THE ACTORS ARE COME HITHER:
GOD'S PROMISE OF VOCATION
GIVEN IN PUBLIC CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

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An intentional hermeneutic circle focusing on systematic theology informed by sociological research in four congregations following an exploratory concurrent embedded mixed method strategy around the question, "How does public Christian worship center the vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?" The answer discovered is by forming them with sacramental practices that help them perceive relationships as relationships with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Uses the work of Atkins, Drescher, Jenson, Keifert, Kolden, Lange, Lathrop, Taylor, Toulmin, Wainwright, and Welker, along with *Hamlet*, act 2, as interpretive partners in developing a relational theology that challenges public Christian leaders and theological education to focus on God's relationship with creation as the basis for relational theology. This necessitates formation in sacramental practices that help us enter into public Christian worship in order to participate in that relationship throughout all aspects of life in many different given vocational identities so that we might discern which god is calling. Similarly, this challenges popular understandings of vocation as occupation and even the popular understanding of the theology of vocation developed by Benne, Buechner, and Wingren.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALC	American Lutheran Church
AWA	Average Weekly Attendance
CFPS	*Christian Faith Practices Scale*
DSM-5	*Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition*
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELW	*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*
ILO	International Labor Organization
LBW	*Lutheran Book of Worship*
LCA	Lutheran Church in America
MDE	*Lutheran Book of Worship: Ministers Desk Edition*
MMVW	*Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*
WCC	World Council of Churches
WPG	Worship Planning Groups

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soli Deo gloria

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A Lutheran understanding of vocation, when explained, resonates deeply with people because it goes straight to the questions of meaning and purpose in daily life.[1] Lutherans in the mid and upper Midwest of the United States have abridged two popular theologies of vocation in a way that leaves God out of vocation. This has resulted in a desire for meaning and purpose that might be found in occupation or in other people. A primary assumption of this dissertation is that public Christian worship centers people on their relationship with God in some way. A second primary assumption of this thesis is that God works in relationships to call people into both short-term and long-term vocations that carry a promise from God, which gives meaning and purpose.

This dissertation enters into a hermeneutic circle starting with a systematic theology, then engages in sociological research in four congregations, reflects on how that research impacts the systematic theology developed, and refines it. The particulars of this methodology are addressed in chapter 2. The systematic theology of chapter 3 presents and unpacks the sociological research question, "How does public Christian worship center the vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest

[1] The importance of meaning and purpose were made clear to me in David Lose's presentation at the 2014 Luther Seminary Mid-Winter Convocation and in the report he sent me. David Lose, "The Death of Christian Vocation," (paper presented at the Mid-Winter Convocation 2014: God's Mission and Worship, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, January 31, 2014); David Lose, "Annaul Report to the Lilly Endowment: The Christian's Calling in the World Project: January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013," (Luther Seminary, 2014).

associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?" The sociological research presented in chapter 4 uses an exploratory concurrent embedded mixed method strategy in an attempt to both lay some groundwork for future research on this question and to discover how the systematic theology either does or does not address issues of the relationship between public Christian worship and vocation. The reflection of chapter 5 interprets the analysis of the sociological research as a sign of what God is doing in the world, giving God's work in congregations precedence over the theology developed. Some implications for public Christian leaders and theological education become apparent through the hermeneutic circle, and chapter 6 presents and addresses these.

A Hermeneutic Circle

Entering into theological reflection within the framework of theological education based in both systematic theology and congregational practices sends me directly into a hermeneutic circle.[2] An awareness of this circle and how it can provide guidance for systematic theology as part of theological education in, with, for, and against congregations shapes the approach of this project. I being by developing a theology with the help of theologians who have thought about public Christian worship and Christian vocation, as well as an outside, interdisciplinary companion. I then turn to the study of what four congregations are actually doing, which will then provide the grist for theological reflection on the systematic theology with an eye toward theological education.

[2] The insights of Gadamer shape this approach, while Charry provides the reasoning for turning to Gadamer. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 2nd, rev. ed., Continuum Impacts (New York: Continuum, 2004); Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 16-17.

The hermeneutical circle I work in this dissertation is intentionally theological. By choosing to take as full a turn as possible through a hermeneutical circle, I begin and end with a systematic theology. As I journey around the circle, I partner with both those who help me reflect while also challenging and supporting the theology developed. One partner provides an interdisciplinary view, namely Shakespeare and particularly *Hamlet*, act 2. Four other partners are congregations with public Christian leaders on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

A systematic theology developed before congregational research begins helps to order my thoughts and expectations around public Christian worship, vocation, and vocational identity. While I draw on theologians from outside the Lutheran tradition, what I develop rests within the Lutheran tradition. That being said, however, none of the elements of this dissertation need be intentionally limited to Lutheran thought or theological education. I hope this work proves efficacious for the church and not just a small part of it.

Public Christian worship, as I develop it in chapter 3 with the help of Robert W. Jenson, expands a Lutheran understanding of sacraments by embracing a broader scope of the number of sacramental practices that could be embraced by any denomination. Biblical instances of worship, both the practices that we use to identify worship and also the words for worship, will provide starting insights. A general sketch of major worship practices up to the Lutheran Reformation shows how the church's relationship with the world and the cultures in which the church finds itself influence worship developments, including an exploration of the relationship between worship and vocation in these changes. My Lutheran basis shows itself as I work directly with the *Book of Concord* and

the challenges and charges that the Lutheran Reformation brought to the sacramental practices of the Catholic Church. Tracing the practices through biblical and historical developments, I will then unpack the phrase "public Christian worship" as a way of presenting sacramental practices that include, but are not limited to, the congregational service that includes Word and Sacraments.[3]

I will start my discussion of vocation by unpacking an intentional shift in sacramental focus that happened in the Second Vatican Council, including some reflection on how this shift in Roman Catholic theology and practice influenced Lutherans in the United States through the development and publication of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. I trace the rise of a communion ecclesiology through the ecumenical movement, particularly as present in the statement from the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*. This approach provides several readings of the role of community in a communion ecclesiology, and in particular the effect of such an ecclesiology among Lutherans in the United States—particularly the diminution of baptism. Showing this diminution allows room to explore baptismal practices and language about baptism as they point to vocation, noting how the diminution of the tension in the polarity between baptism and communion has led to a weakened understanding of vocation generally, and among Lutherans who are associated with the ELCA in particular.

Vocational identity sounds the most general but builds most clearly from Lutheran theology and theologians. Building off the discussion about baptism and

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[3] The phrase "public Christian worship" comes from and is informed by two sources: Patrick R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

vocation, I connect vocation and the Lutheran understanding of the first use of the law following the theology of Marc Kolden.[4] This connection then heightens the life of the baptized as a life lived in two kingdoms, as the Lutheran Confessions express it. The connection between sacramental practices and vocation, drawn through the practices of public Christian worship, rely heavily on ideas of discernment and attending to relationships. The conclusion of this theological development highlights the complex set of relationships, practices, and settings that can lead to the development and centering of vocational identity.

Shakespearean Partnering

The title of this dissertation should provide at least a hint toward my choice of walking with Shakespeare as an additional, external, interdisciplinary lens for theological reflection. As I have thought about many issues, I have found Shakespeare's plays to be a source of remarkable and unexpected insight. The ethical, sociological, and theological reflections present in his plays highlight his public role as one who shaped public imagination and thought. Shakespeare also reminds me of the complex reality of cultures, in particular the reality that too much is going on for us to fully explain or understand any particular theological issue.

Shakespeare and Just War

I had the opportunity to take an ethics class on just war theory with Daniel M. Bell, Jr., when I was working on my masters at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. I was to present an overview of just war theories from the sixteenth and seventeenth

[4] Marc Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, Centered Life Series (St. Paul, MN: Centered Life, 2002).

centuries for a class presentation. Many of the readings highlighted a feudal understanding of just war, noting that the usual mentality was to trust the king, prince, or whomever decided that war was necessary. Commoners and gentry were to trust the king to make the right decision on the reasons for war.

Having long had fondness of Shakespearian plays, something jogged my memory about these claims seeming out of sorts somehow. It finally struck me that Shakespeare had presented a debate about just war theory in *Henry V*, act 4, scene 1: as a disguised King Henry walks among his troops, he falls into an ethical discussion about the placement of responsibility for the justification of and actions in war. Williams presents the horrific sight of "all those legs and arms and heads chopped off in battle" for which the king is responsible.[5] "Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it—who to disobey were against all proportion of subjection."[6] Williams thus places the responsibility of the justification for any war before the king, as was in line with the readings for the class. Henry, however, presents a well-articulated argument placing the responsibility for the justification of participating in a war on each person. It includes the following argument:

> The King is not bound to answer the particular endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant, for they purpose not their deaths when they propose their services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers.[7]

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[5] *Henry V*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, Compact Edition*, ed. Stanley Wells et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 4.1.134-135. References are to act, scene, and lines.

[6] Ibid., 4.1.142-5.

[7] Ibid., 4.1.154-60.

Including this conversation in my class presentation opened an entire discussion about the complex nature of just war theory in every culture and age that I am not sure we would have had otherwise.

Hamlet as a Lens

In a similar way, Shakespeare provides a helpful lens when thinking about vocation. *Hamlet* in particular provides a suitably complex set of vocational identities being centered by various characters in various ways. Hamlet himself is wrestling in his relationships with his dead father-king, mother-queen, step-father-uncle-king, girlfriend, classmates and friends, his country, and relationships with other countries. Each of these can be unpacked with their own set of relationships. Polonius, the father of Hamlet's girlfriend, Ophelia, presents another complex set of relationships that specifically includes God and the church, as well as those of father, a king's lord, diplomat, and employer. While these relationships and the vocational identities they create run throughout the play, one particular act provides some intriguing examples.

Act 2 of *Hamlet* provides assistance when thinking about the role of others in discernment on vocational identities, the value of others therein, and several ways different individuals center them. Act 2, scene 1 provides a twisted beginning for a sense of call and entering into vocation by Polonius tasking Reynaldo with spying on Laertes, Polonius' son, while he is at school in France. As this conversation ends, Ophelia enters into her vocational responsibility as a daughter by telling Polonius what has happened between her and Hamlet because she has followed Polonius' instructions to break off her romantic relationship with Hamlet. Polonius responds by entering into vocation, bringing to King Claudius some insight into Hamlet's madness.

Act 2, scene 2 begins with another call. Claudius and Gertrude rely on the relationship Hamlet has with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, calling them to discover the source of Hamlet's madness. When Polonius arrives, his first response to Claudius names Polonius' vocational relationships to his God and King. When Polonius exits, Gertrude then reflects on her conflicting vocational identities as wife to Claudius and mother to Hamlet, not to mention her relationship with all of Denmark. After a matter of state is dealt with that is also a vocational moment looking at the relationships between Denmark and Norway and between the king of Norway and one of his sons, Polonius presents what he received from Ophelia in Scene 1, which begins the planning for an encounter of discernment—testing the spirit of the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia—which happens in act 3.

Polonius is taunted by Hamlet when he finally appears in act 2, which could be motivated by the broken relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia that happened at Polonius' direction. Stated differently, this could be Hamlet entering into his vocation as boyfriend and possibly lover, although this is another twisted example since he taunts the man who might become his father-in-law. The repartee between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tests their relationship, with Hamlet discovering how Claudius and Gertrude are willingly using his friends.

Rosencrantz's announcement of the coming of the players sets up not only Polonius' line—the title of this dissertation—but also Hamlet's outburst against Polonius' understanding of the treatment of the players and Hamlet's moment of self-reflection about the emotive force of the First Player in comparison with Hamlet's own hesitancy about entering into the call given to him by his father's ghost in act 1.

Act 2 ends with the powerful line, "The play's the thing/ Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."[8] The reflective soliloquy that precedes this expresses Hamlet's moment of repentance for not having acted yet. This, humorously, moves Hamlet to the particular action of discernment, an actual testing of the spirit of the king. The lines Hamlet writes for the players, which we hear in act 3, scene 2, set within "The Murder of Gonzago," are designed to move Claudius to reveal his own culpability in the death of his brother. In this plotting, we see Hamlet wrestling with several vocational identities—to his mother, to his king uncle-father, and to the ghost of his father. How he centers these vocational identities, however, is rather unclear.

While most of the centering and living out of vocational identities in *Hamlet* present negative examples, the dynamic lens and complicated sets of community, family, and personal reflection presented in this one act highlight some of the difficulties in centering vocational identity. This brief description provides an introduction into my reading of *Hamlet*, act 2. More focused and poignant readings are raised up as needed.

There is a danger in choosing a play as a partner for developing a systematic theology that includes worship, especially in a culture caught in something of a post-modern turn. The trend of Modernity was to privatize the worship experience so that each individual in the gathered congregation received worship as a personal experience, thus making the audience of worship each individual in the pew.[9] Jenson keeps the image of a play intact in his theology, shifting the audience of worship from the individual in the

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[8] *Hamlet*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, Compact Edition*, ed. Stanley Wells et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 2.2.606-607. References are to act, scene, and line.

[9] Cf. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger*, particularly the section in chapter 1, "Silence and the Audience"; Parker J. Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

pew to God, particularly the person of Jesus.[10] This shift corrects the ideas of who the actors are, who the audience is, and who worship is for. This corrective lens of Jenson helps focus the imaginative framework for this dissertation. The process of the production and publication of the LBW intentionally fought against this mindset, and part of my research will look into the efficacy of this intent as it was experienced in congregations.

Congregational Partnering

The arguments from David H. Kelsey and Patrick R. Keifert that Christian theological education is most faithful when done in, with, for, and against congregations encourage me to include congregations as partners for this dissertation.[11] I have chosen to intentionally incorporate congregational research as the practical portion of this hermeneutical circle focusing on theological reflection. While it is not possible for this dissertation to exclude either my previous experience in congregations or the body of experiences from those who inform this work, this intentional congregational partnering provides a check for my claims, assertions, and assumptions. To this end, I have tried to catch a sample of congregations from across the Midwest.

My own limitations, both financial and chronological, limit me to four congregational partners who have called their pastors from the roster of Ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA. This somewhat awkward wording comes

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[10] Robert W. Jenson, *Story and Promise: A Brief Theology of the Gospel About Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973). Especially chapter 8, "The Man of Promise."

[11] Patrick R. Keifert, "The Return of the Congregation to Theological Education," in *Testing the Spirits: How Theology Informs the Study of Congregation*, ed. Patrick R. Keifert (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2009); David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

from one congregation that is not a congregation of the ELCA, despite calling their pastors from this roster. The role of this congregation in developing one widely used worship resource, however, justifies this awkwardness.

The four congregations vary in size, location, average weekly attendance, and primary worship resource. The congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota—herein called Gemini—according to its 2013 ELCA Trend Report had a baptized membership of 2,432, a confirmed membership of 1,652, and an AWA of 488.[12] They use *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* as their primary worship resource. The congregation in Billings, Montana—herein called Ouranos—according to its 2013 ELCA Trend Report had a baptized membership of 885, a confirmed membership of 673, and an AWA of 240. They use several primary worship resources, including *Evangelical Lutheran Worship,* but also *Gather* and others, printing everything in the missal for each congregational service. The congregation in River Forrest, Illinois—herein called Potamos—according to their own data had a baptized membership of 1,308, a confirmed membership of 1,053, and an AWA of 437. They use *Lutheran Book of Worship* as their primary worship resource. The congregation in Shawnee Mission, Kansas—herein called Sitos—according to its 2013 ELCA trend report had a baptized membership of 459, a confirmed membership of 254, and an AWA of 562. They have no primary worship resource.

Several helpful comparisons are possible within these four congregations. The congregations with similar AWA use different primary worship resources, and those that at least sometimes use the same primary worship resource have different AWA. Sitos is an outlier in many ways, as should be evident in the unusual discrepancy between

[12] These Trend Reports were all checked on April 2, 2014. A direct link to each will not be given because the congregations can be identified thereby.

baptized membership and AWA. This unique congregation will be discussed more fully in the congregational profiles of the next chapter. The particular nature of Sitos in this sample challenges the otherwise more typical congregations.

I recognize that only a minority of the Regions of the ELCA will be included in this dissertation—another instance of my limited time and resources. I also recognize that none of my congregational partners are in rural settings—a deep concern of mine to which I want to attend in later research. I hope that insights gained from the research and work of this dissertation help to refine its instruments for future use within the ELCA, across various Lutheran bodies in the United States, and across denominational lines.

Theological Reflection

This journey around a hermeneutic circle is intended to produce theological reflection regarding the systematic theology presented herein, current practices, and implications for theological education. Such an approach assumes the discovery of differences and similarities, places to encourage existing practices and theologies, and places to challenge them. Rather than declaring congregational and individual practices right or wrong, faithful or unfaithful, theological reflection pushes to the questions of how we perceive God and what such perception—or lack thereof—does.

The question, "What is God up to here?" is a question of theological reflection. The statement, "God is here and up to something," is a statement of public Christian worship. The interplay of this question and statement points to vocation. Theological reflection, therefore, is part of the centering that happens between public Christian worship and vocation. Because of this, one of my operative assumptions is that all those

who participate in public Christian worship are doing theological reflection, even if unwittingly. Gordon Lathrop's three liturgical theologies help to make this point.[13]

Primary liturgical theology is public Christian worship because worship itself is "the thinking internal to the task of speaking the gospel."[14] Two examples of this can be seen in *Hamlet*, act 2. Polonius' response to Ophelia's declaration of her refusal to see Hamlet at her father's direction is a brief example. A longer moment is the First Player's soliloquy recounting Priam's slaughter.[15]

Secondary liturgical theology is reflection on public Christian worship. The practices of worship planning groups can be seen as falling into this category. I propose that any instance of reflection about public Christian worship—so more than just the congregational service of Word and Sacraments—could fall into this category as well. An example of this in *Hamlet* would be Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of act 2 wherein he reflects on the First Player's soliloquy.

Pastoral liturgical theology is a form of discernment particular to the intersection of reflection on public Christian worship and current issues. It will be argued that this is where most people encounter vocation. The plotting between Polonius and Claudius could be seen as an instance of this in *Hamlet*.[16]

This framework leads me to look for theological reflection in people's daily lives as various forms of secondary and pastoral liturgical theology. My research with the

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[13] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). In particular, the section in the introduction headed, "Primary, Secondary, and Pastoral Theology."

[14] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

[15] *Hamlet*, 2.2.470-500.

[16] Ibid., 2.2.161-169.

partnering congregations seeks to find some insight into how people, mainly those not responsible for planning and leading worship, practice this theological reflection. While I expected the normal grousing about the congregational service, I also expected to hear in that grousing some secondary and pastoral liturgical theology reflecting on how those particular practices de-center vocational identities. I am pleased to report that I was generally wrong about hearing grousing during the member interviews, and was instead directed by that sociological research toward several ways to refine my theology.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation poses the question "How does public Christian worship center the vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?" in hopes that the secondary and pastoral liturgical theology of individual members as evidenced by their practices might inform reflection on the systematic theology developed herein. The four congregations were studied through an exploratory concurrent embedded mixed method strategy emphasizing six to eight qualitative individual interviews and informed by quantitative congregational surveys; individual interviews with the rostered leaders of the congregations and those who function as ministers of Word and Sacraments; panel interviews of the worship planning groups; and archival research in worship missals, congregational newsletters, council minutes, and existing advertising and communication approaches about both the congregational service and also discussion about vocation with particular attention to changes within either of these topics. Each set of interviews and research was conducted over a five-day period with at least four weeks given for completion of the surveys and six weeks for developing the interview roster.

The concurrent embedded mixed method strategy takes into account both a broad sweep of and particular individuals in each congregation. Pairing this strategy with archival research and exploration of the congregation's space provided a deeper view of the formative history of each congregation. The particular histories and stories of

individuals thus had more of a context for interpretation and analysis. The exploratory nature of this research recognized the complex sets of practices within congregations. The significant number of variables reflects this complexity. The work of Wind was particularly helpful in attending to and making sense of this research both while it was being done and in the data analysis.[1]

Variables

The primary challenge with a research question like the one proposed is the sheer number of variables due to the multiple levels of formation. The dependent variable, as I have stated the question, is vocational identity. The independent variables for which I have accounted are the individual's formative history; frequency of public Christian worship including various sacramental practices—as will be developed in the next chapter; the congregation's liturgical order, hymnal usage, the space for the congregational service and how it is used, decorated, and arranged; and communication practices during the congregational service.

Among the seemingly endless list of intervening variables are the age, gender, race/ethnicity, the occupation of the individual and her or his position or positions in the congregation; the formation of a congregation's rostered leaders and worship planning group; how long both the individual and the rostered leaders have been in the congregation; the age of the congregation itself; the congregation's predecessor bodies—given the history of the ELCA; and the congregation's catechetical practices. As I hope these lists of variables make clear, this research studied just one aspect of an entire set of

[1] James P. Wind, *Places of Worship: Exploring Their History* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1990).

mutually formative relationships with an awareness of the many relationships involved both in public Christian worship and vocational identity.

Quantitative Survey

The quantitative survey asks about, in order, place and demographic questions followed by questions about congregational membership and worship practices. Participants then complete the *Christian Faith Practices Survey*, developed by Sherr et al., from Baylor University, and used with permission.[2] Following that, they complete a version of the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* from the International Labour Office as developed by John Hopkins University, and used with permission.[3] The entire survey takes no longer than thirty minutes, and can be found in appendix A. An online version of the survey was made available to each congregation, but none of those internet addresses are currently active.[4]

Subjects were chosen through convenience sampling with the responses weighed according to demographic information to allow for a more equitable comparison. Each congregation was provided with a PDF of the survey for printing paper versions which were to be made available one month before my arrival at the congregation. A link to the online Google Forms version of the survey was distributed through an announcement suitable for printing in bulletins, newsletters, and inclusion on a website. Two versions of

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[2] Michael E. Sherr, James Stamey, and Diana R. Garland, "A Faith Practices Scale for the Church," *Family and Community Ministries* 23, no. 1 (2009). Permission given by Michael Sherr via e-mail on April 22, 2012.

[3] International Labour Organization, *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2011). Permission given by Carmen Jacoby of ILO Publications via e-mail on February 5, 2013.

[4] An active but generic version of the survey can be found at http://tinyurl.com/kwwr4ho (accessed September 17, 2014).

the announcement, one in color and one in grayscale, were sent to each congregation. A grayscale version with a link can be seen in appendix B. Please note that the Google Forms version of the survey is now a generic version.

I presented the rostered or other congregational leaders with both the electronic and paper versions of the survey, leaving it to them to determine which quantitative survey method should be expected to yield highest participation. Two of the congregation had paper versions of the survey on hand when I visited. The overwhelming choice, regardless, was for the electronic version, as only eight of the one hundred seventy-two responses were from the paper version. I encouraged each congregation to make the survey available for four weeks before I arrived and to end on the Sunday or Monday when I was visiting. This varied depending on distribution method, my own clarity of communication, and the number of responses when I arrived. My goal in each congregation was 10% of AWA.

Gemini provided a link to the survey on their website and in congregational communication, with paper versions available in the congregational office, and this provided an adequate number of responses. Ouranos followed the same procedures, but this did not result in enough responses. This may have been due to the timing of my visit as much as anything else. Potamos had a link to the survey on their website and in other congregational communication. Paper copies were available on request, but were not pre-printed. This method did not provide enough responses to reach my goal. Sitos followed a similar approach, but it is worth noting that when I arrived there were very few responses. I raised this up to a rostered leader, who responded by having a staff member share the link via social media. This resulted in the highest per member response from

any of the congregations, although not the highest per AWA—although that hallmark is particular to this congregation—but not enough responses. Given the overall shortfall in responses compared to AWA, I took all of the responses as a group when doing analysis. The statistical rationale for this is presented in chapter 4.

I also intended to use the *Church FutureFinder* from Church Innovations to account for a plethora of data on the location and context of each congregation. I sought help within each congregation to complete this, as it would complete the report for the congregation when I entered the blanched interview summaries. There was inconsistency in completing this element, but since the completed report was intended primarily for each of the congregations, I stopped pushing for completion in January of 2014. This incomplete element did not hurt my research, as I completed the steps of the *Church FutureFinder* for the congregations as a whole on my own.

The quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using SPSS. The ILO's *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* provides its own coding. The rest of the coding was relatively straitgh forward, with the exception of questions 10, 11, 13, and 14 (see appendix A). As I will explain in chapter 4, questions 10 and 11 become superfluous with the *Manual on the Meausrement of Voluteer Work* being included in the survey. Questions 13 and 14 were coded as a binary sequence based on each choice provided.

Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative interviews followed the same general order for all three interview groups—individual members, rostered leaders, and worship planning groups (see appendicies D, F, and G). After a brief welcome, each interviewee was given an informed consent form for us to read together, ask questions about, and sign in several places (see

appendix C). Once signed, the video recorder was activated, dependant on signature or signatures, and we entered into a time of Dwelling in the Word around Luke 10:1-12. A simple prayer followed. The interview continued with the gathering of basic demographic information and moved into the interview prompts. The interviews concluded with a simple prayer and thanking the interviewee or interviewees.

My attire for each interview was generally the same. I dressed business casual in kakies or slacks, a button-down shirt with collar, and a blazer, which was usually on the back of the chair I was sitting on, but no tie or belt. The lack of belt was more of an accident starting from the first visit, so I just continued that way for the rest. I also wore a trimmed, full beard, under the assumption that I look more trustworthy with a beard than without one. The interviews took place in whatever space each congregation was willing to provide for me, as seems fitting following the Luke 10 reading. Whenever possible, an individual interviewee was situated in the room so that they could not be seen from the door but I could be. The panel interviews took place in a variety of areas depending on how many people were part of the panel. In each case, the camera was normally set up behind one of my shoulders, but far enough back that at least a part of me is still in frame.

The individual member interviews lasted no longer than sixty minutes each. The protocol for these interviews can be found in appendix D, and the data gathered for the interviews was recorded on the *Looking and Listening* form from Church Innovations found in appendix E. The introductory paragraph on the *Looking and Listening* form is the only regular deviation from the general interview structure overviewed above. The introduction on that form was read to individual members after the basic data gathering step before the prompts began. The rostered leader interviews lasted no longer than

ninety minutes each. The protocol for these interviews can be found in appendix F. The worship planning group interviews lasted no longer than sixty minutes. The protocol for these interviews can be found in appendix G.

Worship Planning Groups

The worship planning group panel interviews were the most flexible types of interviews. Each congregation determined the recruitment audience. Participation was determined by scheduling, aimed toward fullest possible participation. Each of the groups varried significantly in attendance and scheduling, so each will be described in detail.

The Gemini WPG panel interview took place between the Sunday morning congregational services. There were no rostered leaders present for this interview. Six of the approximately twenety-two members involved with worship planning were present. All present were in their fifties or older, five of the six were women, and four of the six had been members of the congregation for more than ten years. This was the fullest enactment of the protocol of appendix G.

The Ouranos WPG panel interview took place on a weekday afternoon. Three people attended—one rostered leader and two members—out of six. Those who attended were at least in their fifties, with both the members having been at the congregation for more than ten years and the rostered leader between two and five years. There were two males and one female present. Both the rostered leader and the woman were paid staff. One of the members was rather late in arriving, so this panel interview presented 5.c. and 5.c.i. of appedix G as the only prompts.

The Potamos WPG panel interview took place on a weekday afternoon. Three of four people were present and they were all rostered leaders. The absent person is a

member of the congregation, but not on the roster of the ELCA. Two of the rostered leaders are in their thirties and had been at the congregation between two and ten years. The other rostered leader is aged in the sixties and had been at the congregation for more than ten years. Two of the rostered leaders are male and one female. This interview did not include prompt 5.a. from appendix G, as the formation of the group was directly related to their position as rostered leaders in the congreagtion. There was palpable tension in the interview around the worship planning process.

The Sitos WPG panel interview took place on a Sunday afternoon after both congregational services. The congregation provided lunch. Twelve people were present out of thirty, and it was stated that those present all help execute the full Sunday experience. A wide set of ages was present from the twenties to the sixties, and the group was evenly divided between women and men. The two rostered leaders were present for this interivew and one other paid staff member. This group presented a diversity of membership tenures from less than two years to ten years. Due to time restirictions, the size of the group, and the various functions of the group, the prompts were particular to this congregation. I asked those present to answer the prompt, "What is your role in the worship team?" as they were introducing themselves. This change from prompt 5.a. in appendix G was an adaptation to congregational language. Prompt 5.b. in appendix G was skipped, accounting for time. During the panel responses to prompt 5.c.i., a vacuum cleaner started up in the building and dramatically affected the audio portion of the recording.

Rostered Leader Interviews

All of the rostered leaders intervewed except one are on the roster of the ELCA. Since not all of the congregations are congregations of the ELCA but they all have rostered leaders from the roster of the ELCA, the research question is phrased as "associted with" the ELCA. The one rostered leader who is not on the roster of the ELCA is from a non-Lutheran denomintion with a different ecclesial structure, but by and large functions in a manner equivelant to a rostered leader of the ELCA. All of the rostered leaders in each of the congregations were interviewed.

Member Interviews

Recruitment for the interviews of members was decided using a systematic random sample of an alphabetical list of members aged 21 and older. I created alphabetical segments of ten names and randomly picked one name from each block of ten using a ten-sided die dropped through an entropy tower. My upper age limit was 85, and if I could tell that the age of the chosen person was higher, I rerandomized. Relying on the information the congregations sent me did result in one member interview of a person who was 86. If the last block was less than ten names, I still followed the same pattern. If the number on the die correlated with a name, then I added that name to the list, and if not, then the list was completed with the name from the previous block.

The resulting list of ten percent of the membership of the congregation was sent back to the congregation so they might remove any of those names. I gave the congregations as little guidance as I could get away with in the removal of names from this list. I never asked why someone's name was removed, but I know through conversation with the rostered leaders and administrative assistants that some names were

removed because the person was no longer a member of the congregation and some were removed because the person did not want to be contacted. Two of the congregations had no names for me to remove from the systematic random sample, the other two had me removed about ten percent of the list I provided them.

Once I had a finalized list, I began contacting the people on the list with the available contact information, preferencing e-mail over phone contact when there was a choice. I went through every list and was able to find between six and eight people in each congregation who were willing to be interviewed. I probably could have found more in each congregation, but my own schedule limited me to this number.

One of the benefits of the *Church FutureFinder* is that it does not matter in which oder the questions are asked. That being said, however, I did develop an order that seemed to flow well through the interviews (see appendix D). The order for the Gemini interviews was 5.a., 5.b., 5.f., 5.d., 6.b., 6.a. (i., ii., or iii. if needed), 5.c., and 5.e. This resulted in me flipping the protocol printout too many times during the interview, so the Ouranos and Sitos interviews followed this order: 5.a., 5.b., 5.f., 6.a. (i., ii., or iii. if needed), 6.b., 5.e., 5.c., and 5.d. The Potamos interviews followed a slightly different order: 5.a., 5.b., 5.e., 5.f., 6.a. (i., ii., or iii. if needed), 6.b., 5.c., and 5.d. Given the chance to use this protocol again, I would use the order followed at Ouranos and Sitos. I cannot say that the results were effected, but the overall flow of those questions felt better. Juxtaposing the visioning prompt (5.e.) and the conflict promt (5.c.), then ending with the anxiety and hope promopt (5.d.) seemed to bring the interviews to a better conclusion.

The *Church FutureFinder* also has room for user-generated questions. These are easily identifiable in appendix D as the “Vocational Identity Questions.” The follow-up

prompts to 6.a. were used if the interviewee's response was only congregationally focused (6.a.i.), was fairly clear about the tasks involved but not how they related to each other (6.a.ii.), or did not talk about their family (6.a.iii.). There were more interviews where none of these follow-up prompts was asked than there were interviews when they were asked.

Other Notes

The quantitative data was analyzed both through the *Church FutureFinder*'s summary of individual interviews and a word by word coding of all of the interviews using NVivo. It is also worth noting that I varried from the model of the *Church FutureFinder* in personally doing the interviews rather than training members of the congregations to do them. As this was exploratory research, I feel confident that this approach gave me enough information to shape further research without taking too much of my time in the process.

Archival and Artifact Research

My scheduled visits included at least six hours of archival research in each congregation looking through council minutes, annual reports, newsletters, and missals. I searched these archives looking for refernces to vocation, worship, changes in worship, instances of worship, or particular sacramental practices. Of particular interest to me were times of transition between hymnals and calls for vocational awareness happening outside of occupational settings.

All of the congregations provided me with free access to significant amounts of data. Gemini and Potamos both gave me access to their centenial books, allowing me to see how they told their own story about vocation and worship. Oruanos and Sitos are both

congregations that have been established in my lifetime, and I was able to look through all of their available material.

I also took numerous photographs and recorded a walk around the physical property of each congregation, taking special care to photograph the artifacts that occupied places of importance and those that I was told were signficant by the members or rostered leaders of the congregation. While I cannont share any of the photographs or videos, they provide a helpful reference points for me in the analysis.

Journaling

I kept a journal throughout this research process. Reflecting on what I wrote allowed me to keep a healthier perspective on what happened during the research and—once the research was done—brought to light some theological insights. There are two things worth noting from my journal. First is the pushback toward the research I received from each congregation involved, including two that ended up choosing to not be involved. Second is reflection on the Luke 10:1-12 passage that served as the Dwelling in the Word text for all of the interviews. There is more I would like to share but will not because doing so would not be helpful to this project.

Pushback

That there was pushback to my research should not come as a surprise to anyone who has done research in communities. The surprise to me was that each of the congregations that agreed to have me visit pushed back about the quantitative survey. Some common concerns included the number of surveys the congregation had recently done, the kind of information I was collecting, and the length of the survey. As I reflected on this pushback, I came to the realization that it was an expression of the rostered

leaders showing concern for their congregations. I was, after all, asking each of the congregations to take on a significant number of tasks.

There was some pushback regarding the member interviews, but these instances reflected the particular congregation. One rostered leader expressed surprise at the number of people on the potential contact list I sent back to them who were no longer members. The number was just above ten percent, which did not surprise me, but given the tenure of the rostered leader who was my primary contact in that congregation and the conversation that followed, I have a feeling that the membership roster will be updated soon. Another rostered leader was concerned with what I would be doing with information on the membership list, reflecting a concern for what the congregation does with the members' contact information.

Another kind of pushback was to involvement in the research at all. This project was initially envisioned to span from coast to coast in the United States across five congregations. The West Coast was removed from the project when a rostered leader became incommunicative regarding my visit. This happened early enough that I was able to find and include Ouranos, which is not West Coast, but is both West and Midwest in culture and context. The project became four congregations in the mid and upper Midwest when the congregation I had arranged to visit on the East Coast backed out of the project altogether. This happened one month before I was to visit them and after I had already visited two other congregations. The reasons are both complex and would make the congregation identifiable, so they will not be shared here. The result, however, is the more realistic scope you have before you now.

Dwelling in the Word

Many elements of this research took on a new light as I spent more time dwelling with people in Luke 10:1-12. Some of these have already been noted above. For example, I intentionally relied on what was given to me in regard to the WPG interviews and the membership rosters. I will walk through the text here and relate three of the reflections that the Holy Spirit inspired through it.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few…" (Luke 10:2). The Holy Spirit is at work in all of the congregations where I did research. More people should hear the stories people told me. This would change the entire interview dynamic, of course, and so many of those stories would not be told. Creating a safe place to ask deep questions of faith, however, is an achievable goal. Maybe it is time for rostered leaders and other public Christian leaders to learn how to intentionally create such a space and regularly ask such questions.

"Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals…" (Luke 10:4). I almost broke out in laughter during one interview when this passage hit me. Sure, I came to each congregation without a tie or belt, but I did come with a massive case containing a camera, tripod, journal, research storage areas, and a mobile computing device. This text encouraged me, however, to leave behind some unhelpful prejudices about what to expect in these congregations so I might step into each community with clearer questions.

"…eating and drinking whatever they provide…" (Luke 10:7). This was the most powerful part of this text for me in this research. From finding a time for my visit to what was shared in the interviews themselves, hearing this phrase over and over constantly

reminded me to receive whatever was given to me with thanks. This attitude opened me to deep stories that led to helpful—and hopefully insightful—discoveries.

CHAPTER 3

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (ETHOS)

This chapter presents a systematic theology that shows how public Christian worship centers vocational identity. The three parts of the chapter reflect their own hermeneutical circle. In the first part, I explore the Bible, looking at words that are translated as "worship" as a way to raise the tension for what is at stake in the Carolingian reforms and the Lutheran Reformation, showing that an idea of worship as the congregational service is too narrow of a concept, and that public Christian worship is a particular instance of worship that effectively challenges the modern mentality of a disenchanted world. In the second part, I will engage in secondary and pastoral liturgical theology by tracing the role of sacramental practices in congregational services. I show that since the Second Vatican Council a unipolar communion approach to public Christian worship has resulted in a diminution of the sacrament of baptism in congregational life in many mainline Protestant denominations, despite the intent of hymnals like the LBW and ecumenical agreements like the WCC document *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*. Through these two lines of thought, I will be making room for the idea of vocation, to which I will attend in the third part by delving into Lutheran theology and interpretations thereof, concluding with discussion of vocational identity and how public Christian worship can center each person's multiple vocational identities. This hermeneutical circle within a hermeneutical circle helps establish a framework for exploring ideas of worship, shows how reflection on those ideas influenced changes in

sacramental practices over the centuries, and helps reframe an idea of public Christian worship that attends to vocational identities.

What is Worship?

This seems a simple enough question, but the idea of worship is far more complicated than any simple answer. I begin this part in the Bible starting with "worship" in the NRSV, particularly looking at words that have been translated into "worship." This approach may seem backward, but to some extent this is the point.[1] Exploring the biblical idea of worship allows me to challenge the idea of worship expressed in the translation endorsed by the ELCA for use in congregations. This is a limited approach, so the next step looks at some instances of worship in the Bible that are not called worship but fit within the broader idea of worship that will be developed. Through the work of Alexander Schmemann and others, I then briefly touch on the varieties of worship and social expectations around the Constantinian and Carolingian reforms, which provided an overarching shape to worship across the Christian landscape. A fast forward to the Lutheran Reformation reveals some of the failings and faults in the Constantinian and Carolingian reforms by asking the central question of faith: Where do you place your trust? This section in particular provides the start of a different idea of worship by beginning with the relationship between worship and trust, moving to experiences of public worship that need not be Christian, then looking to Christian worship, and ending with a fuller picture of public Christian worship—a picture that will be carried forward into the next part of the chapter.

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[1] Here I work within Gadamer's insight into the challenges of translation and what those challenges reveal about those who translate and those who accept and use the translation. Cf. Gadamer, Weinsheimer, and Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 385ff.

Biblical Witness

The biblical texts present significant ambiguity around the idea of worship. This may come as a surprise, given all the particular elements from the Bible that we use as sacramental practices in many and various ways.[2] The biblical words translated as "worship" create a different image, however, and are worth exploring. In the Old Testament, the two word roots *chawah* and *'avad* are most frequently translated as worship, with *chawah* providing a semantic range of to bow and to worship while *'avad* provides a semantic range of to work and to serve.[3] The two word roots *proskuneo* and *latrueo* provide similar semantic ranges in the New Testament.[4] The ways these words are used throughout the biblical narrative opens an idea of worship that works within yet also challenges modern ideas including the idea of a disenchanted world.[5] Indeed, "Only by drawing on their differences do the biblical testimonies mutually illuminate,

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[2] For example, the canticle, "Holy, Holy, Holy," which comes directly from Revelation 4:8 and Matthew 21:9 and parallels; or the introduction to the "Brief Order of Confession and Forgiveness" in the LBW, which quotes 1 John 1:8-9; or the words of institution from the synoptic gospels and Paul; or the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6 and Luke 11.

[3] I am not a biblical or linguistic scholar in the original languages of the Bible, so these semantic ranges come from what I could find in translation resources. For words in Hebrew, Francis Brown, Charles A. Briggs, and S. R. Driver, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979). For *chawah*, G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Rev. ed., vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

[4] See footnote above. For words in Greek, Geoffrey William Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich, and Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans and Paternoster Press, 1985); Joseph Henry Thayer and Christian Gottlob Wilke, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996); J. P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1st ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988). For *proskuneo*, Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968). For *latrueo*, Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967).

[5] The phrase "disenchanted world" comes from Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

strengthen, and clarify each other. It is precisely in this way that they can teach us to discover and to experience God's Spirit in our times and our cultures as well."[6]

Instances of the Hebrew word roots *chawah* and *'avad* in Exodus provide an interesting starting place for this exploration. The word root *chawah* describes particular instances of the Hebrews recognizing the action of God, as a descriptor for the relationship between God and the Hebrews, and also as the action that threatens this relationship in the golden calf incident.[7] The word root *'avad* appears when Moses entreats Pharaoh to release the Hebrews as the descriptor of what they would do in the wilderness, and is used to describe what happens when other gods lead them away from their God.[8]

It seems a line could be drawn between these two word roots. Describing what happens when we gather is *'avad*, but what actually happens when we perceive of the presence of God is *chawah*. As much as I would like this to be the case,[9] this line does not hold through the rest of the Old Testament. Judges raises the level of ambiguity by describing the Israelites' relationship to God in Judges 2:7 within the word root *'avad* and using the same root word throughout Judges 10 to describe both the Israelites' relationship to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their relationship the Baals. 2 Samuel adds to the ambiguity by inverting the possible separation made in Exodus.

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[6] Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), Kindle edition, at 1%, location 52.

[7] Recognizing the action of God: Exodus 4:31 and 12:27. Describing relationship: Exodus 20:5 and 23:25. The golden calf reference: Exodus 32:8.

[8] Multiple instances of what Moses says the Hebrews will do: Exodus 4-12. When other gods lead them astray: Exodus 23:24, 33.

[9] Because I am a recovering positivist.

Further instances heighten the ambiguity by using both word roots in the same passage, and often in the same phrase or idea.[10]

The word roots translated as worship in the gospels are overwhelmingly from the word root *proskuneo*, which runs in a semantic range similar to *chawah*. Instances of other words translated as worship are so rare that I can present them here. The quote of Isaiah 29:13 in Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7 uses *sebo*, more solidly in the semantic range of worship than any word root so far.[11] Luke and John use words from the root *latrueo*, which runs in a semantic range similar to *'avad*. In Luke, this occurs at Jesus' temptation and resurrection.[12] In John, the instance during Jesus' farewell discourse is a prophetic explanation of the rationale of the actions of persecutors of the church, which notes that those who persecute the church will do so because they think they are offering to God service or worship. Outside of the gospels, *proskuneo* takes a back seat to *latrueo* until we get to Revelation, where *proskuneo* jumps off the page as the consistent descriptor for the relationship between a people and a god—either Christ or the anti-Christ; there is no distinction. The word root *latrueo* is translated twice as worship in Revelation, both times to describe the actions of humans in the presence of the throne of God and the Lamb.[13]

The dominant word root outside of the gospels and Revelation translated as worship is *latrueo*, which as noted above runs in a semantic range similar to *'avad*. The less ambiguous *sebo* makes the occasional appearance, and *proskuneo* is not entirely

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[10] Cf. 1 Kings 25:53; 2 Kings 21:3; 2 Chronicles 33:3; Jeremiah 8:2, 13:10, 16:11, 22:9, 25:6.

[11] See footnotes 3 and 4 above. For *sebo*, Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

[12] Luke 4:7-8; 24:52.

[13] Revelation 7:15; 22:3.

absent, but between the gospels and Revelation, the idea of worship has overtones of service without drawing a hard distinction between the two. It should be noted here that *latrueo* functions both within both the ideas of worship of and service to—these ideas touch in a New Testament idea of worship.

There are two more word roots from the Old Testament that should be mentioned: *yara'* and *sagad*. The word root *yara'*, which has a semantic range in the area of fear, occurs almost exclusively in 2 Kings 17 as a reflection on the cause of the Assyrian exile—that the Israelites did not have a proper fear of the LORD, did not properly worship the LORD. In a parallel vein, *sagad*, which like *sebo* is more directly in the semantic range of worship, is translated as worship exclusively in Daniel and mostly in chapter 3 for the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. While *yara'* provides an interesting coloration to an idea of worship in the Bible, namely an aspect of fear, *sagad* on the other hand brings little to this discussion.

An aspect of fear and the call to not fear are worth attention as it provides an opening for understanding something about the ideas of worship in the Bible and being in the presence of God. The prophets provide some excellent examples. The call story in Isaiah 6 triggers fear in the prophet because of his sin, a fear that is removed by the touch of a burning coal so that God's call to serve might be heard without fear.[14] The call story in Ezekiel 1-2 has the prophet prostrating himself in the presence of God with that great phrase, "I fell on my face."[15] The sight of the glory of God described in Ezekiel 1 results in the prophet taking a pose of worship. The spirit of God stands him up to receive his

[14] Not a sacramental practice I recommend.

[15] Ezekiel 1:28.

call for service. Recognition of being in the presence of God inspires confession of unworthiness, either expressed verbally or through physical posture, followed by God's declaration of forgiveness, again expressed either verbally or through a change in physical posture, leading to service in God's name.

The prophets may not themselves be sufficient evidence of the ideas of worship in the Bible that involve both prostration and service, but God's call to not fear still provides a guide, and indeed some examples from the gospels and Acts show that the order can change and some parts might be missing. Joseph's dream, for example, has God's call followed by a change in posture,[16] but no clear prostration or declaration of forgiveness.[17] The conversion of Saul starts with the prostration, proceeds to service in Jesus' name, and is followed by a change in posture.[18] The declaration of God's forgiveness happens elsewhere.

I do not mean to suggest some alternate *ordo* for congregational services. I merely want to show that biblical ideas of worship show that a perceived encounter with the divine presence leads to both contrition—sometimes physically expressed—and action in the world. I can thus account for the *chawah*/*proskuneo* and *'avad*/*latrueo* semantic ranges and also begin to make room for vocation in the idea of worship. Worship is, in some sense, what you do when you perceive the presence of the divine.[19]

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[16] Because he wakes up.

[17] Matthew 1:18-25.

[18] Acts 9:1-9.

[19] I will work with the idea of worship developed by Richard Sennett and used by Patrick R. Keifert; cf. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger*; Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*.

History and Development in the Church

Given the many ideas of worship in the Bible, it should not come as a surprise that a preponderance of sacramental practices developed. As the relationship between the church and world changed, a multitude of practices could not last too long. This relational change necessitated changes in sacramental practices that resulted in hierarchical control of the *ordo* and other expressions of worship in the church. A thumbnail review of the history can trace some of the major events.[20]

Encountering the historical texts of the sacramental practices of the early church can be overwhelming, especially given the complexity of social realities that lead to the creation of such documents. Schmemann notes that the early creativity in the sacramental practices of the church reflected local reception of the gospel, and when written down, describe those local sacramental practices.[21] The sacramental practices of both baptism and communion marked the church as something new rather than any prescribed or universal *ordo*.[22] Sacramental practices varied widely as the level of persecution experienced by the church in any given place or time had a direct impact on worship practices. The Constantinian legalization of Christianity in the fourth century as a legal religion, as Schmemann notes, changed the relationship between Christianity and the cultures where it found itself. The complete adoption of Christianity as the Roman

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[20] Some other, more complete sources on these historical developments are Ralph R. Van Loon and Paul Westermeyer, *Encountering God: The Legacy of Lutheran Book of Worship for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Kirk House Publishers, 1998), 57-65; Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments: History and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976); Anton Baumstark and Fritz West, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011).

[21] Alexander Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Portland, ME: American Orthodox, 1966), 29.

