper is accompanied by prayers of thanksgiving and certainly evokes thoughts of praise, its purposes, as they are presented in the New Testament, are not basically God-directed, but are rather aimed toward the edification of the body" (4:407).

9

The edification thesis suffers most of the problems connected with attempts to draw too much from word studies. Cf. James Barr, Biblical Words for Time (London: SCM, 1962). Further, to note that early Christians did not apply sacrificial terminology of Jewish and Hellenistic cults in describing their assemblies in part reflects their understanding of the finality of Jesus' atoning death. It does not establish that they thereby discarded any concept of worship or transcendence from their gatherings--only that they wanted to avoid certain misunderstandings of their actions, e.g., sacrificial and propitiatory. See T. W. Manson, "hilastērion," Journal of Theological Studies, 46, 1945, 10.

10

"The Christian Assembly," 5:503.

11

Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies (New York: Doubleday, 1961) 85.

12

Berger, 126.

13

Ibid.

14

A sociology of knowledge approach would maintain that social circumstances variously and subtly influence the acceptability and attractiveness of ideas and concepts as well as play a fundamental role in their formulation. For example, it is often noted that had Freud not existed he would had to have been invented due to the social and intellectual climate of late 19th-century Europe.

15

Ann Landers, "They'd Like to Get Religion at Church," Los Angeles Times, Nov. 16, 1987. Landers' column contains letters written by Protestants, Catholics and Jews from Florida to California. Although not all writers are critical, the majority complain variously that their worship services have degenerated into "social activities and fun stuff," "video tapes,"

"applause," "show-biz time," and are "so laid back that you might as well be in an amusement park."

16

C. F. D. Moule, Worship in the New Testament (London: Lutterworth, 1961) 82.

17

Moule, 85.

18

Moule, 82.

19

Interestingly, while Bishop utilizes some of Cullmann's insights, he ignores Cullmann's argument that "the primitive Lord's Supper gravitates around . . . two poles: the presence of Christ and the fellowship of those who experience that presence." It is the presence of the risen one which transforms the gathering into an eschatological community. To ignore or deemphasize the presence of Christ radically alters the self-understanding of those gathered and the nature of their fellowship. See Oscar Cullmann and F. J. Leenhardt, Essays on the Lord's Supper (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958) 16.

BOOK REVIEW: Lesslie Newbigin. Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986. 156 pages.

By J. Robert Reynolds

While the traditional book review normally adheres to some critically objective schema of judgment, I must disclaim much of that supposed objectivity in any discussion I might have of Leslie Newbigin's Foolishness to the Greeks. The reason for this glaring subjectivity can be clarified with a simple statement: I like the book. I have read Newbigin's work several times and have found in it a valuable and insightful tool for missions and evangelism. In fact, to make my confession complete, I even admit to having recommended it to all of my missionary friends and to having pirated a copy for one such associate. Indeed, I do like this book.

What is it that draws me repeatedly to this work on missions? To be honest, it is not the ease with which one can read the book. While Foolishness to the Greeks is clear and concise, the matters it treats are weighty, and the author's arguments suggest deeper thoughts and larger discussions than those actually presented. If anything, this is the only flaw I can cite concerning the book: it is too brief in its

presentation and, as a result, leaves the reader with an insatiable desire for more of the same.

Why then do I believe in this work? Actually I recommend Foolishness to the Greeks for three primary reasons. First, the book is original in its orientation and universal in its appeal. Newbigin's basic premise is stated from the first page: "What would be involved in a missionary encounter between the gospel and this whole way of perceiving, thinking, and living that we call 'modern Western culture'?" Using this as his point of departure, he then proceeds to a description of the Western culture, the gospel, and the encounter between the two. In the following chapters Newbigin details the effects of the Enlightenment and the subsequent emphasis of science and scientific philosophies on the Western patterns of thought and religion. He concludes that these elements have resulted in a society which confines religion to the private sphere of life, with relatively little or no importance in the public sphere. It is a world "that is to be understood in terms of efficient causes and not final causes, a world that is not governed by an intelligible purpose, and thus a world in which the answer to the question of what is good has to be left to the private opinion of each individual and cannot be included in the body of facts that control public life."

Another attractive aspect of the book is Newbigin's precise evaluation of current missionary principles and methods. As a missionary to India with more than forty years of experience the author has a vast experience on which to draw. His assessment of actual practices and approaches to missions will prove of

immeasurable value for those presently involved in missions as well as for the future generations who hope to engage in cross-cultural encounters with the gospel. Newbigin's models are practical in their nature, yet flexible enough to be useful for any missionary encounter with culture.

Finally, this book will prove to be practical for its readers because it deals with a problem central to Christianity, that is, what should be the role of the Christian within the worldly society? Newbigin's approach is attractive because he views Western culture with the eyes of a true 'marginal man', one who has stood beyond the borders of that society and who can perhaps see that culture for what it is. His treatment is also persuasive because he offers specific guidelines and potential solutions for those problems that he identifies.

In closing I will quote the statement of an earlier critic with regards to the Spanish novel Don Quijote: "this is a lot of book." The material is fresh and provoking. The author has also provided, in addition to a clear and organized presentation, excellent documentation and useful bibliography. All of which serves as support for a comment made by one critic in his review of Foolishness to the Greeks: "I like this book."

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