[22] Ibid., 47-51.

religion in the eighth century created a need for a large-scale catechumenate against the vacuum of the abandoned paganism that worship itself could provide.[23]

Constantinian legalization heightened the tension in the polarity between secular and sacred in those intervening centuries. As Schmemann notes, "Monasticism arose as an almost unconscious and instinctive reaction against the secularization of the Church."[24] This reaction was not a break of relationship because the monastic communities created sacramental practices that over time made their way into congregations. We still see this relationship in effect today through intentional communities such as Holden Village and Taizé. It is worth noting that the church has a tradition of adopting sacramental practices of intentional communities for broader use as a regular element of the secular-sacred polarity. Schmemann calls this element "the return of the monasteries into the world."[25] The desire to be faithful while living in the world sent—and sends—the church looking for sacramental practices that help people perceive the presence of God. As the relationship between the world and the church moved from persecuted to acknowledged to expected, the church kept these monastic sacramental practices and sought to create more.

The abundance of creativity shifted focus when the church's relationship with the world tipped the political scale and the church claimed the one thing we confess we never actually have—control. The Carolingian reforms reflected a change in the relationship between the world and the church. The ecclesiastical structures that resulted in the

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[23] Ibid., 73-74, 76-77, 86-88.

[24] Ibid., 102.

[25] Ibid., 112.

primacy of the Roman pontiff made possible an official relationship between ecclesiastical and political structures in the West. The political dynamics around the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor laid the groundwork for the clericalism that developed following the Constantinian reforms.[26]

The demands of the world for a clear and uniform *ordo* reflected the control the world was asserting over the church. This relationship between the ecclesiastical structures of the church and the political structures of the world gave the church a way to enforce uniformity of sacramental practices through hierarchy.[27] This uniformity created a catechetical system that reinforced the new ecclesiastical and political structures, providing paths for those with the desired to grab and keep power. This hierarchical structure demand obedience, which inevitably lead to rebellion.[28]

Lutheran Confessional Understandings

The Lutheran Reformation was not the first form of rebellion against the Catholic Church, yet one particular idea that came out of the Lutheran Reformation revealed the morphological fundamentalism[29] of Catholic thought—the idea of what a god is. In this brief walk through the first fifteen hundred years of the church, a change in the place of trust can be seen as the relationship between the church and the world changed.

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[26] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945), chapter 1; Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 78.

[27] Pfatteicher's chapter, "The Blood in Our Veins: Lutheranism's Liturgical Lineage," in Van Loon and Westermeyer, *Encountering God*, 57-58.

[28] Alexander Schmemann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), chapter 8, section 4.

[29] I first encounter this incredibly helpful phrase in George W. Webber, *The Congregation in Mission: Emerging Structures for the Church in an Urban Society* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964).

Schmemann notes that the Constantinian reforms made room for a clericalism that reflected the belief of mystery cults in the efficacy of sacramental practices—the sacramental practices themselves were seen as salvific, so trust the priests to lead sacramental practices correctly.[30] Paired with the control granted by the Carolingian reforms, a legalistic mentality regarding worship was born in which the trustworthiness and reliability of worship depended on the sanctity of the priest properly reciting the liturgy. Perceiving the presence of that which is trustworthy and reliable was as easy as looking at the priest who was doing the worship for you.

In reaction against this move, Martin Luther took an interesting theological step by taking an honest look at what a god is:

> A "god" is the term used for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart. As I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God.[31]

This reframing of what a god is revealed the idolatry behind the morphological fundamentalism in the Catholic Church.

The focus on trust finds expression in the emphasis on the proclamation of the gospel in worship. This single act becomes the focus as evidenced in several particular worship practices—the sermon, the preface to communion, and confession.[32] The focus

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[30] Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 81-82, 97-100.

[31] LC 1.2-3.

[32] See AC 5 for the sermon, AC 12 for confession, and for the preface to communion see Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass*, Grove Liturgical Study 30 (Nottingham, England: Grove Books, 1982), 22.

on proclamation emphasizes the creativity of local congregations, and returns the Spirit's gift of faith in Jesus to the center of the Christian life.[33] By moving trust away from some ecclesiological or liturgical fundamentalism and focusing on the gift of faith, the Lutheran Reformation attempted to give up the control the Catholic Church had claimed.

God's action in the world as part of the relationship between the church and the world changes all the relationships. The Spirit moves in the world creating the church. The church only has a relationship to the world because the Spirit both calls the church out from the world by the gospel and sends the church into the world by the gospel. In public Christian worship, both at the building where the congregation gathers, but also at home and at work, the church empowered by the Spirit receives and proclaims the gospel. Through the eyes and ears of faith given by the Holy Spirit, we can perceive the presence of God and thus worship. That would be sufficient if there were only one god in which to believe, but this was Luther's insight—there are many gods.

Public Christian Worship

I have worked myself into a strange place now, which was the point of this, where worship is what one does when one perceives the presence of the thing on which one's heart relies, in which one's trust is placed. So attending to your child's soccer game might be idolatrous worship. Checking the stock markets throughout the day might be as well. Even what you do when watching a professional sporting event might be idolatrous worship, as a recent beer commercial claims, because superstitions are only strange if

[33] AC 7 and SC 2.6.

they don't work.[34] Every action can be viewed as a sacramental practice, and it might not clearly be in Jesus' name—it may actually be serving or worshipping another god.

Elizabeth Drescher, in her presentation to the 2012 Missional Church Consultation at Luther Seminary, noted that feelings of intimacy and belonging—two hallmarks of the Modern idea of worship—are found in digital media around four kinds of relationships, a framework she called the "Four F's"—family, friends, fido (for animals, often pets, but not always), and food.[35] These feelings of intimacy and belonging through digital media and social networks were self-identified by both those who considered themselves Christian and those who classified themselves as belonging to no faith group. I wonder about a relationship with food as relationships can happen around food, but the practice of taking a picture and publishing it through social media may show something else is at work. In any case, even eating might be idolatrous worship.

Relationships with family and friends have a public character, even if Modernity would say they are entirely private. The public-private tension is present in relationships, but they are still public in that they involve more than one person. One can think of intimate moments when a claim of "entirely private" might apply, but even in those moments the complex set of relationships that any one individual has interact with the complex set of relationships the other person has. As a pastor and theologian, I experience moments during what could be seen as private, intimate conversations that the other person tells me she or he does not have elsewhere. All the people and events that

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[34] Anheuser-Busch Inbev, "Very Superstitious," Translation, http://www.adforum.com/creative-work/ad/player/34479033 (accessed June 9, 2013).

[35] Luther Seminary, "Luther Seminary - 2012 Review," Luther Seminary, http://www.luthersem.edu/mission/consultation/2012/consult_overvw.aspx?m=4482 (accessed June 10, 2013).

have shaped my theology and pastoral identity become part of those private conversations, making them public. All of our relationships matter.

Since relationships matter, our emotions also play a role in worship and may lead to particular sacramental practices. Geoffrey Wainwright's list of "moods" and "attitudes" is helpful here: a) adoration, b) confession of sin, c) proclamation and thanksgiving, d) commitment, e) intercession, f) expectation, g) absence, and h) wrestling.[36] While not an exhaustive list, Wainwright's range of emotional expressions in worship provides enough complexity for attending to relationships and how they provide insight into what we do when we perceive the presence of a trustworthy, reliable thing.

In thinking through this expanded idea of worship, we need to avoid a place where all the things in which one could trust or on which one's heart could rely are bad, save for God. Indeed, quite the opposite is true. It is a good thing to hope that your child has fun when playing soccer, and maybe even does well. It is a good thing to trust that wise investments will help to fund retirement. It is a good thing to have repeated practices for community events that encourage a sense of belonging by enabling participation. The challenge is to follow the first commandment and keep as ultimate that which is ultimately trustworthy and reliable—namely, God. Working through some of the examples above within the framework from Drescher and the moods from Wainwright, the move to public worship is possible.

Attending your child's soccer game contains at least one of Drescher's "Four F's"—family—and may also include friends, fido, and food, so that framework is present. Wainwright's list of moods and attitudes can also be there, leading to some

[36] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1980), 37-44.

sacramental practice. Adoration is simple enough to imagine, especially with the youngest age groups as they all rush around the ball. Confession of sin may happen—"Sorry I'm late for the game: got caught at work." Proclamation and thanksgiving, certainly—"That was my daughter! Way to go, honey!" Commitment is a possibility as well—"We should get him some new cleats and sign him up for a summer league." Intercession may come up between parent and referee. Expectations abound—"If she's good enough, she may get a scholarship," "I just hope he has fun," "I hope she gets a goal this game." Absence may even be present in a parent's displaced hopes being put on the child. Wrestling may happen in any of the relationships present—getting the child to the game, between parents and coaches and referees, between parents at several different levels.

A more complicated example is the stock market, mostly because the role of Drescher's "Four F's" depends on where a person stands in relation to the market. It seems doubtful that the average market trader is there among family, friends, fido, or food, but they could be there because of any of these four. A more common relation to the stock market is checking the closing market prices, a practice which may share the framework from Drescher's "Four F's." The common thing being chased here is probably best grasped when thought of as "the good life," or what Ellen T. Charry calls "human flourishing."[37] This is a complicated idea and covers many angles, some of which will be explored shortly.

The last example of public worship—that of seeing a professional sporting event—provides a chance to look briefly at the largest such event in the United States:

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[37] Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*.

the Super Bowl. Drescher's "Four F's" are overwhelmingly apparent. Family and friends gather for the game in places all over the world. Fidos of various kinds will also watch the game, or will at least be engaged by the emotional states of the people present. Food is one of the classic Super Bowl advertising markets. In this third example, I will skip over Wainwright's moods and attitudes to some sociological research that shows they are present. Thomas Joiner's book, *Why People Die by Suicide,* notes that as the Super Bowl has become more of a public event in the United States, the day of the Super Bowl has a statistically significant lower number of suicides than average. This is proof for Joiner's hypothesis "that suicide rates on Super Bowl Sundays would be lower than on comparison Sundays, but only from the mid-1980s on, when the Super Bowl was firmly entrenched on the national consciousness as an occasion for social gathering." [38] The emotional power of belonging—what Joiner calls, "pulling together"—inspires many of the positive moods and attitudes from Wainwright, but even being able to participate in the arguments about questionable calls—or Wainwright's wrestling—can be present as a sacramental practice.[39]

But what is being worshipped? What is the perceived presence of the trustworthy, reliable thing? The complicated idea of "the good life" springs to mind, and is used by many as a way to present things as trustworthy and reliable. A quick internet search turns up uses of "the good life" for lifestyle choices, psychological models, and active marketing.[40] In the earlier examples, many trustworthy, reliable things might be present.

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[38] Thomas Joiner, *Why People Die by Suicide* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 131.

[39] Ibid., 132.

[40] One example of lifestyle choices is "The Good Life," StarTribune, http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/goodlife/ (accessed June 20, 2013). An example of psychological models is Christopher Peterson, "The Good Life," Psychology Today,

The soccer game could include displaced hopes, hope for financial gain through professional sports, or maybe a good education made possible by an athletic scholarship. Involvement in the stock market presents hope for the future through investment in the present and may come from a desire to not burden children upon retirement in old age or a hope for financial gain. Super Bowl suicide rates generally show that social involvement is a source of hope, but there are populations where the hope placed on this particular game becomes life consuming.[41]

For Christians, at least up until the Enlightenment, the transformative effect of God's relationship with us shaped "the good life," as Charry's thesis points out: "the classic theologians based their understanding of human excellence on knowing and loving God, the imitation of or assimilation to whom brings proper human dignity and flourishing."[42] The western reshaping of "the good life" from human flourishing to economic prosperity through the Enlightenment and into Modernity was another step toward the disenchanted world.[43] Removing God's relationship with us from public conversation helped to downplay some levels of religious conflict, while centering public life on economic prosperity changed public conversation and imagination in the West.

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http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-good-life (accessed June 20, 2013). There are many examples of active marketing. One such is Craig Wetherby and Tim Brodhagen, "Thegoodlife!," The Good Life, http://www.wearethegoodlife.com/blog/ (accessed June 20, 2013).

[41] Gary Taylor. "For Compulsive Gamblers, Super Bowl Outcome Could Be Life or Death." *Orlando Sentinel*, February 2, 2011. http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-02-02/news/os-super-bowl-gambling-20110202_1_problem-gamblers-compulsive-gambling-pathological-gamblers (accessed June 2, 2013).

[42] Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, 18.

[43] As noted in Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

Hamlet presents a case study on this shift in the two ill-fated friends of Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, while also providing a chance to explore Drescher's Four F's and Wainwright's moods and attitudes when it comes to responding to a very particular vocational calling. The relationships between Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, and Hamlet are never fully explored in *Hamlet* itself. The derivative work, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, reads into *Hamlet*, providing clearer motivations for why Rosencrantz and Guildenstern come to Denmark.[44] The following case study presents the ambiguity behind their motivation, highlighting competing ideas of what "the good life" might be.

Shakespeare leaves substantial ambiguity around the appearance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. We know they were sent for, but not much else. Claudius tells us that Hamlet grew up with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and Gertrude tells us that Hamlet speaks of them much—although he has yet to say anything about them at this point in the play.[45] Hamlet calls them "my ex'llent good friends" when they meet, and the following repartee shows something of the character of their relationship, or at least enough for Hamlet to have reason to question their claim about why they are in Denmark.[46] Friendship, one of Drescher's Four F's, may be at work here, but so may something else—food. In either a literal or metaphoric sense, or some combination, an invitation from a king to "vouchsafe your rest here in our court some little time" is an invitation to

[44] *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, written and directed by Tom Stoppard, DVD (Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 1990).

[45] *Hamlet*, 2.2.11-21.

[46] Ibid., 2.2.226ff.

partake in the food and shelter provided be the king.[47] The chance to live off of the wealth of a king for a time may also be at work here. The public nature of the relationships at work between these five people—Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern—is palpable whatever the motivating factors. A shift in an understanding of relationships can be seen even in just trying to figure out why Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are in Denmark. Claudius purchases the friendship between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for his own ends—a utilitarian approach indicative of Modernity. The move of Modernity to remove God from public conversation and replace it with economic prosperity is heightened when we attend to the absence of an official voice of the church. Shakespeare does not present a representative of the church until act 5 at Ophelia's funeral, and only then as officiant and enforcer.[48]

The shift into Modernity is not straightforward, however. Remember Polonius' line, "I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,/ Both to my God and to my gracious King."[49] Remember, too, the brief exchange between Guildenstern and Gertrude showing that at least the queen still has a place for faith in public life and that Guildenstern is at least willing to give it lip service.[50] Intimacy and belonging are at work here between friendship and food, but Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also show moods and attitudes of worship.

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[47] Ibid., 2.2.13-14.

[48] Ibid., 5.1.217-237.

[49] Ibid., 2.2.44-45.

[50] Ibid., 2.2.38-39.

Hamlet pulls Rosencrantz and Guildenstern into wrestling with each other verbally, which seems to have been a normal part of their relationship.[51] Hamlet's turn to darker metaphors seems to throw Rosencrantz and Guildenstern off, an unbalancing that Hamlet turns into a confession about why they are in Denmark.[52] Here we have two of Wainwright's moods and attitudes: wrestling with one they deem worthy of honor, which is shown in the way Rosencrantz and Guildenstern address Hamlet during the repartee; and confession of sin, even if the nature of the sin is ambiguous. The relationships between these five characters show elements of public worship, although I would be hard pressed to call it Christian. The relationships at work here present an expansion through Modernity to relationships with other gods that eschew the label, but are still related to as such.

In the midst of all this relational talk, surely there exists some sense of private worship made possible with this broader sense of worship. It would involve a self-perception that moves one to action, but the question is to what end. If the self is that which is trustworthy and reliable, what is the point, what is the hope? Working through Wainwright's list, egocentric solipsism seems a possibility, but the other moods and attitudes either expect some other to be present or can be seen as an aspect of egocentric solipsism—for example, thanking myself is possible, if awkward, but proclaiming myself assumes someone to whom I can proclaim. Even an attitude of seeing or using other people as things for my own betterment or enjoyment requires other people and is thus

[51] Ibid., 2.2.226-240.

[52] Ibid., 2.2.241-293.

public. Some kind of egocentric solipsism, then, could be private worship, but other forms are still instances of public worship.

At this point, some particularly Christian elements need to come back into the discussion around the idea of public. Egocentric solipsism works as a form of worship because it describes an idolatrous relationship that I have with myself. This shows, oddly enough, that relationship is part of worship, and particularly a relationship of trust and reliance. The Christian element can therefore be found in the relationships any individual has with God who is revealed in the community of the church, both of which are necessary.

God comes to us through the power of the Holy Spirit to establish a trustworthy and reliable relationship by the forgiveness of our sins. God always initiates this relationship. God chooses revelation, but not always through direct theophany. In establishing a relationship with an individual, God also works through the church, through those who already attend to the relationship that God has established with them. Without the community of the church, no individual can be sure that the god perceived is the same as the God revealed in the person and work of Jesus by the movement of the Holy Spirit. Even in cases of direct theophany, the relationship God establishes drives those individuals to the church for public confirmation of the relationship and participation in the community—the conversion of Saul comes to mind.

One of the promises of baptism, which will be explored below, is that we are made sisters and brothers in Christ. This promise expands the community of the church to include all those who are part of the church by the Spirit's baptism through all time and space. Before this starts sounding needlessly like science fiction, what I seek to raise up

is the communion of saints, the great cloud of witnesses. While we might not always perceive their presence, just like we might not always perceive the presence of God, the promises of God assure us of the reality of this community that waits for us to join them in worship.

This community and the God that creates it and relates to it are always present with every individual who is a part of it—even when that individual does not perceive the presence of this trustworthy, reliable God. Because of this, every instance of shared sacramental practices in any time or place unites each individual with this community, and it is in this community that God reveals to each person the ultimately trustworthy, reliable thing. Baptism and communion, therefore, are necessarily sacramental practices of public Christian worship, but so are instances of family devotions, individual prayer, and any conversations and experiences that help the individual perceive the presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable God.[53]

Interpreting Worship

The creativity in worship that followed the Lutheran Reformation, including several more trips back and forth across the creativity-control polarity, eventually became part of the official Roman Catholic documents of the Second Vatican Council. Adoption of the use of vernacular language, placing communion firmly at the center of the life of the church, involvement of the laity, and other reforms were both informed by and formed other ecumenical relationships. This part begins by presenting the unipolar

[53] "By 'communities of conviction' I mean peoples who are intersubjectively related to one another across time and space by a body of convictions, language patterns, and practices that they hold in common." Cf. Craig R. Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1999), 133.

communion approach of Roman Catholic sacramental practices in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and how the resulting communion ecclesiology influenced Lutheran practices, notably in the creation and use of the LBW. The claims of public Christian worship above affirm and challenge the unipolar communion approach in the life of the church by exploring and expanding the theology of Robert W. Jenson. The work of Peter Atkins in *Memory and Liturgy* brings a neurobiological example to broaden the sense of public Christian worship above. Attention is given to vocation at the end of this part by proposing a bipolar approach to worship in baptism and communion that opens up the community of the church to perceive the presence of the ultimately trustworthy and reliable Jesus. This turn allows exploration of the centering of vocational identities in public Christian worship setting up the third part of this chapter.

Sacramental Focus Following the Second Vatican Council

The massive crowds that gather wherever and whenever the Pope celebrates a public mass have always overwhelmed my imagination. A profound primary liturgical theology is at work in those events that comes from the discussions of the Second Vatican Council. The documents thereof, particularly *Lumen Gentium* and *Sacrosanctum consilium,* present the secondary liturgical theology behind these mass gatherings. The celebration of communion is the kingdom of God, or at least as close as we can get to it in this life.[54]

[54] A note on the language around communion, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, the Last Supper, or what have you: The word or phrase used in describing the church's sacramental practice of dwelling in Jesus' last meal with his disciples before his crucifixion presents complications I will not explore in this systematic theology. However, I will attend to the language used in the interviews during the congregational research portion of this dissertation. In this systematic theology, I make no attempt to change or correct current uses, nor do I change the language of those sources I quote. I use "communion" as my own description of this sacramental practice, recognizing that this is an imperfect and sometimes confusing choice.

The hierarchical ecclesiological structure of the Roman Catholic Church described in *Lumen Gentium* III.28-9 meets sacramental practice in the celebration of communion. A relationship is established between bishops and laity in each direction. For bishops, "it is above all in the Eucharistic worship or assembly of the faithful that they exercise their sacred functions."[55] For the laity,

> all should hold in the greatest esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church. They must be convinced that the principal manifestation of the church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers.[56]

All the people gathered, lay and clergy, have a role in the celebration of communion. The imaginative framework in this relationship comes from the following imaginative vision of the church:

> It is especially in the sacred liturgy that our union with the heavenly church is best realized; in the liturgy, the power of the holy Spirit acts on us through sacramental signs; there we celebrate, rejoicing together, the praise of the divine majesty, and all who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (see Apoc 5:9), gathered together into one church glorify, in one common song of praise, the one and triune God. When, then, we celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice we are most closely united to the worship of the heavenly church; when in one communion we honor and remember the glorious Mary ever virgin, St Joseph, the holy apostles and martyrs and all the saints.[57]

This grand eschatological vision imagined as an action we currently live presents some forms for how other sacramental practices function in Roman Catholic teaching.

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[55] "*Lumen Genitum*: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P., trans. Colman O'Neill, O.P. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 40, III.28.

[56] "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, trans. Joseph Rodgers (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1963), 132-133, I.III.E.141.

[57] "*Lumen Gentium*," 77, VII.50.

Baptism becomes the way into the communion celebration, for "In this sacred rite our union with Christ's death and resurrection is symbolized and effected," however, by "Really sharing in the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another (Rom 12:5)."[58] Baptism is entry into the death and resurrection of Christ, but communion is how people become one church. Such an emphasis necessitates the claim that Christ is always present in the sacramental practices of the church, but communion is held up as the particular centering practice and identity of the church and the lives of lay people—a unipolar communion approach to sacramental practices that flattens the tension of the baptism-communion polarity.[59]

The Second Vatican Council influenced the thinking of other church bodies. Eugene Brand and Thomas Schattauer note the effects of the Second Vatican Council on the development of the LBW and other hymnals.[60] Those involved with the creation of the LBW intentionally tried "to restore to Holy Baptism the liturgical rank and dignity implied by Lutheran theology, and to draw out the baptismal motifs in such acts as the confession of sin and the burial of the dead."[61] So fifteen years after the Second Vatican Council, many Lutheran church bodies in the United States had a new hymnal reflecting the force of the ecumenical and liturgical movements therein.[62]

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[58] Ibid., 6-7, I.7.

[59] "*Sacrosanctum Concilim*," Introduction.2, I.I.7, I.I.10; "*Lumen Gentium*," IV.33 and V.42.

[60] Van Loon and Westermeyer, *Encountering God*, 12, 162.

[61] *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Pew ed. (Minneapolis; Philadelphia: Augsburg Publishing House; Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 8.

[62] Ibid., 7-8; Van Loon and Westermeyer, *Encountering God*, 11-15.

A broad variation of sacramental practices is reflected in the LBW—especially around communion—because of the different practices each of the Lutheran church bodies had, particularly in regards to frequency. Several options were provided to allow for accommodation. For congregations where morning and evening prayer were a regular part of congregational life, the MDE notes that "On Sundays and festivals these liturgies [of daily prayer] may be used in augmented form"[63] to recognize the significance of the day. Another approach is the "Service of the Word," which "may be used at any time a full liturgical order is desired which does not include the Lord's Supper. It may be substituted for the Holy Communion on Sundays when the Sacrament is not to be celebrated."[64] This may be an instance of aspirational rubrics, but they do reflect different possibilities of practice.

There is the note, however, that,

> Within Lutheran circles it has become customary to use the first part of the Holy Communion for Sunday services when the Sacrament is not celebrated. A method for concluding the service following the Creed is provided for those times when there is no Communion.[65]

This direction for a new pattern that used the liturgical order and music for a celebration of communion even when communion was not being celebrated helped congregations to learn the liturgies for the celebration of communion.[66] The same direction also reflected the desire for more frequent celebration of communion, and probably helped to ease the

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[63] *Lutheran Book of Worship: Ministers Desk Edition*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg; Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 15.

[64] Ibid., 32.

[65] Ibid., 26.

[66] This may have been an unintended consequence, but the change of the general order from a worship without communion to one with communion but with an optional non-communion ending made this a practical reality; cf. Van Loon and Westermeyer, *Encountering God*, 24.

transition in some congregations. An earlier rubric gives the reason: "The Augsburg Confession regards the Holy Communion as the chief act of worship on Sundays and other festivals (Article 24)."[67]

Five years later, after the publication of the LBW and motivated by those same ecumenical and liturgical forces, the WCC produced the ecumenical statement *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*.[68] Evidenced here is a movement toward a unipolar communion approach to sacramental practices not explicitly present in the LBW. The section on *Eucharist* in BEM provides several examples that reflect the eschatological vision of the Second Vatican Council.[69] The ELCA, in a 1989 statement and a 1997 document, push the issue.

> The earliest Lutheran practice provides an appropriate goal for the frequency of celebration of the full service of Word and Sacrament. "In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals when the Sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved" (AP XXIV, 1).
>
> Congregations are encouraged to move toward this goal because the complete service of Holy Communion embodies the fullness of the Means of Grace, because it provides an excellent focus for the whole Christian life and mission, and because it witnesses to our confessional and ecumenical heritage. Our parishes are encouraged to provide for weekday celebrations for the increasing number of Christians whose schedules make Sunday Communion difficult.[70]

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[67] *Lutheran Book of Worship: Ministers Desk Edition*, 25.

[68] Van Loon and Westermeyer, *Encountering God*, 18-20.

[69] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper; No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), Eucharist paragraphs 11, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 30.

[70] The American Lutheran Chruch and Lutheran Church in America, *A Statement on Communion Practices* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978), 7. This document, although not from 1989, seems to be the actual document referenced in *The Use of the Means of Grace*, 26n35, 39n63, 41n65, 41n67, 44n69, 48n79, 49n81, 50nn82-3, 52n86, 53n87. The 1978 joint statement of the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America was officially adopted as the statement on communion practices for the newly formed ELCA in 1989; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Churchwide Assembly, *Reports and Records–1989* (Chicago, IL: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1989), 450-451. The ELCA Archives has no other document. Conversation and communication with those who were

This was reiterated and expanded in 1997:

> *Principle* 35: According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Lutheran congregations celebrate the Holy Communion every Sunday and festival. This confession remains the norm for our practice.
>
> *Background* 35A: The church celebrated the Holy Communion frequently because the Church needs the sacrament… For a variety of historical reasons, Lutherans in various places moved away from the weekly celebration of the sacrament.
>
> *Application* 35B: All of our congregations are encouraged to celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly, but not every service need be a Eucharist.[71]

The effect of these admonitions is debatable. I was raised with a weekly celebration of communion, but my first call in 2003 only celebrated communion twice a month. The effect of the Second Vatican Council is still present at a denominational if not congregational level, however, especially since before the publication of *The Use of the Means of Grace*, the ELCA did not have its own statement about baptism or baptismal practices or a similar mutual statement from any predecessor bodies.[72]

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part of the 1989 ELCA Churchwide Assembly or the group that drafted *The Use of the Means of Grace* have turned up no other document.

"The 1989 Statement on Communion Practices is really just an adoption of the 1978 Statement on Communion Practices…. The minutes do not reprint the text of the statement, and I have not found any copies of a republished version, just this original 1978 version. This copy was in a folder of pre-Task Force Documents in the records of the Task Force on Sacramental Practices, which was put together in 1993 to develop the 1997 statement The Use of the Means of Grace." Taken with permission from an e-mail sent to the author by Joel Thoreson, E-mail message to author, June 26, 2013. The administrative history is in appendix H and the finding aid is in appendix I.

"In 1989, the ELCA adopted as its own statement the joint ALC and LCA Communion Practice Statement from 1978. I am sure that the 1978 Statement could be found in LCA and ALC minutes and that the ELCA re-adoption could also be so found. We had copies of this 1978 Statement when I was working on the UMG [*The Use of the Means of Grace*] task force, but I do not any longer have one." Taken with permission from an e-mail sent to the author by Gordon Lathrop, E-mail message to author, June 28, 2013.

[71] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 39.

[72] "Writing a church statement on Baptism was relatively new, untested in many ways, though done before us by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (and by the Lutheran group at the North American Academy of Liturgy). Given that newness, I think the UMG [*The Use of the Means of Grace*]

Another instance of a unipolar communion approach to the sacramental practices of Lutherans is the language used to describe what we do. An above quote from the MDE notes that there are "Sunday services when the Sacrament is not celebrated."[73] This language continues into the 1997 document that speaks of the "gift of Word and Sacrament."[74] A valiant attempt is made to indicate that this phrase includes both communion and baptism, but "Part 2: Holy Baptism and the Christian Assembly" and "Part 3: Holy Communion and the Christian Assembly" reveal something else. The body text of Part 2 in this document refers to baptism as a sacrament only once.[75] There are many footnotes that refer to baptism as a sacrament through the titles of other documents, and the missing reference in the body of the text could be overlooked except for the number of instances in Part 3 of communion being referred to as "the sacrament."[76] The 2006 publication of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* reflects some awareness of this use of language and the general movement toward a unipolar communion approach while also expanding the baptismal rites to include more elements of the catechumenate.[77]

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section on Baptism (and on baptismal ethics in Principles 51 and 52) is not bad. There is, of course, more to say about baptism than is said there. We keep learning." Taken with permission from an e-mail sent to the author by Lathrop, E-mail message to author.

[73] *Lutheran Book of Worship: Ministers Desk Edition*, 26.

[74] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, 6, 9, 13, 18.

[75] Ibid., 28, Application 22A.

[76] Ibid., 37, Pinciple 33 and Background 33B; 39, Background 35A; 40, Background 36A; 41, Principle 37; 44, Principle 39; 52, Application 49A.

[77] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Pew ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 6-8. This is why I intentionally include both congregations that have begun using the ELW and those that still use the LBW in my congregational research.

Consciously or not, the ELCA, and probably other denominations, have followed the imaginative vision of the Second Vatican Council and its unipolar communion approach to sacramental practices. Despite the intent of those who developed the LBW and the movement evidenced in ecumenical documents, the sacramental practices of congregations in the ELCA are still mixed but seem to generally reflect a unipolar communion approach. Rather than retread ground covered in the document *The Use of the Means of Grace* or make an argument for a greater awareness of sacramental practices, the idea of public Christian worship developed above allows me to come at the issue from the other direction and turn to the sacramental practices of Christians who perceive the presence of God. I will, however, start with communion because it is the most intimate encounter we can have with Jesus until he returns.

The Place of Communion

It does indeed make sense to give communion a significant place in the life of the church, but there are enough Protestant denominations that do not give a prominent place to communion in their sacramental practices or primary liturgical theology that we should have reason to pause. As Robert W. Jenson notes,

> Divisions of the church have fought for centuries over how many sacraments there are. Hidden real disagreements fueled the dispute; but the argument itself is quite empty. What we in fact have is an indefinite and changing number and variety of dramatic performances belonging to the gospel's life in the church. Which are sacraments depends entirely on what you make "sacrament" mean. One can indeed argue that some of the performances are more important to the church than others, and that some of them are essential; but when the issue is put this way, the main divisions of the church tend to agree.[78]

[78] Jenson, *Story and Promise*, 166.

The challenge, then, is to find space for communion without necessarily embracing all the sacramental practices cited in scripture as sacramental practices of the early church that ought to be continued.

As with so many other things, we have a plethora of possible sacramental practices—practices which the church sets aside as community defining. By general use, communion and baptism are primary examples, but there are many others—foot washing, confession and forgiveness, giving to the poor, preaching and teaching, anointing, visible acts of repentance, prayer, mutual support and consolation, rites of healing, marriage, ordination, etc. All of these practices come to us through the ongoing story of Jesus, or as Jenson says it, "our existence and the existence of all things occur as an event in Jesus' history. We and all things are players and stage for the play of his crucifixion and resurrection."[79]

The Lutheran argument places communion at least near the heart of the Christian life.

> There are so many hindrances and attacks of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint and at times even stumble. Therefore the Lord's Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may be refreshed and strengthened and that it may not succumb in the struggle but become stronger and stronger.[80]

This placement does not come at the expense of baptism however.

> In baptism, therefore, every Christian has enough to study and practice all his or her life. Christians always have enough to do to believe firmly what baptism promises and brings—victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts. In short, the blessings

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[79] Ibid., 133.

[80] LC 5.23f-24.

> of baptism are so boundless that if our timid nature considers them, it may well doubt whether they could all be true.[81]

And yet there is something different about communion, not the least of which is that we have more scriptural rubrics about communion than any other sacramental practice.[82] All of this happens within the context of the community of the church, because "the sacramental presence of the gospel's particular God is not separable from the community it creates."[83] But there is a particular issue around communion that makes it unique among the sacramental practices, the traumatic event that we remember as part of the celebration of communion.

The work of Dirk G. Lange, bringing trauma theory into conversation with liturgical theology, highlights the repetition of the communion rite and the remembrance of a particular kind of event. "The traumatic event is a missed event, a missed encounter with death."[84] Such an event repeated through the sacramental practice pushes the church to constantly wonder, "Why did I survive the death of God?"[85] As Lange points out, "Liturgical celebration, and particularly the Eucharistic celebration, confronts us with this failure of meaning—with the failure of the self, of the individual, to define meaning."[86] The celebration of communion places the death of God before the church more directly than any other sacramental practice, and therefore gives it a unique place among them.

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[81] LC 4.41-2.

[82] Cf. Robert W. Jenson, *Visible Words: The Interpretation and Practice of Christian Sacraments* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), chapter 7.

[83] Ibid., 38.

[84] Dirk G. Lange, *Trauma Recalled: Liturgy, Disruption, and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 7.

[85] Ibid., xi.

[86] Ibid., 123.

This more ambiguous reflection on communion returns us to one of Wainwright's moods and attitudes—namely the experience of the absence of God—as a way of entering into public Christian worship. The presence of ambiguity in other sacramental practices reflects a challenge in the relationships between God, each person, the church, and the world, but in communion, God's relationship to the church for the sake of the world is uniquely highlighted.

Intercessory prayers might fall into a similar kind of ambiguity, but requesting God's assistance around a particular instance or issue is different than the ambiguity expressed in communion. The church gathers around the promised physical presence and absence of Jesus in the elements of bread and wine, holding up the brokenness of the world, and crying out for Jesus to return and heal all of creation.[87] Intercessory prayers, on the other hand, tend to be for particular persons or issues offered to Jesus, who is ubiquitously present and who has promised that the prayers in his name will be heard.[88] The difference lies in how Jesus is present—physically in communion, ubiquitously around prayer.

The difference in kinds of ambiguity among sacramental practices reveals the depths of God's commitment to the world and the many ways the church enters into public Christian worship because of God's actions. Indeed, the primary liturgical theology of public Christian worship presents the church with a particular task in secondary liturgical theology. "The church's task is to *interpret*, in every mode of address, each reality in the world as an occasion of that hope which is there if Jesus lives;

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[87] Matthew 18:20; 26:26, 28; and parallels.

[88] John 14:13-4.

to treat, in words and speaking deeds, each hope and fear as a hope for love's triumph."[89] This hope is expressed in the celebration of communion, and in other sacramental practices as well. The question now is how communion relates to the other sacramental practices—a question that has no single answer, but demands clear reasoning taken as Stephen Toulmin develops the idea of "reasonableness."[90]

At this point, I must return to the Lutheran Confessions, which relate communion and baptism. This approach is not the only one, however, so what follows is not an exhaustive explanation of relationships between sacramental practices, but a particularly Lutheran approach emphasizing the relationship between communion and baptism that opens the way into other sacramental practices. The relationship between sacramental practices can become polemical, as Jenson warns, "to commend certain instituted forms of the gospel and denigrate others."[91] By focusing on sacramental practices as expressions of public Christian worship that open people to participate in God's relationship with the world, the focus becomes participating in God's mission to the world rather than deciding or relying on some kind of morphological fundamentalism. It

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[89] Jenson, *Story and Promise*, 178.

[90] "So, in medicine and other human disciplines, we must remember the difference between the general factual assumptions that support 'reasonable' arguments in the practical arts, and the 'rational' deductions that are the stock-in-trade of mathematically formulated theories." Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason*, Second printing of Harvard University Press paperback ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Kindle edition, at 46%, location 1482. "Certainly the most reasonable estimate a man can make of the probability of some hypothesis depends in every case on the evidence at his disposal—not just any batch he chooses to consider, but *all* the relevant evidence he has access to—but equally, it depends on the same body of evidence whether he can reasonably conclude that a given statement is *true*… In each case, the reasonable conclusion is that which is warranted by the evidence, and the terms 'bearing', 'support' and the like are the ones we use to mark the relation between the statements cited as evidence and the possibilities whose relative credibilities are being examined." Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument*, Updated paperback ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Kindle edition, 75, at 30%, location 1622. Italics in original.

[91] Jenson, *Visible Words*, 11.

is here, around the relationship between sacramental practices, that ecumenical dialogue might find a new conversation for the sake of God's mission.

At this point, it should be stated as clearly as possible that sacramental practices are instances where public Christian worship has been entered into in the past. There will be other forms of worship also happening within most people, and there is the possibility of no worship happening for some. Sacramental practices, however, are historic forms for something to do when one wants to perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus because they have helped others perceive his presence—the ultimately trustworthy, reliable thing of the Christian faith. The perceived presence of Jesus reminds us of his promises and teachings around the sacramental practices. How the sacramental practices relate to each other, then, can be approached by attending to which part of the promises and teachings of Jesus are being emphasized.

As stated earlier, communion is about the relationship between God and the church for the sake of the world, and this is accomplished through the forgiveness of sin, first for those who are celebrating communion and then between Christians and the world as Christians interact with others in the world, people who may or may not be Christian.[92] Already, some of the other sacramental practices of public Christian worship are present—evangelism, prayer, acts of healing, confession and forgiveness, giving to the poor, etc. The Holy Spirit moves through the relationships created between Christians and the world to bring others into the church—one of promises we have from Jesus, and thus we have baptism.[93]

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[92] Matthew 26:28 and parallels; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38.

[93] Luke 11:13; John 7:37-39; 14:15-24; 20:21-23.

The liturgical rite of baptism is the entry rite into the church. As the book of Acts shows us, the Holy Spirit makes the church and the church responds by welcoming people through the rite of baptism.[94] The sacramental practice of baptism is also about the forgiveness of sin, but the relationships being affected here are first the relationship between God and the person through the power of the Holy Spirit, and then the relationship between the person and the church for God's sake. God wills there to be a church through which the gospel might be acted out as part of God's mission in the world. As Jenson notes, "The sacraments are the acting-out, more-than-verbal side of the gospel."[95] Through the baptism of the Spirit, God gathers the church, which baptizes with water those who have been baptized with the Spirit. Through the rite of baptism, the church intentionally enters into the sacramental practices of public Christian worship for the sake of the world.

We now have an admittedly Lutheran framework for the relationship between communion and baptism that encompasses the other sacramental practices. Such an approach has its advantages for congregations, denominations, and ecumenical dialogue. A dramatic tension exists between baptism and communion and the relationships affected by them. Communion is for the sake of the world. Baptism is for God's sake. The church, therefore, lives in the dramatic tension forced by the relationships each Christian and all Christians have with both God and the world. All the other sacramental practices fall into this dramatic tension because they all focus on the Christian's relationship with either the

[94] Acts 8:9-17; 10:44-48; 19:1-7.

[95] Jenson, *Story and Promise*, 2-3.

world or God, even when that tension happens within the person. The church, in its sacramental practices, is bipolar.

The church is bipolar in sacramental practices because there are two sacramental practices at the center of public Christian worship around which the rest move. Communion and baptism together provide the dynamic energy for the church's participation in God's mission. Baptism brings people into the church, and communion sends the church out into the world. Baptism assures people of their salvation, and communion convicts the church with how much the world needs this good news. Baptism establishes people's personal relationships with God, and communion establishes God's communal relationship with the church for the sake of the world. In the midst of this bipolar dynamic, other sacramental practices emerge as moments of entering into public Christian worship.

The church is bipolar in sacramental practices because ecumenical discussions about baptism and communion have divided the church as much as such discussions have helped to bring various denominations together. If baptism and communion are divided by a unipolar approach, allowing for only one as the primary sacramental practice, then manic-depressive cycles develop within denominations and in ecumenical dialogue.

Denominations that have a unipolar communion approach often focus on the relationship between God and the world, leading to expressions of Christianity reflecting autolaborological fundamentalism through social justice action—the manic phase.[96] These same denominations also experience depressive phases, when the unipolar

[96] Yes, I made up the word "autolaborological," but think "works righteousness" and it will become clear. My blog explains more fully: http://theothru.net/blog/2013/4/24/imaginative-relational-worship (accessed May 5, 2013).

communion approach becomes a focus on God's sacrifice for us in the death of Jesus and how much the individual owes God—most often expressed in monastic movements that emphasize withdrawal from the world for the sake of spiritual perfection.

Denominations that have a unipolar baptism approach often focus on moral perfection expressed in the relationship between the individual and God, with a heavy emphasis on choosing Jesus, while they create a congregational ghetto as a safe place for their members to withdraw from the world—the manic phase, and another kind of autolaborological fundamentalism. These denominations experience the depressive phase as individuals question the faith, a questioning that sometimes leads to individuals leaving the congregation, and sometimes the church, entirely.

Ecumenical conversation around sacramental practices also presents manic-depressive expressions. The depressive expression is most generally evident in the lack of dialogue about sacramental practices between denominations with different unipolar emphases—an expression of morphological fundamentalism. The manic expression can be found in ecumenical documents of structural agreement where denominations that share a unipolar emphasis strive for some form of structural unity through specific practices—another expression of morphological fundamentalism. This manic expression can also be found in schismatic separation of denominations around claims of not being pure enough in practices—yet another expression of morphological fundamentalism.

All of these manic-depressive cycles show a need for a bipolar approach to sacramental practices around baptism and communion, which can help counter both parts of the cycle. A focus on baptism makes room for practices that attend to the relationship between God and the person, while a focus on communion makes room for practices that

attend to the relationship between the person and the world because of God. Moving back and forth between these two sacramental practices can help denominations stave off the tendency toward autolaborological fundamentalism within the denomination and morphological fundamentalism in ecumenical conversations.

To be clear, the image of the church suffering from bipolar disorder is a metaphor. The church cannot have bipolar disorder because the church is not an individual. The most recent *Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* from the American Psychiatric Association gives the framework for the above metaphor and also points to the necessary "is not."

The bipolar metaphor when read as a disorder around sacramental practices falls within the definitions from the DSM-5 for the category of the bipolar I disorder.

> The bipolar I disorder criteria represent the modern understanding of the classic manic-depressive disorder or affective psychosis described in the nineteenth century, differing from that classic description only to the extent that neither psychosis nor the lifetime experience of a major depressive episode is a requirement. However, the vast majority of individuals whose symptoms meet the criteria for a fully syndromal manic episode also experience major depressive episodes during the course of their lives.[97]

The DSM-5 clarifies the bipolar I disorder, giving first the essential feature and then the number of necessary criterion.

> The essential feature of a manic episode is a distinct period during which there is an abnormally, persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and persistently increased activity or energy that is present for most of the day, nearly every day, for a period of at least 1 week (or any duration if hospitalization is necessary), accompanied by at least three additional symptoms from Criterion B. If the mood is irritable rather than elevated or expansive, at least four Criterion B symptoms must be present.[98]

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[97] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 123.

[98] Ibid.

Both the "is" and "is not" of the metaphor are already present. The church, in part or in total, can take on moods that extend over periods of time, but at the congregational and ecumenical level, these moods do not fit the time frame, since the moods of the church tend to last months or years rather than days or weeks. The clarification of the general diagnostic with various criterion indicating the bipolar I disorder more clearly show both the metaphoric "is" and "is not."

A metaphorical connection to the manic side of the bipolar I disorder can be seen in the mood of the disorder.

> Mood in a manic episode is often described as euphoric, excessively cheerful, high, or "feeling on top of the world." In some cases, the mood is of such a highly infectious quality that it is easily recognized as excessive and may be characterized by unlimited and haphazard enthusiasm for interpersonal, sexual, or occupational interactions.[99]

The "is" of the metaphor comes from the mood that drives parts of evangelism and ecumenism in reaching out to others without a clear sense of how or why we are reaching out. The "is not" of the metaphor comes from the types of interactions possible between people as opposed to the types of interactions possible between groups of people.

Similar examples of particular criterion for bipolar I disorder show both the "is" and the "is not" of the metaphor. They include markers like engaging "in multiple overlapping new projects," or an "Inflated self-esteem… ranging from uncritical self-confidence to marked grandiosity," which could be seen as elements of the "is" for the metaphor.[100] Other markers would stretch the metaphor to insulting, thus showing the "is not," for example, "Individuals may talk continuously and without regard for others'

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[99] Ibid., 127.

[100] Ibid., 128.

wishes to communicate, often in an intrusive manner or without concern for the relevance of what is said," or "Increased sexual drive, fantasies, and behavior are often present."[101] One of the concluding points from the DSM-5 on the bipolar I disorder points directly to the heart of the metaphor. "The manic episode must result in marked impairment in social or occupational functioning or require hospitalization to prevent harm to self or others."[102] We, who are the church, harm both ourselves and others when parts of the church pit differing unipolar sacramental practices against each other.

The primary "is not" of the bipolar metaphor rests on the difference in operative realities. The bipolar I disorder in individuals is a disorder that can and should be treated through counseling and medication. The church, by its nature, is bipolar, and therefore the differences between unipolar understandings of the church are part of God's gift of the church, not a disorder. As the metaphor pointed out, the problems of unipolar sacramental approaches come from morphological or autolaborological fundamentalism. The problems of fundamentalism are why the unipolar focus on baptism needs the unipolar focus on communion. The church needs both voices and needs both voices to be in dialogue with each other so that we as church can be mindful of the moving balance point around becoming and belonging.[103]

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 129.

[103] The becoming-belonging issue was introduced to me through my participation in the Partnership for Missional Church from Church Innovations in my second call. The phrase used there was "managing polarities." This can be a loaded phrase in particular contexts, so I've tried to describe the idea rather than use the phrase. For more on this idea of "managing polarities," cf. Patrick R. Keifert, *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era: A Missional Journey of Spiritual Discovery*, 1st ed. (Eagle, ID: Allelon Publishing, 2006).

The Role of Community

The reason this bipolar approach to sacramental practices helps combat the manic-depressive cycles of a unipolar approach is because it helps form disciples through sacramental practices. After all, to perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable thing, we have to first learn what that thing is and when it is present. As this is learned and repeated, the brain's tendency to create structure will expand the imagination of those participating in the sacramental practices so the presence of the trustworthy reliable thing is more readily perceived.

Peter Atkins has shown the neurobiological effects of public Christian worship, particularly through repeated sacramental practices, or what he calls liturgy.[104] Atkins has shown through neurobiology what others have shown sociologically, that the community around us teaches us before we are even aware of being taught. "Individuals need a supporting group to accumulate experiences which provide the memories on which they base their learning as to how to act."[105] Two of the roles of Christian community, then, are to teach what the trustworthy, reliable thing is, and how we perceive its presence. Or as Atkins more fully states it:

> The mind is more satisfied when it is able to allocate a 'name' to an experience, especially when that experience involves an element of mystery within it. Once the mystery is named the mind is able to react with respect rather than with fear of the 'unknown'. The emotion of awe is still present, but that awe is not filled with fear as long as we are able to relate to the object of our respect. The mind associates the feelings of holy with the mystery and with the material object to which it is attached. Such an experience of the holy is carried forward in the memory.[106]

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[104] Peter Atkins, *Memory and Liturgy: The Place of Memory in the Composition and Practice of Liturgy* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

[105] Ibid., 69.

[106] Ibid., 99.

When the Christian community helps name an experience of the holy, the people learn and remember to attend to the perceived presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable God, which makes possible a relationship with God. The more often a person repeats such an experience, the more easily that person can recognize the relationship and perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable God. "For the establishment of a relationship in liturgy I must have a sense of self and a sense of other. Liturgy helps me see myself as a child of God and helps me to see my need of a relationship with God and with the community which shares the liturgy."[107] And here, liturgy is not referring to the formality of any particular sacramental practice, but to the repeated communal memory carried forward through them.[108] Indeed, "Without a memory there can be no liturgy… Without a liturgy there can be no memory of God for the people."[109]

Relationship and repetition within the sacramental practices teach people a way of attending to God's presence that results in an expansion of the imaginative realm where God is working. This can leads to an expansion of the ability of the person to perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable God.

> The basis of worship is the relationship between us and God, and this relationship is reenacted and further developed every time we remember God. The advantage of the way our brains are designed is that they can hold together a vast array of memories and knowledge so that we can integrate a substantial picture of the nature of the Almighty. The regular repetition of the knowledge about God allows the worshipper to hold on to the great variety of such knowledge.[110]

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[107] Ibid., 23.

[108] One of the arguments in Lange, *Trauma Recalled*.

[109] Atkins, *Memory and Liturgy*, 24.

[110] Ibid., xiii.

Our ability to hold together repeated knowledge and experience creates a special place for the words of institution in celebrations of communion.

> So in the liturgy the call "to remember" at the time of thanksgiving for the bread and the wine at the Eucharist can *cause* the brain to recall the presence of Christ for this moment of time while also recognizing that Jesus is part of history and that his presence now foreshadows the coming again of Christ in future glory.[111]

Other sacramental practices help us remember the stories of faith as we are participating in them, and also to help us enter into public Christian worship. "Christian worship is designed to allow memory to bring us up to speed so that we can apply the recalled truths about God to our new and critical situations."[112]

Sacramental practices prepare us for moments of public Christian worship in all areas of life. "Our worship prepares us for our expectation of God in the future, and for our service of action in God's name."[113] The more often we enter into instances of public Christian worship, the more we will be attuned to perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable God, because "The linkage of memory patterns has a powerful effect on our interpretation of present events."[114]

Neurobiological insights might scare some into reading this as programming of some kind, which even if done with good intent, is ethically wrong. What Atkins has raised up within my broader sense of worship is the reality that every community influences how a person perceives a god. Since we create connections, the task of worship planning groups and public leaders of the church is to help the communities they

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[111] Ibid., xi.

[112] Ibid., 28.

[113] Ibid., 11.

[114] Ibid., 13.

lead and for which they plan worship to name and experience the centering nature of public Christian worship.[115] The church has the chance to help people in their meaning-making to meet Jesus as the ultimately trustworthy, reliable thing whose ubiquity makes other things trustworthy and reliable.[116]

Except that Jesus is not a "thing." Some of the gods we might idolatrously serve are things that can be obtained like wealth or food, some of the gods are social constructions like the good life or happiness, and some of the gods are metaphysical ideas like justice or peace. The "thing" language serves as a marker for focusing on what is trustworthy and reliable. The Christian claim is not about a thing, or a construct, or an idea. The Christian claim is about Jesus and the God revealed in his incarnation, life, death, rising, and ascending. As the sacramental practices of public Christian worship help us center on perceiving the presence of Jesus, the Spirit will help us experience Jesus as trustworthy and reliable when all the things, constructs, and ideas fall away. Public Christian worship centers us on the trustworthy, reliable Jesus within a world that has many gods claiming to be trustworthy and reliable.

The Point of Baptism

My own setting within the ELCA, and my research in this denomination, demand an argument for a bipolar sacramental approach. Thankfully I am not alone in making this argument. Jenson brings to attention the role of baptism by thinking about communities, and particularly communities who bring in new members through conversion and initiation. "A missionary community will necessarily have a rite of

[115] In the ELCA, public leaders of the church include rostered leaders, both clergy and lay.

[116] Cf. Jenson, *Story and Promise*, chapter 4.

initiation, and that rite, whatever it is, will be at the center of its life and consciousness."[117] This realization shifts the conversation to the question of what the initiation rite is, not whether or not to have one.

A unipolar communion approach to sacramental practices leads to discussions of opening communion to whoever wishes to receive it, regardless of what they believe, because communion itself becomes the rite of initiation and places discipleship formation within the context of a communion service. As noted above, the manic cycles of a unipolar communion approach miss the relationship between God and the person, making the relationship with the world what matters—the relationship emphasized in communion. If this is so, then what matters is that everyone be able to participate in communion. Discipleship, therefore, becomes making communion as open as possible.

A bipolar sacramental approach expands the question of discipleship formation, making room for other sacramental practices as expressions of public Christian worship because they happen as we attend to the presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus. A bipolar approach keeps the promises of Jesus before the community more fully than either unipolar approach. Unlike a unipolar approach to sacramental practices, a bipolar approach holds the promises of Jesus before each person and the church in a way that helps the community and each person attend to what is trustworthy and reliable by challenging morphological and autolaborological fundamentalisms.

Indeed, by attending to the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus in our relationships with God and the world, Christians have a lifetime for potential instances of public Christian worship through an infinite expression of sacramental practices.

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[117] Jenson, *Visible Words*, 126.

Marriage, both the state of and the rite of, can be a sacramental practice. The relationship with your neighbor can be a sacramental practice. Your child's soccer game can be a sacramental practice. The point of baptism in a bipolar sacramental approach is to expand the imagination to perceive the presence of Jesus in more than just the bread and wine of communion to make possible a life of entering into public Christian worship.

The body of Christ is found in the bread and wine of communion… and in conversations with your neighbor, who may or may not be Christian... and in the community gathered by the Spirit around baptismal waters… and in the moments of rational insight and emotional depth during Bible study… and in the way you relate to your co-workers, employees, employer… and in halls of power when those on the margins are remembered… and in your prayer closet… and during mountain top experiences… and… and…

Vocation and Callings

And now vocation becomes a reality of public Christian worship. This part explores vocation as it relates to public Christian worship, drawing substantially from the work of Marc Kolden and Gustaf Wingren. I begin with a Lutheran discussion about Christian perfection to show how vocation relates to the law because of the promises of God. This leads to an exploration of how Christians might perceive the presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus in the voice of their neighbor, an expression of both vocation and public Christian worship. A discussion about the Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms as a way to understand vocation as a sacramental practice that can make it possible to enter into public Christian worship follows. Returning to Luther's more general definition of what a god is, I raise up a distinction between vocation and

Christian vocation in an effort to challenge and clarify an idea of vocational identity. This chapter ends with the role of public Christian worship in forming and centering vocational identities.

Vocation as Law

One of the challenges in talking about vocation is that vocation for Christians always includes the cross, the death of the old person. The Augsburg Confession and its Apology make clear that part of what happens in vocation is the death of the old person within us. Article 26, *Concerning the Distinction among Foods*, states,

> For concerning the holy cross they [our people] have always taught that Christians are obliged to suffer, and that this is proper and real, not contrived, mortification. … Paul says that he punished his body and enslaved it [1 Cor. 9:27], indicating that mortification should not serve the purpose of earning grace but of keeping the body in a condition that does not prevent performing the duties required by one's calling.[118]

This is reiterated in the Apology. "All people, whatever their calling, should seek perfection, that is, growth in the fear of God, in faith, in the love for their neighbor, and in similar spiritual virtues."[119] Vocation is discipleship because it confronts the old person with the needs of the neighbor, teaching us how to be Christian through the relationships we have with others.

The second use of the law is at work in vocation, continuing what began in baptism—"that the old creature in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily contrition and repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person

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[118] AC 26.31-32, 37-38. Bracketed biblical citation in source.

[119] AP 27.37.

is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."[120] This happens through our vocations when we are called to take up our cross, but this comes to us rather than being something we choose.

> Luther insisted from scripture that one is not to bear some self-selected religious "cross" in the imitation of Christ (after all, Jesus told his disciples to take up *their* crosses, not his). Rather, a cross will be laid on each believer, as it was laid on Jesus; and for us, as for him, it will be laid on us *in our callings*.[121]

Christians need not worry about missing this element of discipleship by choosing the wrong vocation, because "There is a 'cross' in every vocation, Luther said. The cross is the means by which God puts to death the sinful self through the demands for service wherever we are."[122]

Yet there is still struggle present within the person as the second use of the law drives each of us back to Christ and the waters of our baptism. This is a constant struggle present even in our sacramental practices. Prayer is a good example:

> Prayer ought to be understood in terms of the self struggling in vocation. First, we do what needs to be done in a given time and place, and then we pray. For this to happen, we need to be clear about two things: about Christ's mercy and about where Christ call us to be. Then it will make sense to endure and to do everything we can and also to cry for help. Here God acts through the law in both uses—working with us to do God's work and working on us to put our old self to death. Our prayer is the way that God enters into work, home, and community creatively. However, praying about circumstances into which we have strayed (where we are not called but have been led by our sinful self) is useless, for God does not want us there. We should pray instead to be delivered from evil and not led into temptation. In this light, Luther says that one of the ways God answers prayer is by showing us the right use of our office. This means that we can pray with confidence in our callings because it is where God has called us to be and so we should ask for God's help. In contrast to this, many of our prayers are actually

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[120] SC 4.4.12. Cf. SA 3.2 and FC 6; Kolden suggests Luther, "Lectures on Galatians," LW 26: esp. 5-6, 14, 116-117, 183, 308-313, and 365, in Marc Kolden, "Manuscript on Vocation" (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN), chapter 3, n8.

[121] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 46. Italics in the original.

[122] Ibid., 13.

> cries of the old self seeking to avoid the cross in the calling, and so they we [will] not be answered.[123]

But it is here, in this struggle, that faith makes all the difference. For with faith, "What is hard and burdensome is transmuted into good. It is not a rationalization of the burdens of vocation; it is a genuine and real change. If faith does not believe it, life's bitterness is actually something evil."[124]

Trusting in the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus frees us through the challenge of the second use of the law by the gospel to participate with God in the ongoing act of creation through the first use of the law. Or as Kolden says it, "The gospel sets us free from the law's condemnation and it sets us free to seek the good of our neighbor—which is, after all, the true purpose of God's law."[125] Our neighbors, therefore, become ways we counter the law as good because our relationships with our neighbors are part of the relationship we have with God and part of the relationship God has with our neighbors. Therefore, our vocations are not a set of rules, not some additional use of the law, but a set of relationships.

> What the command [to love one's neighbor] means depends on each [person's] living neighbor and [her or] his varying needs. Since it is in my situation on earth that I meet my neighbor, my vocation comprehends all my relations with different "neighbors"; indeed, my vocation can be said to consist of those relations.[126]

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[123] Kolden, "Manuscript on Vocation," chapter 3, 12-13.

[124] Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 235.

[125] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 10.

[126] Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 203. The bracketed words update the language of the source to remove the use of masculine language in reference to all of humanity.

God's Two Reigns

A Lutheran understanding of God at work in heaven and in creation following AC 16 opens space for a bipolar approach to sacramental practices within the life of the church as it is active in the world. This is true for the church as an institution because God forgives all people who are part of the church in baptism, which makes possible each person's participation in that relationship. These same people have been sent into the world by God through communion as ambassadors of forgiveness in all areas of their lives, because "The gospel does not overthrow secular government, public order, and marriage but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person's calling."[127] The normal lives of Christians are a meeting of God's two reigns.

The relational nature of vocation read in conjunction with the Lutheran understanding of God's two reigns, creates theological space for attending to and learning from the world.

> If God's will is part of God's creative work, when it comes to our helping to keep the world going and our neighbors loved we will be able to rely on the insights and knowledge that are available in the world and to all who can think—and not only believers.[128]

Tremendous freedom has been granted to the church through God's gifts of the sacramental practices of baptism and communion to participate and engage with the world for the sake of God's mission. "The difference will be that Christians know that in dealing with the world we are also dealing with the God we know through Jesus Christ and this gives us some clues as to what God might be up to—not the least of these being

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[127] AC 16.5.

[128] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 32.

God's law."[129] And moreover, "Persons who are faithful in their callings become channels for God's ongoing creating and ordering work."[130] The challenge with this approach, however, is my use of Luther's idea of what a god is in discussing public Christian worship.

Callings as Faith

So far I have made no distinction between callings from God or callings from a god. Finding such a distinction shows the power of the second use of the law as we try to participate with God through the first use because locating this distinction makes each of us ask ourselves where we place our trust, on what is our heart relying. For Luther, "Vocation was life in the world lived in faith in the creating God."[131] But given all the possible claimants for the trustworthy, reliable god, what is the distinction between entering into relationships in the world because of God and doing so because of a god?

Returning to Drescher's "Four F's" and the relationships they describe, any of which could be a person's trustworthy, reliable god at any given moment, an endless list of tasks can arise from any of them and is easy to create. To make the list even longer just add in the other tasks people do because of their other gods—employment choices, ambition, goal setting, where and when one attends to the presence of any trustworthy, reliable thing, etc. Reading Wingren's *Luther on Vocation*, one could get the impression that only Christians can have vocation. Kolden softens this impression, noting that "To be precise, only a believer in God can be said to be in a calling (*from God*) or to have a

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Kolden, "Manuscript on Vocation," chapter 2, 8.

[131] Marc Kolden, "Ministry and Vocation for Clergy and Laity," in *Called and Ordained*, ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 202.

vocation."[132] It seems to me that any god can present tasks for a person to do in the world or can call a person into some kind of relationship with the world.

The children's soccer game can highlight the ambiguity that shows the power of the second use of the law. Starting with someone who is not Christian, many relationships are present, any of which could be that person's trustworthy, reliable god. The parent-child relationship, as noted earlier, is filled with possibilities reflecting many different hopes that might make attendance at that game an expression of vocation in that relationship. The same could be true of a spousal relationship, or the late-comer balancing work and family. Relationships with neighbors could also be at work. Any responsibility as coach, referee, groundskeeper, scorekeeper, etc., could also be an expression of vocation—participating in a god's relationship with the world.

Even within a Christian, all of these relationships are present, and all of them could be expressions of a relationship with some trustworthy, reliable god—but that does not make them wrong *prima facie,* nor indeed at all. The difference between a non-Christian and a Christian in vocation will not be the task nor even the particular vocation. It might not even be the attitude or approach, as secular humanism is consistently reminding us. The difference will be in the awareness of God's forgiveness, the freedom to make mistakes and the freedom to forgive others for making mistakes, not out of some magnanimous gesture, but because our brokenness has been forgiven by God in Jesus. In this respect, "Christians also have a *unique* calling with respect to the mission of the church: that of responding to Christ's command to be his witnesses."[133]

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[132] Kolden, "Manuscript on Vocation," chapter 2, 9. Italic in original. Cites Wingren, 2, at the end of this quote.

[133] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World,* 40.

There is a unique Christian vocation, which is discovered and lived out in all our other vocations.

> The basic call to faith is to reveal that each situation in which we find ourselves is an opportunity to serve God because God creates everything and we now see that every aspect of "ordinary" life is to be understood as a place in which God calls us to concrete response. That is, *We are to love our neighbors in and through the activities and responsibilities of our callings*.[134]

Each moment, therefore, becomes a moment wherein we engage in vocation, and each moment presents the chance to participate in the relationship with my neighbor because of the relationship God has with her or him and because of the relationship God has with me. Now discernment and learning to attend to the presence of God becomes important, because

> we will find God's will in and through the demands and contexts in which we find ourselves. Not that the will of God can be equated with all demands upon us (or opportunities in front of us); many will be anything but divine. Rather, the demands will confront us in our various places and roles in such a way that we will have to ask what is loving and just for the particular neighbors that God has given us in this time and place.[135]

It is because of this constant struggle between the demands of gods and the love of God that we need to learn about God. Through such formation we might begin to see each relationship as an opportunity to participate in the mission of God. Christians need the sacramental practices that help us enter into public Christian worship so we can attend to our perceptions of the presence of the ultimately trustworthy and reliable Jesus as a way to make sense of—or to center—our many vocational identities.

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[134] Kolden, "Manuscript on Vocation," chapter 2, 6. Italics in original.

[135] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 34.

Vocational Identities

Robert Benne has described vocational identities most succinctly: "Our identities are shaped by our responsibilities."[136] This is another way of saying what Wingren said, that each person's vocation is the set of relationships they have.[137] In describing this set, or these responsibilities, I use the idea of vocational identities, which is the idea that each of us, in all of our responsibilities across the set of relationships we have will change our thoughts and actions based on who is around us physically, virtually, and in our memory. The egotistical solipsist might be the only person without multiple vocational identities through many responsibilities, but at some point even such a person must relate to the world or die, so even this hypothetical construct will have multiple vocational identities. But this should not be a surprise, as this is part of how we are made in God's image, for "God's identity is not in solitary, egocentric selfhood but in a community of need and self-expenditure on behalf of the other."[138]

In our complicated set of vocational identities, each person has an equally complicated set of gods competing to be trustworthy and reliable. Formation and meaning-making become paramount for each person in their discernment thereof. This is where the sacramental practices of public Christian worship form practitioners in vocation, because such practices "become arenas in which something is done to us, in us, and through us that we could not of ourselves do, that is beyond what we do."[139]

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[136] Robert Benne, *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 18.

[137] Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 203.

[138] Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger*, 86.

[139] Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, 56.

Unfortunately, any practice that is part of public worship, Christian or otherwise, can be twisted or misunderstood or misrepresented. Even in these instances, however, such practices still form the practitioners. While there is no sure way to keep the formative nature of sacramental practices in public Christian worship from being distorted, a bipolar sacramental approach to public Christian worship can help because it points to Jesus as the ultimately trustworthy, reliable God—the only sacrament of which all sacramental practices are a part.

Theological education for public leaders of the church should attend to the formative power of sacramental practices. When planning and leading public Christian worship, those involved have at their disposal several sacramental practices that can help them attend to which god they perceive as ultimately trustworthy and reliable. The most powerful of these for the planning and leading of public Christian worship is prayer, for "Prayer is the door through which God, Creator and Lord, enters creatively into home, community, and labor."[140] Through the regular practice of prayer, especially if attended to in its formative role as a sacramental practice, those who plan and lead public Christian worship can model prayer, and hopefully teach prayer, as a way to perceive the presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus.

Another element of theological education is lifted up here, which is the education of others in sacramental practices. To some extent, being a practitioner is sufficient, but at some point, intentional instruction on how to engage in sacramental practices and what happens during them is necessary, and not just to understand the practices. Education

[140] Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 194.

about sacramental practices will help each person attend more fully to those practices—it will help the person make sense of the importance of sacramental practices.

This element of theological education equips those who will be public leaders of the church to equip the people of God for participating in God's mission in the world by helping the public Christian leaders learn how to perceive the presence of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Those who receive theological education can be taught to see responses that come from public Christian worship as sacramental practices, to publically name them as such, and in this way continue to help expand the imaginations of those who have called them to lead about the ubiquity of the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus, which is how public Christian worship can center vocational identities.

Everyone has multiple vocations and thus multiple vocational identities because everyone has multiple relationships.[141] We try to make meaning, in our vocations and our vocational identities, or at least they try to relate them to each other in some way. The sacramental practices that help us enter into public Christian worship can help us in that meaning-making between vocational identities by providing a central axis, a central vocational identity, around which the others can move and through which they can relate. The unique Christian vocation to be Jesus' witnesses gives us an identity through our baptism—God's relationship with each person—that is directed into the world by communion—God's relationship with the world into which we are called.

The unique nature of the Christian vocation can center our vocational identities because the promises of Jesus change our relationship to the law. All our other relationships create, to use Benne's word, responsibilities. Demands of work and

[141] Ibid., 4-5.

marriage, of being a neighbor and a citizen, of having children and being someone's child can and often do conflict because they demand of us tasks and time that require some kind of balance, some kind of decision-making. It is only through the promises of Jesus that we receive our death as the good news that frees us from "the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh" so that we might receive the demands and responsibilities that are laid on us in our relationships as good news.[142]

The sacramental practices that help us enter into public Christian worship form us in ways that expand our perceptions of the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus so that we might find a way to relate and deal with the conflicting demands of our multiple vocational identities. Because of the relationship God establishes with us in Christ by the movement of the Holy Spirit through the waters of baptism, all of our vocations can become part of the unique Christian vocation to be Jesus' witnesses in the world. Through the sacramental practices that help us enter into public Christian worship, we learn how to attend to the presence of God in all our relationships. Theological education has the chance to form public leaders of the church in such a way that they can help others learn how to center their vocational identities on the ultimately trustworthy, reliable Jesus through public Christian worship.

[142] SC 3.11.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS (PATHOS)

The next arc of the hermeneutic circle accounts for what happens in congregations. This chapter presents summaries of the quantitative and qualitative research done in four congregations across the mid and upper Midwest. The quantitative research is presented in the four parts of the congregational survey. The qualitative research is generally summarized, and then explored through the focal words of god, vocation, and worship, before pointing out the discovered frequency of relationships in the responses of members interviewed. This chapter continues with some deeper analysis of the research around the concerns of the worship wars within the topic of this dissertation. It then moves to the effects of Modernity as seen in statistical differences between the genders. Next, a general understanding of the importance of relationships among the laity is raised up. Then, the reality of significant levels of volunteerism as vocation—even if it might not be understood as such—is noted. This will hopefully be enough to put forward an answer to the research question of this dissertation.

Quantitative Research

Across the four congregations, 172 of the quantitative surveys were completed and analyzed using SPSS. Using the average weekly attendance as reported for Gemini, Ouranos, and Sitos in the congregational Trend Reports to the ELCA, and the number given to me by the office manager of Potamos, the four congregations total 1,727 people

in AWA. Figure 1 shows the percentage of responses in comparison with the AWA of each congregation. All of the surveys in total provide a confidence interval of ±7.12 at a 95% confidence level.

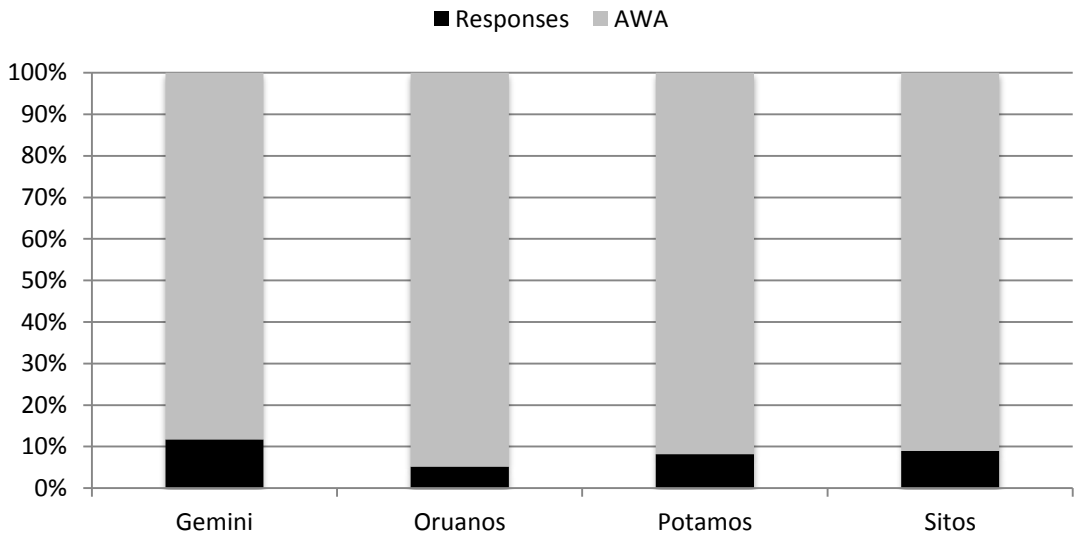

Figure 1. Responses as Percentages of AWA

The surveys from the four congregations each have substantially worse confidence intervals making them generally unusable for drawing generalizations about any of the individual congregations studied. Sixty-four members of Gemini and one visitor completed the survey, giving a 13% sample of the 488 reported in AWA, providing a confidence interval of ±11.43 at a 95% confidence level. Thirteen members of Ouranos completed the survey, giving a 5.4% sample of the 240 reported in AWA, providing a confidence interval of ±26.49 at a 95% confidence level. Thirty-nine members of Potamos completed the survey, giving an 8.9% sample of the 437 reported in AWA, providing a confidence interval of ±14.99 at a 95% confidence level. Sitos is a special case among these four congregations, as the last reported AWA is 562 people, while their last reported total membership is 459. The numbers are close enough to make

little difference for the purpose of determining a confidence interval, however, so for the sake of uniformity, the reported AWA will be used. Fifty-five members of Sitos completed the survey giving a 9.8% sample of the 562 reported in average weekly attendance, providing a confidence interval of ±12.56 at a 95% confidence level. Table 1 provides quick reference for all of the above confidence intervals. Comparisons to United States Census data will therefore be limited to the total of all the surveys across all four congregations.

Table 1. Confidence Intervals

Congregation	Confidence Interval
Gemini	±11.43
Ouranos	±26.49
Potamos	±14.99
Sitos	±12.56
All Together	±7.12

Demographic Data Review

The gender of those who completed the survey is not surprisingly 64% female and 36% male. The marital status is worth noting, with 80% of respondents "Married, Not Separated" as compared to the estimate of 48.8% in the general population (see figure 2).[1] The responses "Never Married," "Divorced," and "Separated" show the impact of this at 7%, 7%, and 0% respectively, compared with 32.1%, 10.9%, and 2.2%. The

[1] "Married, Not Separated" here includes the 2% who identified themselves as "Other Committed Relationship." "American Factfinder - Results: S0201," American FactFinder, http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S0201&prodType=table (accessed February 10, 2014).

response "Widowed" is on par with the Census estimate of 6%.[2] The discrepancy is probably from the difference in age ranges in determining these statistics.

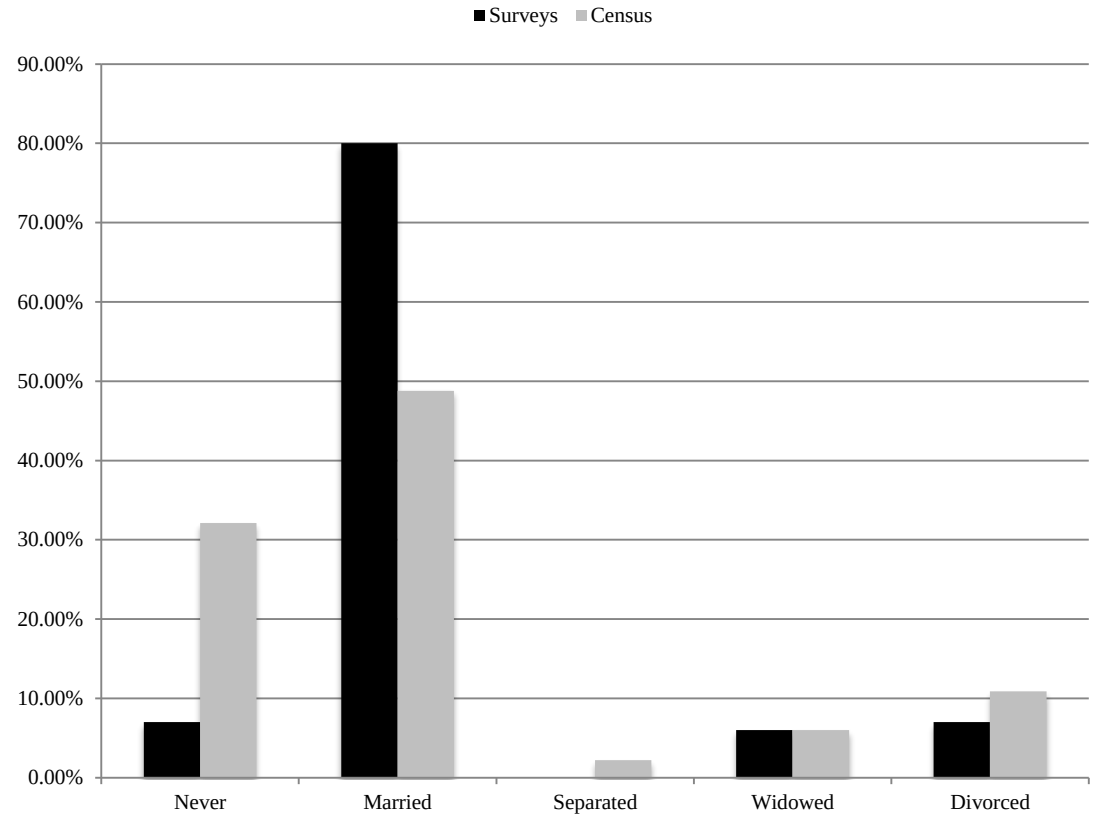

Figure 2. Marital Status

The survey respondents were overwhelmingly white at 98%.

All of the survey respondents had at least some college educaStion, but 89% had a Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional Degree as compared with 28.5% of the general population 25 years and over (see figure 3).[3]

[2] Ibid.

[3] "American Factfinder - Results: S1501," American FactFinder, http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_S1501 (accessed February 10, 2014).

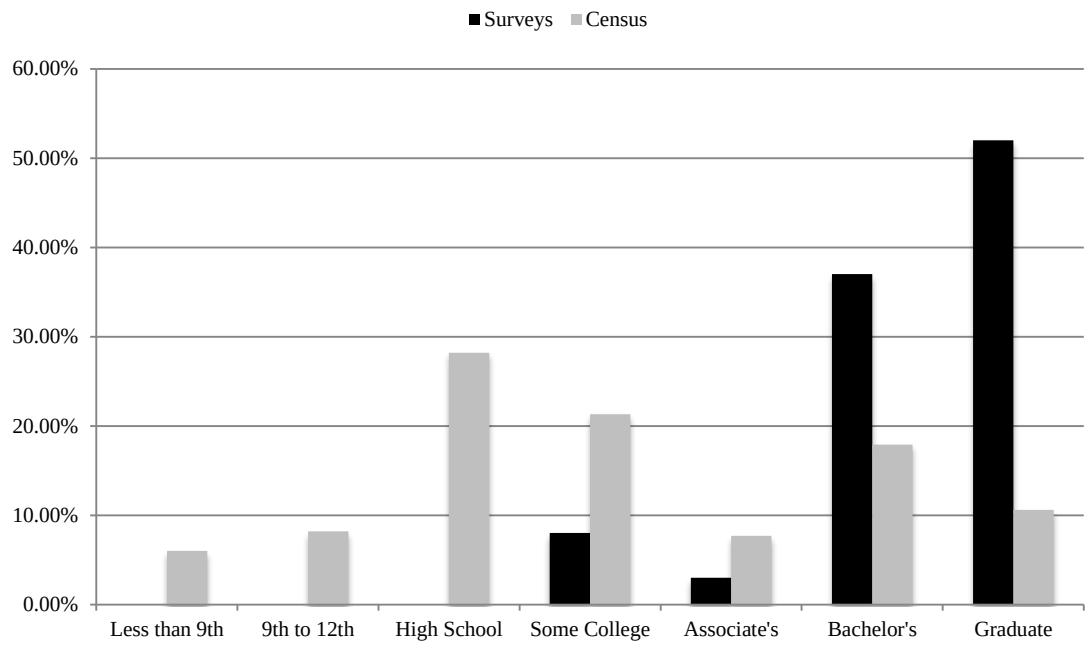

Figure 3. Educational Attainment

The survey respondents are generally well employed: 28% in management, business or financial occupations compared with an estimated 14.4% of the general population; 21% in education, legal, community service, arts or media occupations compared with an estimated 10.8% of the general population.[4] On the other hand, only 3% of the survey respondents are employed in sales or related occupations compared with an estimated 11% of the general population, and another 3% of the respondents are employed in office or administrative support occupations compared to an estimated 13.9% of the general population.[5] All other occupations are within the ±7.12 confidence interval (see figure 4).

[4] Calculated from "American Factfinder - Results: S2401," American FactFinder, http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_S2401 (accessed February 10, 2014).

[5] Ibid.

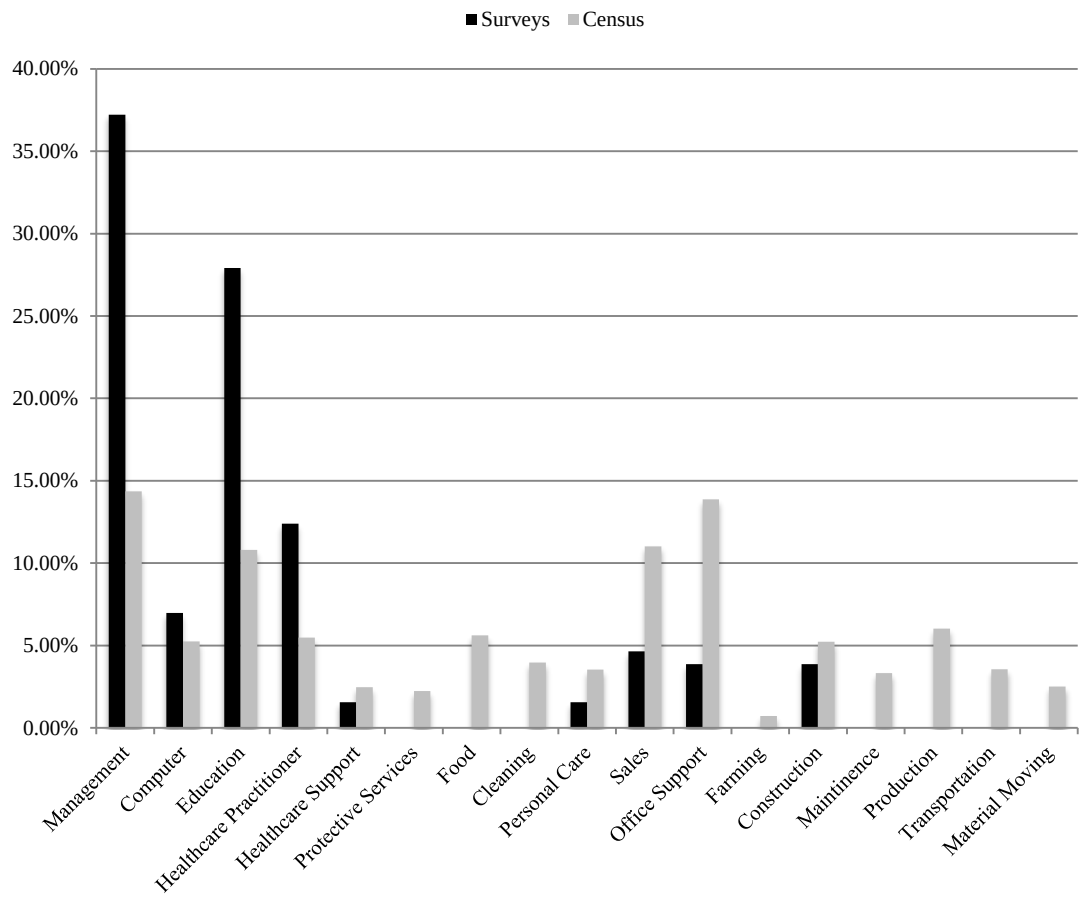

Figure 4. Employment

Along with the high quality of employment comes a high level of income reflected in the total annual household incomes of those who completed the survey. Only 1% of survey respondents had an income from $15,000 to $24,999, which is significantly lower than the estimated 10.7% of the general population, while 24% of the survey respondents had an income from $100,000 to $149,999, and another 15% had an income from $200,000 or more, compared to the estimated 12.8% and 4.6% of the general population (see figure 5 for a full comparison).[6]

[6] "American Factfinder - Results: S1909," American FactFinder, http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_S1901 (accessed February 10, 2014).

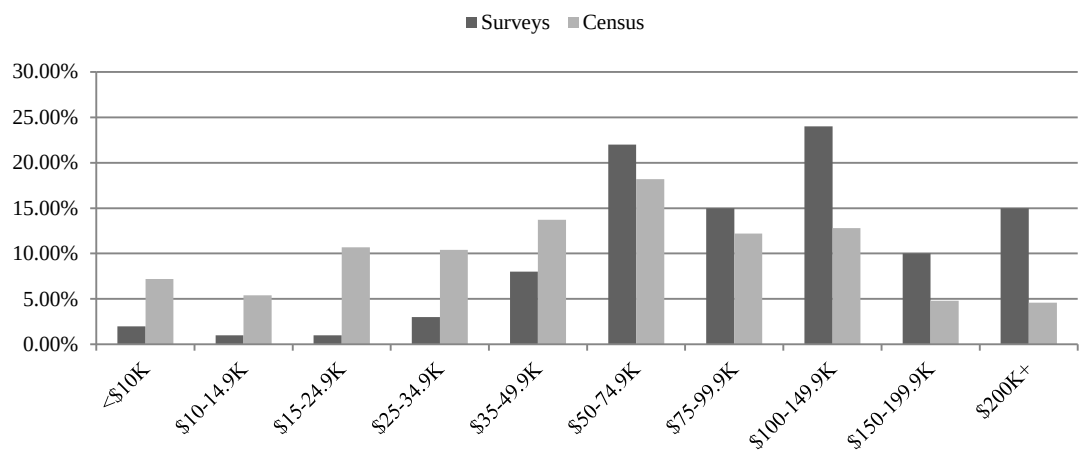

Figure 5. Household Income

Congregational Activities Review

The questions on previous membership show that 63% of those who responded to the survey came from a Lutheran congregation to the congregation in which they took the survey. Another 5% have always been members of one of the congregations surveyed. So 68% percent of those who responded to the survey have been Lutheran for some measureable time. 27% of the respondents were not previously Lutheran, coming from another Christian denomination with the most—at 5.8%—coming from Catholicism, 4.1% coming from Methodism, and 2.3% coming from a Baptist tradition. Several other denominations are represented at 1% or less.

Each of the options for hymnals and musical instruments used during congregational services that were presented had at least one person respond with their use. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* was widely recognized as being used in congregational services at 64%, with *With One Voice* following closely behind at 56%. An oddity came up with *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, however, in that only 28% or forty-six of the people surveyed said this hymnal was used in congregational services.

This is odd because seventy-eight of them use the ELW as a primary worship resource, with one of the congregations even having the hymnal as the only hymnal in the pews.

The only musical instruments that were not recognized as being used in congregational services at a level of 27% or higher were “Prerecorded Music” at 2%, “None” at 1%, and “Other” at 6%. Every other option was selected at least 27% of the time. If there is any future use of this portion of the survey, the “Other” category was usually explained by respondents as some kind of bell or chime choir, which should probably be included in future versions. The two questions on current and previous volunteer positions in the congregation should be removed in future versions of the survey, given the fourth section, which covers levels of volunteerism.

Christian Faith Practices Scale Review

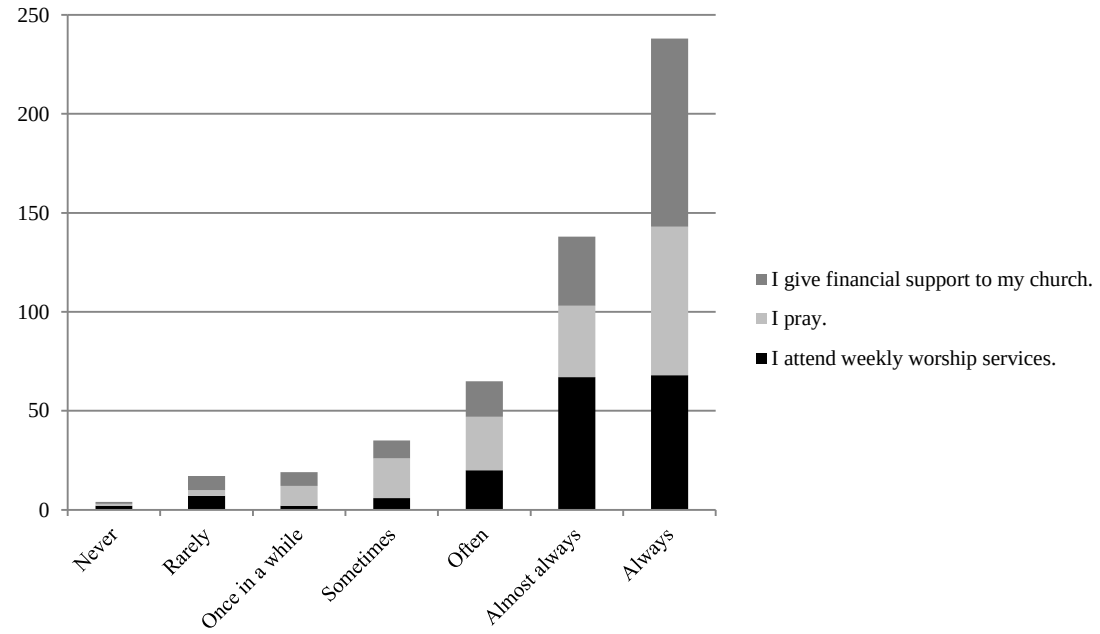

Figure 6. Significant Practices

Some clarification of practices becomes clear when the responses to the Christian Faith Practices Scale are examined. The most significant practices highlighted by the CFPS across all four congregations are weekly worship attendance, prayer, and financial support of the congregation (see figure 6). Attention should be paid to these practices as independent variables. Some secondary practices are confession of sin to others, forgiveness of others and healing relationships, encouragement of others, hospitality, and discussion of contemporary issues (see figure 7). A larger sample size would be needed to show how these variables relate to the above.

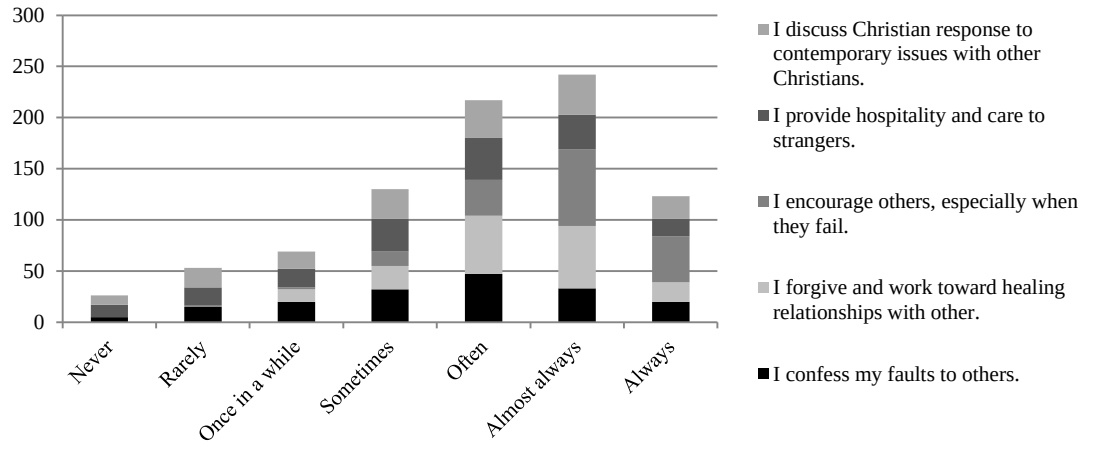

Figure 7. Secondary Practices

Several practices seem to not influence those who responded to the survey as much as I had anticipated. 49% of the respondents admit to doing Bible study and 53% admit to sharing the Christian story once in a while or less (see figure 8). Studying the teaching and history of the church, volunteering and promoting social justice were, to my surprise, inconclusive practices with 57% of the respondents studying once in a while to often, and 52% volunteering at the same levels. 46% of the respondents promote social justice often or more frequently, but 22% do so rarely—the same percentage as almost

always (see figure 9). As with the previous set of variables, a larger sample size would help determine how these practices relate to the others.

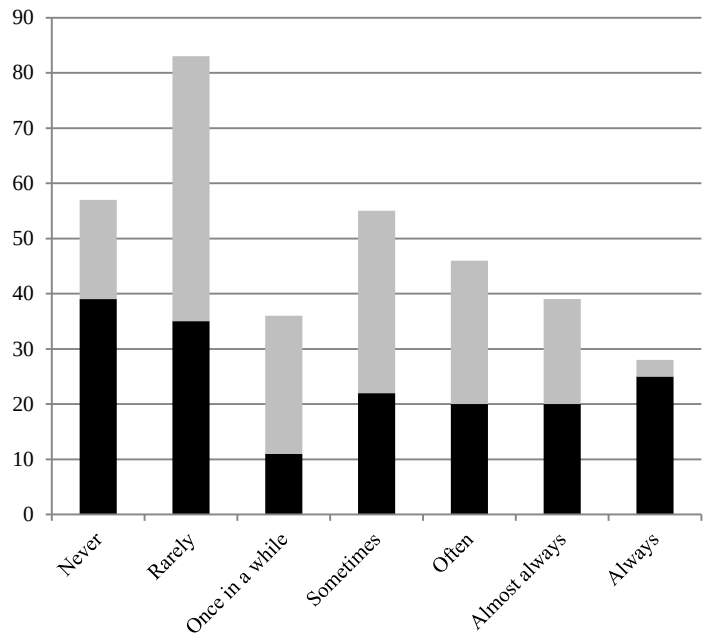

Figure 8. Minimal Practices

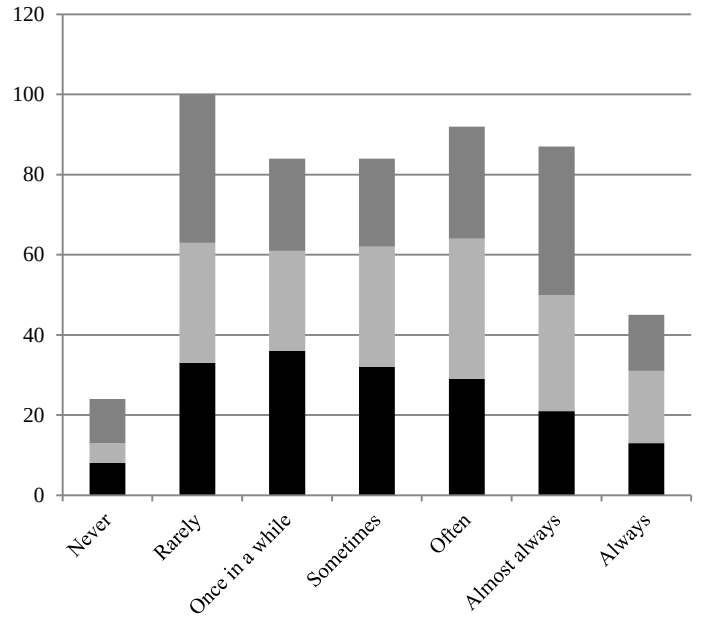

Figure 9. Inconclusive Practices

Measurement of Volunteer Work Review

It must be noted that a substantial number of respondents—70%—reported at least one type of volunteer work. If the confidence interval were at its worst when generalizing across these four congregations, that still means that almost 63% of the people in AWA at these congregations spend time volunteering each week—and not just at the congregation. This data seems to contradict the responses from the CFPS portion of the survey, except that 64% of the respondents said they volunteered at least sometimes, so this contradiction may just be the subjective nature of a self-determined frequency of practices or who is less fortunate. With just the respondents, and minimizing the time volunteered to just one hour a month, the respondents alone are volunteering a total of 120 hours a week. Generalizing to the AWA, and taking the lowest likely values, this still means that these four congregations combined among those people who make up their AWA volunteer 1,079 hours a month. That's almost forty-five days of volunteer work per month as a conservative estimate among these four congregations.

If those numbers do not impress, it is worth noting that this is only for the first volunteer activity. 13% of the respondents listed the maximum of three volunteer activities, and an additional 20% listed two volunteer activities. Following the same logic as above, those who make up the AWA of the congregations provide 1,626 hours of volunteer work per month. That is over sixty-seven days of volunteering per month across four congregations.

The beneficiaries of this volunteerism are overwhelmingly nonprofit organizations of one kind or another at 83.75% (see figure 10). Other organizations, including community work, make up the next largest group at 11.88%. It is reasonable to

expect the congregations to be listed in the names of these organizations—and they are—but there are many more as well: substance abuse programs, homeless shelters, schools, political interest groups, wellness institutions, food distribution organizations, conservation groups, foundations, etc. Through their actions, the members of these congregations show some understanding of vocation beyond occupation, even if the people call it something else.

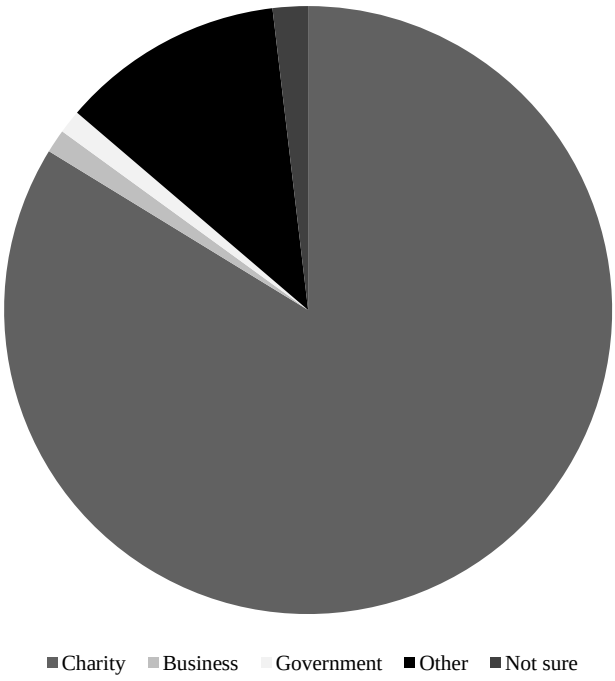

Figure 10. Beneficiaries of Volunteerism

Qualitative Research

A total of forty-three interviews were conducted across the four congregations. Twenty-seven of these interviews were with members of the congregations, twelve were with the rostered leaders of each of the congregations, and four were panel interviews with those identified by the rostered leaders as worship planning groups (see figure 11 for

the distribution). The members of each congregation were chosen by a systematic random sample. The rostered leaders were, save one, pastors rostered through the ELCA. The other leader is not rostered in the ELCA, but instead has a Bachelor's degree in church ministry. Given this leader's role in worship planning, however, the individual interview was a worthwhile endeavor. The panel interviews were different in every congregation, both in who attended and when they happened.[7] All of these interviews were analyzed using NVivo.

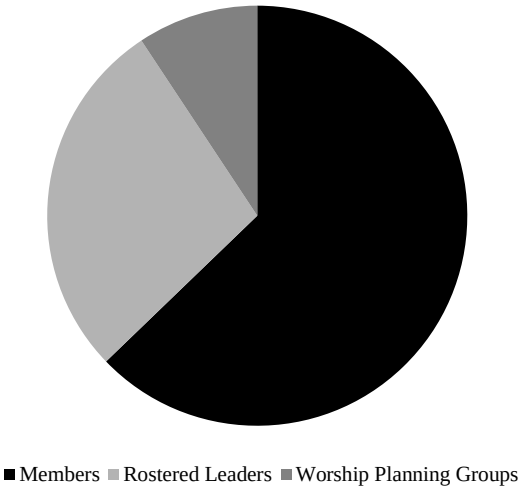

Figure 11. Interview Distribution

Overview

Across all the interviews, "think" was the most frequent word of significance. Given the nature of the interview prompts, the effects of Modernity in the United States, and the tradition of Lutheranism as an academic movement within Christianity, this is not a surprise. The full top ten most frequently used words during the interviews is found in table 2, where they are also broken down by type of interview. The top ten word

[7] Chapter 2 has more information about this.

frequency lists of each group—members, rostered leaders, and worship planning groups—heightens the insights of the members. The prompts for the rostered leaders included the word "vocation," but unlike the prompts for the members, did not include the word "god." The WPG had "feel" in their top ten word frequency list, and the only other top ten word frequency list that includes "feel" is from the Sitos member interviews. It should be noted, as a matter of record, that "god" came in at number fifteen on the word frequency list of the WPG, and "bible" made it to number 112 overall, being mentioned in twenty of the interviews. The high placement of "people" across all these categories will be more fully explored later, but first, given the topic of this research, I need to look more closely at the instances of "god" and some Trinitarian equivalencies, "vocation" with some synonyms and cognates, and "worship" paired with "pray" and their cognates.

Table 2. Top Ten Word Lists in Interviews

	All	Rostered Leaders	WPG	Members
1	Think	Worship	Think	People
2	People	Think	People	Think
3	Church	People	Worship	Church
4	Worship	Church	Church	Worship
5	Know	God	Service	Congregation
6	Congregation	Congregation	Get	God
7	God	Vocation	Know	Know
8	Time	Pastor	Going	Time
9	See	Service	Time	Way
10	Going	Time	Feel	Going

Talking About God

Across all the interviews, "god," "Jesus," "Christ," and "spirit" were used as the object of a passive verb 64.8% of the time.[8] This usage was more frequent during the member interviews at 72.6% of the time, and less frequent during the rostered leader interviews at 61.7% of the time (see figure 12). The worship planning groups stand out as an exception here, having these words as the object of a passive verb only 37.5% of the time, but this is probably because there were only twenty-four instances of these words in the panel interviews compared to 146 in the member interviews and 154 in the rostered leader interviews.

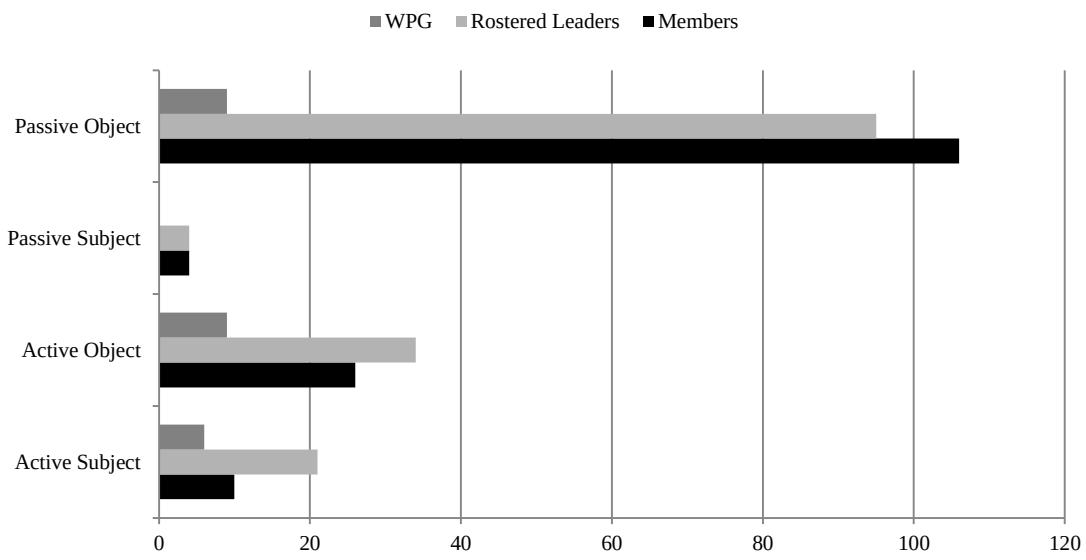

Figure 12. Verbs and "God"

The worship planning groups are a highlight of the diversity in this section on "god" language (see figure 13). The panel interview at Gemini was all laity, and in their conversation spoke about "god" one third of the time as the subject of an active verb, one

[8] For the rest of this section, instances of "god" refer to this list.

third of the time as the subject of a passive verb, and one third of the time as the object of a passive verb. The Ouranos WPG panel was a mix of rostered leaders and laity, but never mentioned "god" in the panel interview. The WPG panel at Potamos was the three rostered leaders, which probably explains why "god" was the object of an active verb half the time, the subject of an active verb one third of the time, and the object of a passive verb only one sixth of the time. The WPG panel at Sitos was the largest panel interview, including the rostered leaders and ten laity. They spoke of "god" as the object of a passive verb 83.3% of the time, and as the object of an active verb 16.7% of the time. The diversity of who made up these groups, however, makes this data less helpful.

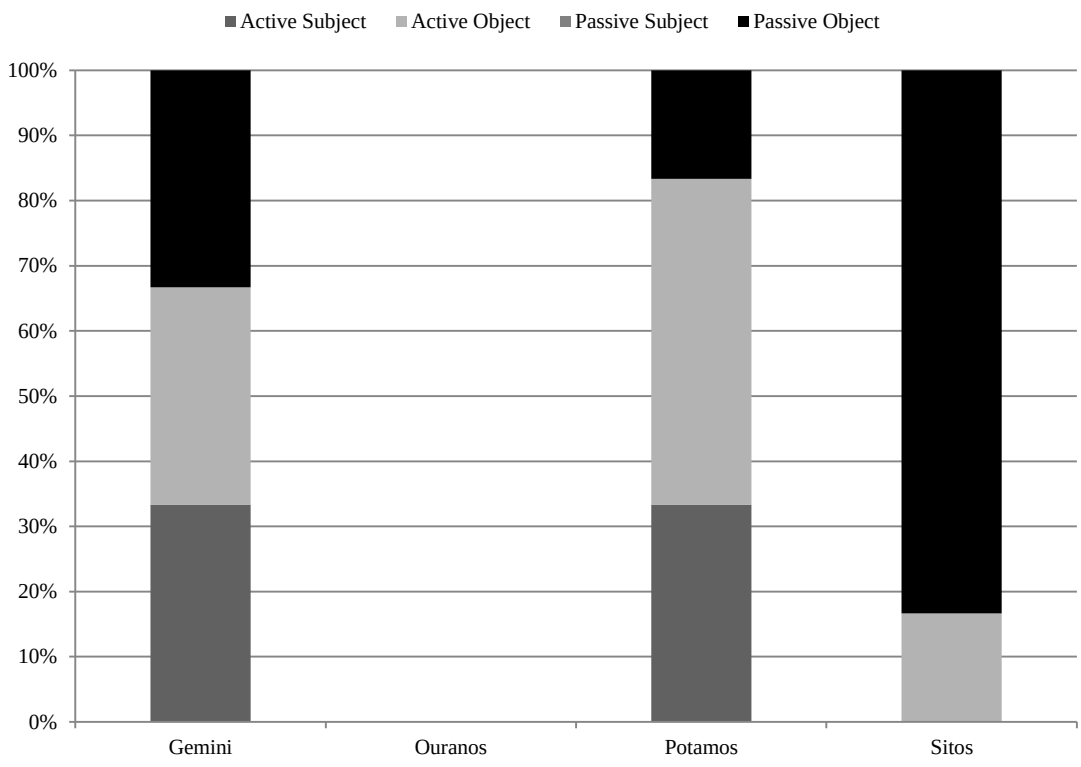

Figure 13. Worship Planning Groups' Talk About "God"

The rostered leader interviews present two stories of how the rostered leaders talk about "god" (see figure 14). They spoke of "god" as the object of a passive verb 84.4%

and 75% of the time at Gemini and Sitos respectively. Gemini's rostered leaders spoke of "god" as the subject of an active verb 12.5% of the time, and as the subject of a passive verb 3.1% of the time. Sitos' rostered leaders spoke of "god" as the subject of an active verb 3.1% of the time, as the object of an active verb 15.6% of the time, and as the subject of a passive verb 6.3% of the time. The rostered leaders of Ouranos and Potamos present the other story, speaking of "god" as the object of a passive verb 52% and 45% of the time respectively. References to "god" as either the subject or object of an active verb are fairly close between Ouranos and Potamos at 16% and 20% the subject, and 30% and 35% the object respectively. Given these numbers, it would seem reasonable to expect that the members of each of these congregations would reflect the usage of their rostered leaders. Confusingly, however, this is not the case.

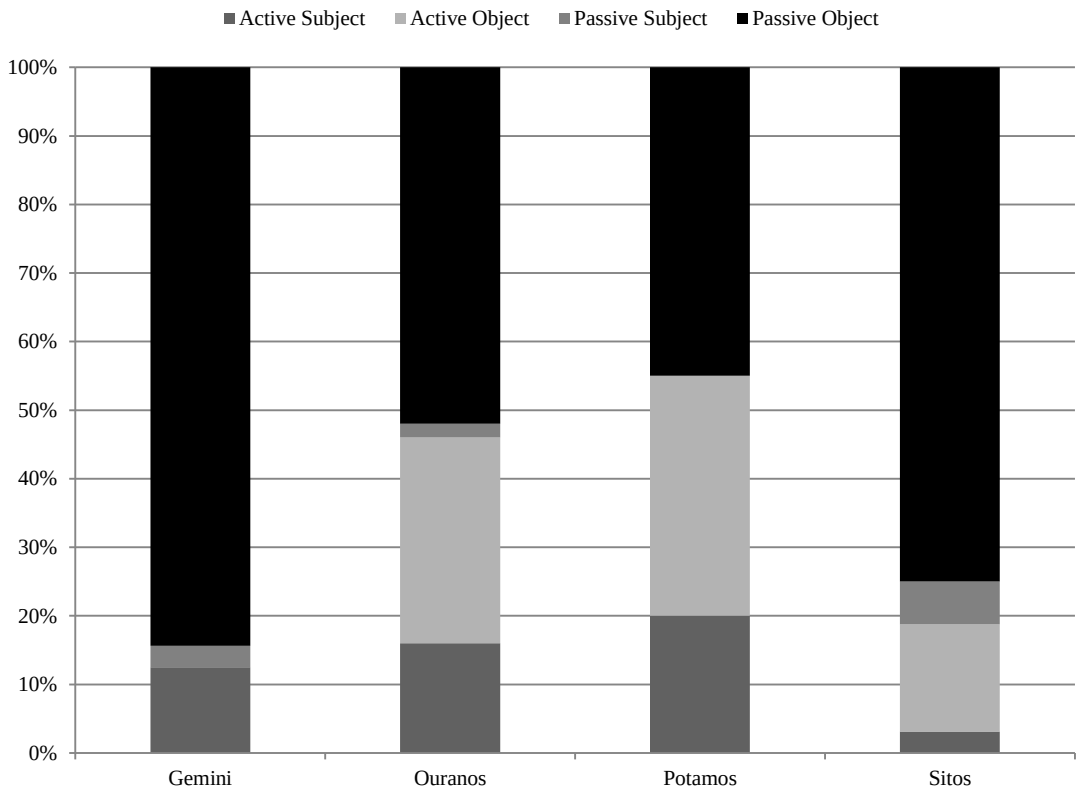

Figure 14. Rostered Leaders' Talk About "God"

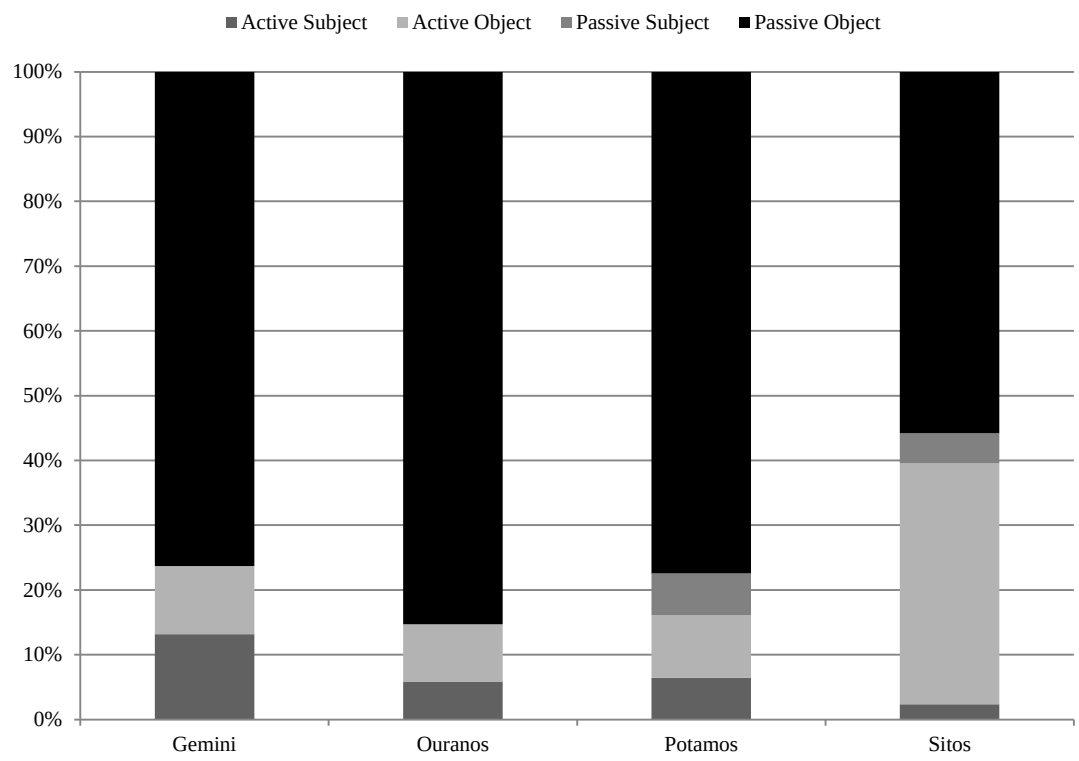

Figure 15. Members' Talk About "God"

The members interviewed at Gemini used "god" as the object of passive verbs 76.2% of the time, on par with the members interviewed at Potamos, but 8% less frequently than their own rostered leaders. The members interviewed at Ouranos speak of "god" as the object of passive verbs 85.3% of the time, highest among all the member groups across the congregations and 33% more frequently than their rostered leaders. The members interviewed at Potamos show the same extreme, speaking of "god" as object of passive verbs 77.4% of the time, at a 32% greater frequency than their rostered leaders, but still in the middle range of the four congregations. The members at Sitos present the exception to this trend, referring to "god" as the object of passive verbs only 55.8% of the time, lowest among the members interviewed and almost 20% less frequently than their own rostered leaders. The general trends present across these four congregations still

present an image of God that is mostly removed and passive, rather than present and active—a substantial challenge for perceiving the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus and for any sense of God calling us in any way (see figure 15).

Seeking Vocation

The prompts given to the members and rostered leaders had a clear effect on the interviews. Only the rostered leaders used the word "vocation," including in the worship planning group interviews. The members talked about "calling" and the like, but this was probably from the prompts. I split the instances of "vocation," "work," or "call," and their cognates into four categories: 1) those involving the congregation, 2) those involving God, 3) those involving occupation, and 4) those involving relationships.[9] Drescher's "Four F's" of family, friends, fido, and food informs the relationship category.

This data provides no clear sense on how the members of these four congregations think of "vocation" (see figure 16). Church activities were spoken of with the greatest frequency at 29.7%, with occupation a close second at 26.4%. Language of God calling covered only 24.2% of the instances of "vocation," and relationships only accounted for 19.8%. The members of Gemini and Ouranos most frequently spoke of "vocation" in terms of God calling, then occupation. The member of Sitos inverted these. Ouranos and Potamos substantially broke the frequencies of "vocation" because the members interviewed at Ouranos never mentioned congregational activities, but the members interviewed at Potamos most frequently talked about congregational activities at 45.7%.

[9] For the rest of this section, instances of "vocation" refer to this list.

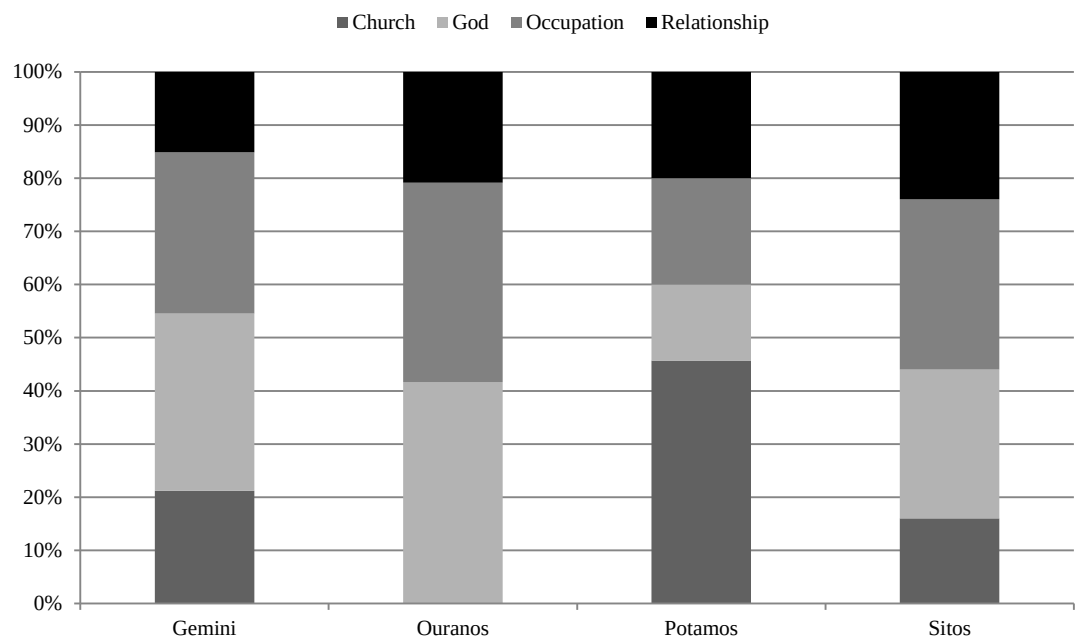

Figure 16. Members' Talk of "Vocation"

Unfortunately, the insight provided by this data is that there is no clarity around "vocation," which Kolden addressed in *The Christian's Calling the World*. It is worth noting, however, that every member interviewed save one—who claimed agnosticism during the interview—gave an answer to the prompt, "How is God calling you to be active in the world?" This included two other members who also claimed agnosticism during their interviews.

There is a notable absence of any mention of civil responsibilities as any kind of vocation. Given the importance of being involved in the civil realms of society as Christians expressed in the writings of the Book of Concord and all the interviewees being members of Lutheran congregations, the absence of vocation expressed as relationships based on civil duties, responsibilities, or opportunities is surprising. Some of this was my own focus on familial and vocational relationships, but since none of the interviewees brought up any civil office, more than researcher bias is at work here.

Expanding Worship

Worship was so overwhelmingly talked about among the members, rostered leaders, and worship planning groups as the congregational service that I mention only the exceptions. These six stories and reflections hint at people experiencing worship as something more than the congregational service, half of them through the leadership of a public Christian leader.

A member at Gemini recounted a conversation with a parent that talked about the creation of art as worship. This conversation came forward in the interview as the member was reflecting on art, in various forms, and how it aided in perceiving the presence of God. The member noted how creation of plastic arts as a hobby has become worship through reflection on biblical stories, repeating the practice of a parent.

One member of the WPG at Gemini talked about worship as what we do outside of the congregational service, with the service being a place to encourage people for their time outside of the service. This could be understood as the congregational service functioning as filling station, where our spiritual gas tanks get filled up for the week ahead. I think the idea being expressed, however, was that worship is what we do outside of the congregational service. Unfortunately I did not have the time or structure to clarify or ask how this idea was formed.

Two of the stories were similar. A member of Ouranos talked about being active in youth group when growing up and how the youth group leader pulled prayer and Biblical stories into whatever activity they were doing wherever they were. Similarly, a rostered leader at Sitos reflected that the youth group leader expanded the idea of worship outside of the congregational service through prayer during youth group activities. The

modeling of the youth group leaders formed these two people significantly enough that they still reflect on the experiences as public Christian worship.

One of the rostered leaders at Ouranos mentioned a seminary professor who talked about worship as a regular weekly gathering for mutual support and to share how we see God at work in the world. While this may just be a different way of describing congregational services, the rostered leader liked the idea of doing this on a daily rather than weekly basis, taking the structure of congregational services out of the hands of the rostered leaders and placing it in the hands of the laity in their daily family settings.

A member of Potamos briefly reflected that occupation might be worship. This may have just been an off the cuff comment, but when reflecting on prayer outside of congregational services, this member noted that occupational responsibilities sometimes prevented attendance at congregational services and then made a comment on how these responsibilities might also be worship. This simple comment provided a glimpse into how the vocational identities of this person might be centered in public Christian worship.

Not a story like the previous, but still worth noting, one of the rostered leaders at Potamos realized that seminary training spent a significant amount of time clarifying the role of a rostered leader in congregational services as a way to encourage more lay participation, but failed to connect worship and daily life. It does make sense that theological education focuses on the practical realities of leading congregational services, but missing the opportunity to connect that service to public Christian worship in daily life seems a failing of theological education from a Lutheran understanding of vocation.

Relational Expectations

In the time between finishing my M.Div. and returning to work on my Ph.D., the language of relationality became part of the conversations in pastoral care and systematic theology. Because of this, I feel the need to report that the members of the four congregations I interviewed mostly talked about relationships when they talked about congregational life, worship, and vocation. Members mentioned relationships so often to some particular prompts that these findings need to be presented.

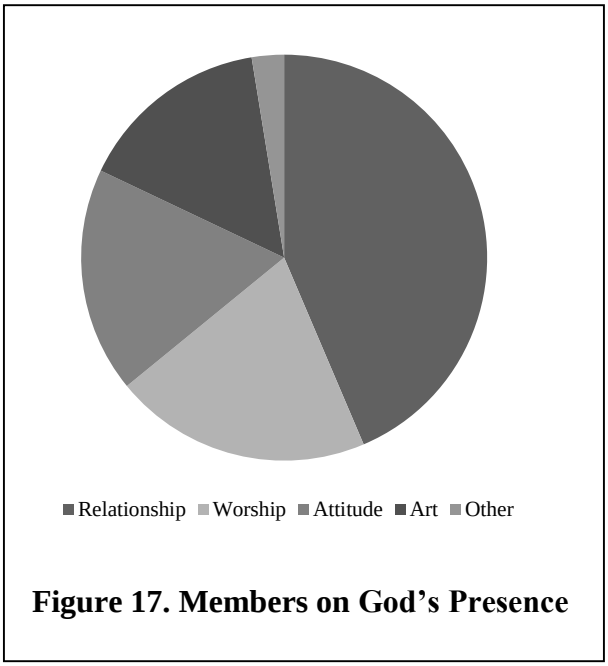

Figure 17. Members on God's Presence

The prompt, "Tell a story about how you sense God's presence and activity in this congregation," resulted in seventeen instances of relational language accounting for 43.6% of the responses (see figure 17). The relationships mentioned were the people, the children, family, and the youth. This may sound generic, but in the context of the prompt and the systematic theology developed in the previous chapter, these relationships are how the members perceive the presence of a trustworthy, reliable god.

Responses to the prompt, "Describe an experience of profound worship you have had," resulted mostly in references to artistic expressions at a 46.2% frequency, as is in line with Chaves' findings (see figure 18).[10] Relationships, however, were not far behind. 42.3% of the responses mentioned relationships in general or family, the people, pastoral visitation, and the youth in particular.

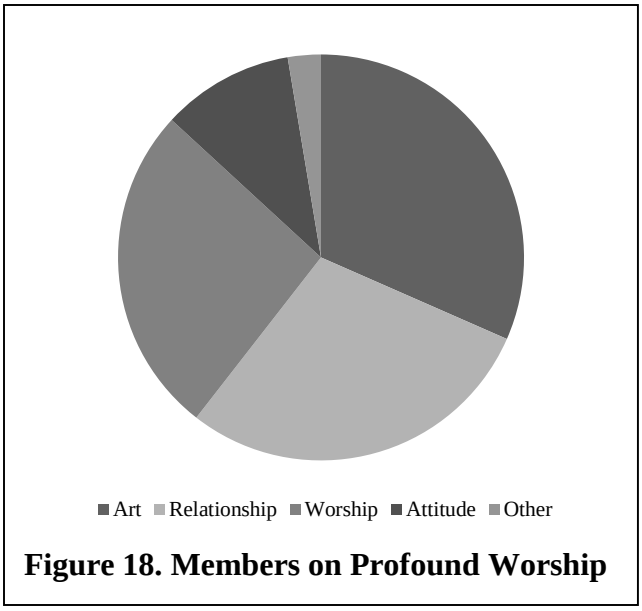

Figure 18. Members on Profound Worship

The prompt, "What tells you God is present here in worship?" elicited slightly more varied results (see figure 19). Relationality expressed as people, relationships, conversation, and family were mentioned 32.7% of the time, while particular sacramental practices such as sermons, the liturgy, gathering together, the announcements, and the prayers were mentioned 30.6% of the time. Some of these sacramental practices could be seen as relational, making the distinction between relationality and sacramental practices a connecting point that includes a relationship with God.

[10] Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5, 8, 14.

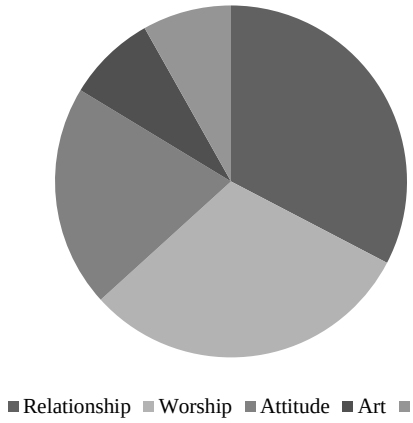

Figure 19. Members on God's Presence in Worship

The prompt, "How is God calling you to be active in the word?" brought forth significant reflection on relationships. This was primarily in terms of family, but also through relationships in general, God's guidance, neighbors, and pets. Drescher's "Four F's" can be seen at work here. Combined, these account for 41% of vocational examples among the members interviewed (see figure 20).

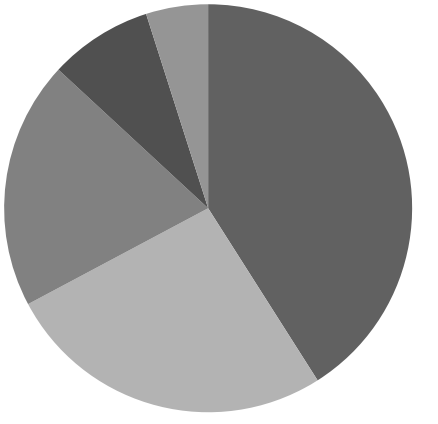

Figure 20. Members on God's Call

Findings and Discovery

It is time to turn to some deeper analysis of the data. First, I will reflect on the concerns of the worship wars and how this research reveals that they do not matter in terms of centering vocational identity. Second, I will turn to evidence of Modernity within the congregations as evidenced by the different responses of females and males to certain questions, serving as a reminder to not rush too quickly into talk of Post-Modernity. Third, I will show that theological education needs to start intentionally connecting relationality to particular aspects of Christian life and sacramental practices because the laity grasp the importance of relationship. Finishing with reflection on the high level of volunteerism among these four congregations, I will be able to show a connection between relationship and vocation that might serve as a way for public Christian leaders to begin making the connection between vocation and public Christian worship.

Worship Wars

The most important insight from the quantitative surveys for conversations about musical instruments or primary worship resources for congregational services is the apparent lack of correlation between primary worship resource or musical instruments used in congregational services and levels of volunteerism. Some of this probably stems from how the people in the congregational service figure out how to participate therein. Three of the four congregations of this research put the liturgy for the congregational service in the missal. Sitos was the exception to this, as they only provide an outline of the worship in their bulletin. That being said, however, those who attend services at Sitos would not benefit from having the liturgy in a missal since the lights are turned low in the

nave and the liturgical elements that the people need to be able to participate in the service are projected onto large screens.

Ouranos prints everything in a missal, including the hymns with music, so the primary worship resource might not be known to people in general unless they pay attention to the copyright declarations at the end of the missal. Those who plan the congregational services see this as an expression of creativity and faith, and both the members and the rostered leaders commented on this. On the Sunday when I visited, they used a liturgy from ELW and hymns from GIA Publications, the LBW, Integrity Music, and Birdwing Music.

Gemini and Potamos, using different primary worship resources, but both large congregations with traditional Lutheran worship practices and spaces, had the congregation using the hymnal for only some of the hymns on the Sundays I visited them. The vast majority of the liturgy was in a missal.

There are commonalities in the musical instruments used in worship for Gemini and Potamos, tending toward classical instrumentation and musical genre. For example, on the Sunday I visited Gemini, the music during the collection of the offering was a solo cello performance of a classical piece, and at Potamos a classical piece for violin and organ was performed at the same liturgical moment. Ouranos and Sitos share some common musical instruments used in worship, although with a different feel. Ouranos intentionally embraces the talents within the congregation for musical leadership, which on the Sunday I visited gave a folksy feel to the music in that those leading the music were of the congregation and playing music for their friends. At Sitos, the musical leadership felt more distinctly like the performance of a band, first, because it is more

intentionally a band with a band leader, band members, a crew, etc., second, because of the layout of the chancel and sanctuary, and third, because of the lighting. The layout of the chancel and sanctuary are a stage and gym floor with chairs arranged for the congregation, a small stage on the floor that serves as the sanctuary, and the band on the stage, which serves as a chancel. The chancel behind the sanctuary as the place for the band enhances the performance experience, which the lighting also enhances, as it lowers in the nave and responds to the music and actions of those in the chancel and sanctuary. I present no judgment on musical differences other than to say they did not demonstrably influence the volunteerism of those who attend. There is no single worship resource or musical instrument for a congregational service that directly influences levels of volunteerism.

In these four congregations, the choices of instruments used and the liturgical orders are a deep part of the congregational identity, but as Chaves points out, this says more about participation in artistic expression than anything else.[11] That Sitos is on par with the other congregations in terms of total household income and educational attainment may challenge some of the class distinctions Chaves reported, but with just four congregations, this is hard to determine. What I can say, at a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of ±7.47, is that for both the ELCA itself and for Lutheranism in the United States in general, liturgical format and musical instruments used do not affect levels of volunteerism.[12]

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[11] Ibid., 104.

[12] Ibid., 142, 144, and table 145.142 on 136. The confidence interval remains ±7.47 at a 95% confidence level for both the ELCA or Lutheranism in the United States.

Gender Differences

I assumed that Modernity was still prevalent in the congregations I studied in various ways and this proved true in some ways. For example, of those reporting their employment, 35.5% of the males are in management, business, or financial occupations compared with 23.6% of the females, and 13.6% of the females are in healthcare practitioner or technical fields, while only 1.6% of the males are (see figure 21).

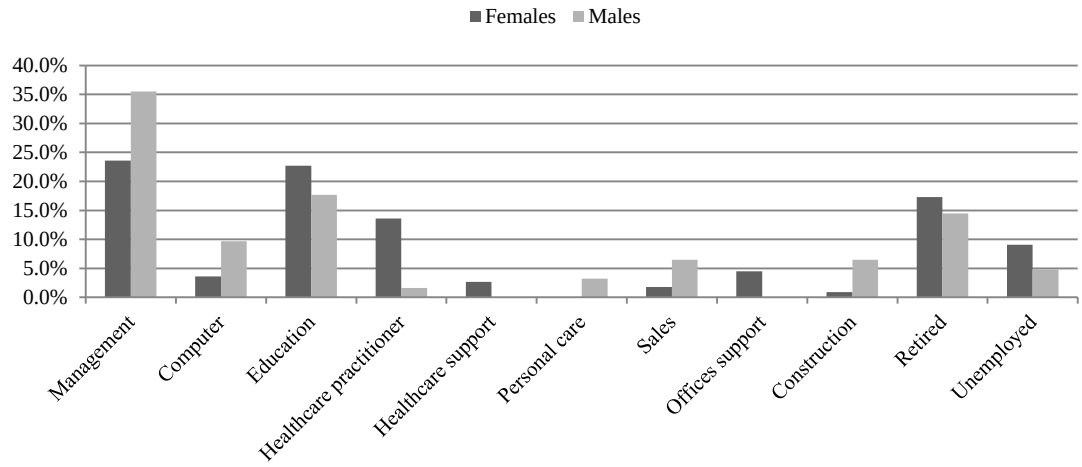

Figure 21. Percentage of Employment by Gender

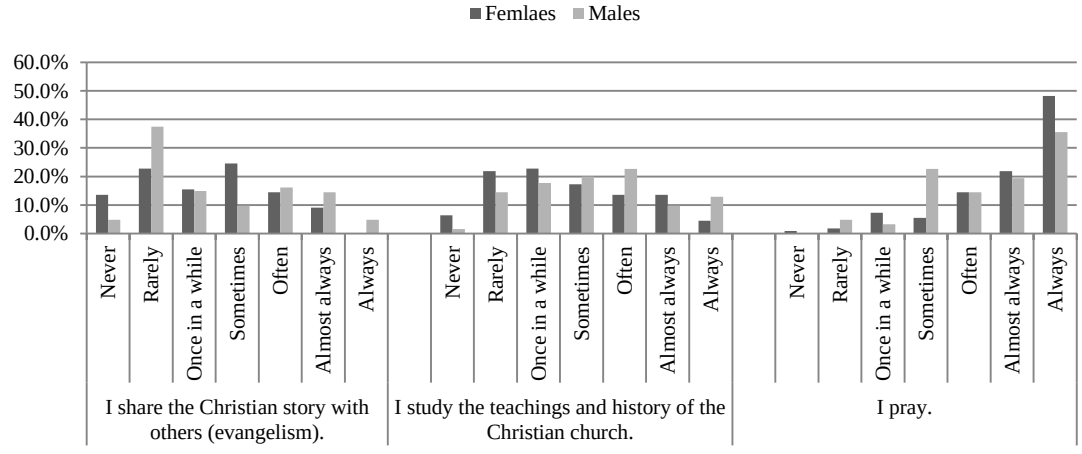

Figure 22. Survey Questions 17, 18, and 19 by Gender

The CFPS also revealed some trends of Modernity. Males reported sharing the Christian story with others more rarely than females, while females reported sharing the Christian story with others sometimes at a notably higher rate than males (see figure 22). When it comes to studying the teachings and history of the church, males reported a generally higher rate (see figure 22). Responses to prayer frequency also fit within Modernity as 22.6% of males reported praying sometimes compared with 5.5% of females, while 48.2% of females reported always praying compared with 35.5% of males (see figure 22). Males were more likely to report confessing their faults to others sometimes, while females were more likely to report almost always confessing their faults to others (see figure 23). Similar modernist tendencies were reported in forgiving others and working toward healing, with males claiming often more than females, but females claiming almost always more than males (see figure 23). More of the same was reported when encouraging others, with females reporting doing so always more so than males (see figure 23). And when it came to reporting volunteering to help the less fortunate, females reported often more frequently than males (see figure 24).

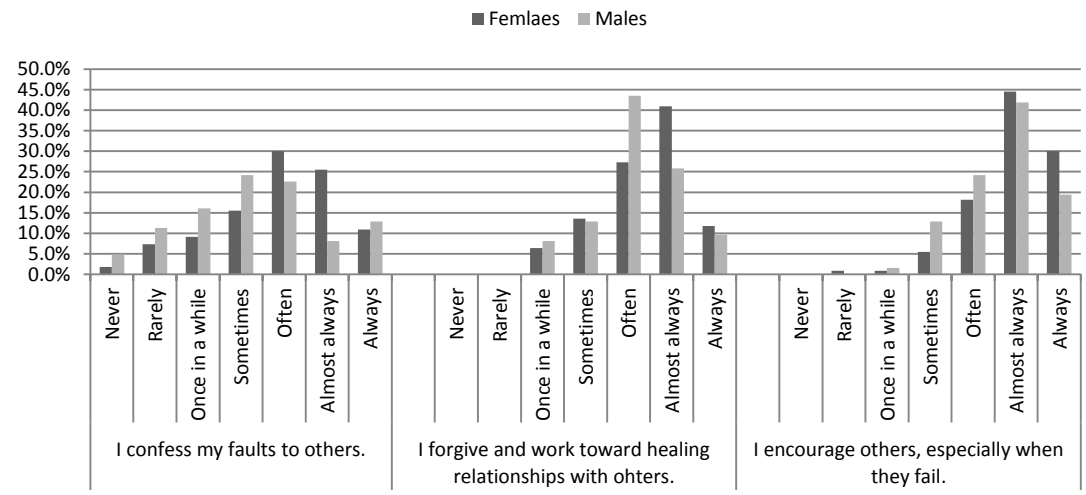

Figure 23. Survey Questions 20, 21, and 22 by Gender

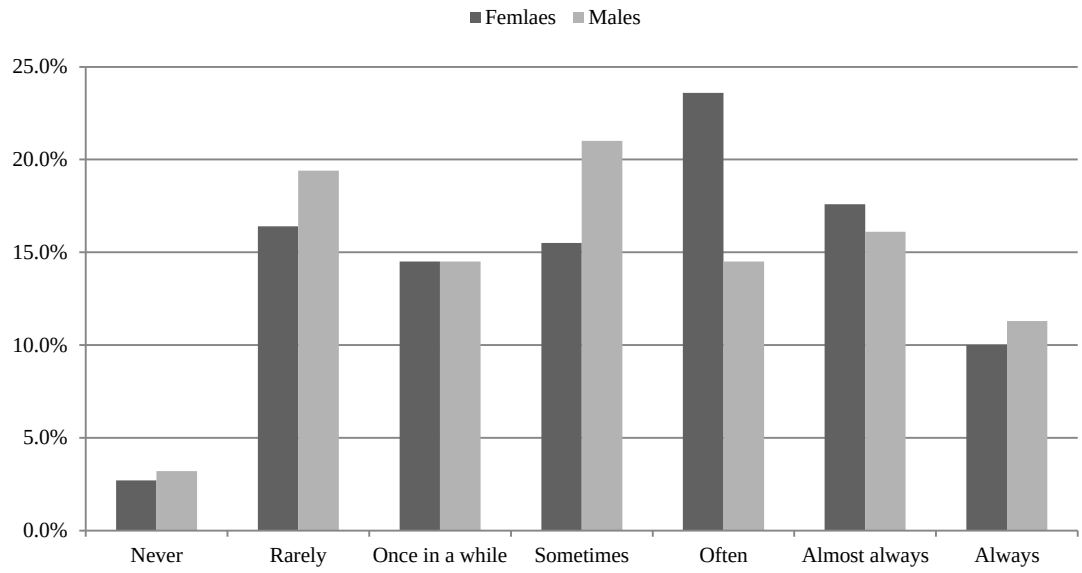

Figure 24. CFPS Question "I volunteer time to help those less fortunate" by Gender

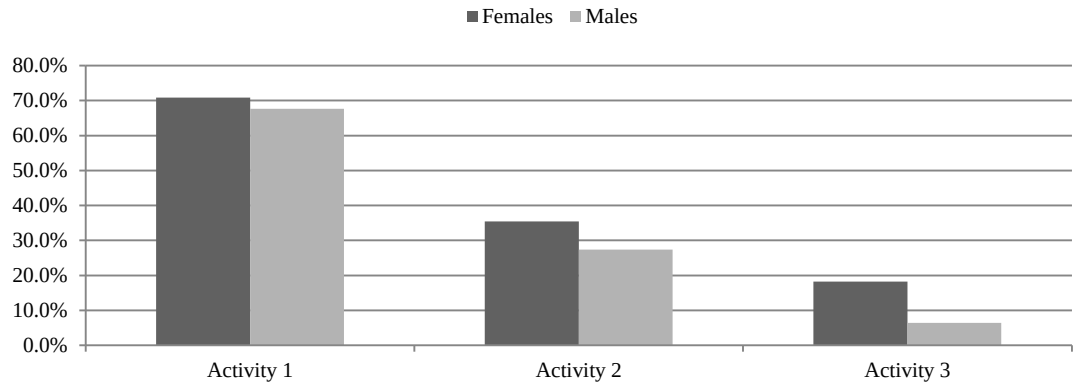

Figure 25. Number of Volunteer Activities by Gender

The number of volunteer activities reported shows the effects of Modernity because there is a move in just three reported volunteer actives from almost parity between the genders at one activity to a substantial difference where 18% of the females responding reported three volunteer activities to only 6.7% of males (see figure 25). A

larger sample size might narrow this gap however. The types of organizations for which the volunteer work is done also shows the effects of Modernity (see figure 26).

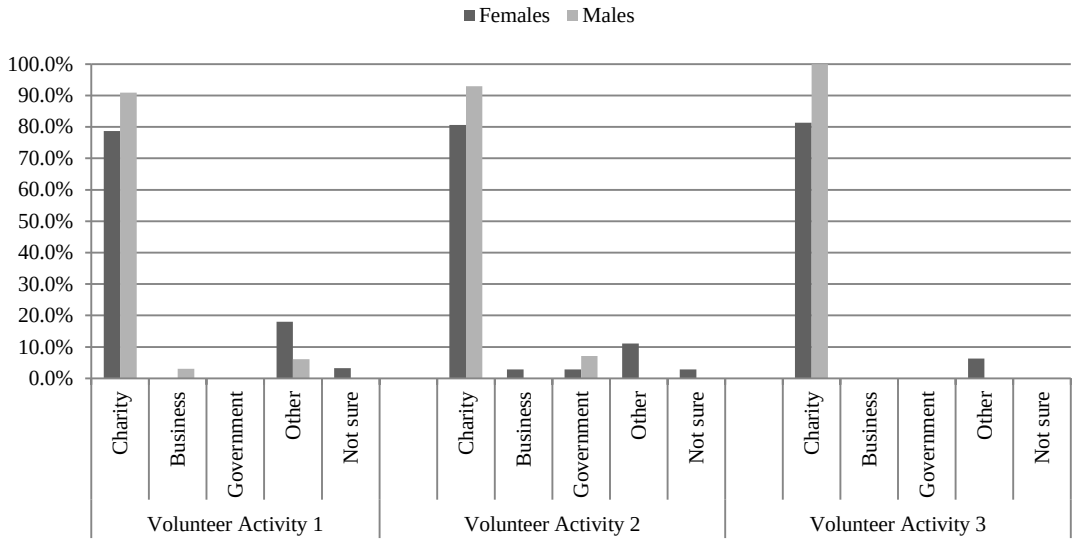

Figure 26. Types of Organizations by Number of Volunteer Activity and Gender

Charity, nonprofit, nongovernmental, union, or religious organizations far and away receive the volunteer time, however, males more frequently reported volunteering for a charity, nonprofit, nongovernmental, union, or religious organization than females, while females more frequently reported volunteering for other organizations, including community organizations.[13]

There may be signs of something other than Modernity at work in the congregations. For example, the reported marital statuses deviated from expectation in two places (see figure 27). No males reported never being married, while 10.9% of the females did, showing some substantial level of female independence in the congregations. The reported marital statuses influenced the percentage of males who

[13] In the ILO's MMVW, the choices for organizations receiving volunteer time are all compound choices. See appendix A, part IV.

reported being married, which was notably higher than females. The only reported total household income level not within the confidence interval between genders was the $100,000 to $149,999, with 30.6% of the males and 19.1% of the females in this category. This may seem like it falls within Modernity, but the two higher levels of total household income, while falling within the confidence interval, both had a greater percentage of females than males when compared by gender.

Figure 27. Marital Status by Gender

The CFPS also offers some trends that seem to go against the effects of Modernity (see figure 28). When reporting AWA, 46.8% of males said always, while only 35.5% of females did. A similar inversion occurred when reporting Bible study activity, with 14.5% of males claiming never, and 27.3% of females claiming the same. When reporting promotion of social justice, a higher percentage of females reported doing so once in a while, with only 8.1% of the males reporting the same, but a higher percentage of males reported doing so often, with only 14.5% of females reporting the same. I do not feel confident saying that these percentages reflect an inversion of Modernity, as most of

them could be accounted for by applying the confidence interval to each, thus drawing them closer together. A χ^2 analysis shows the same.

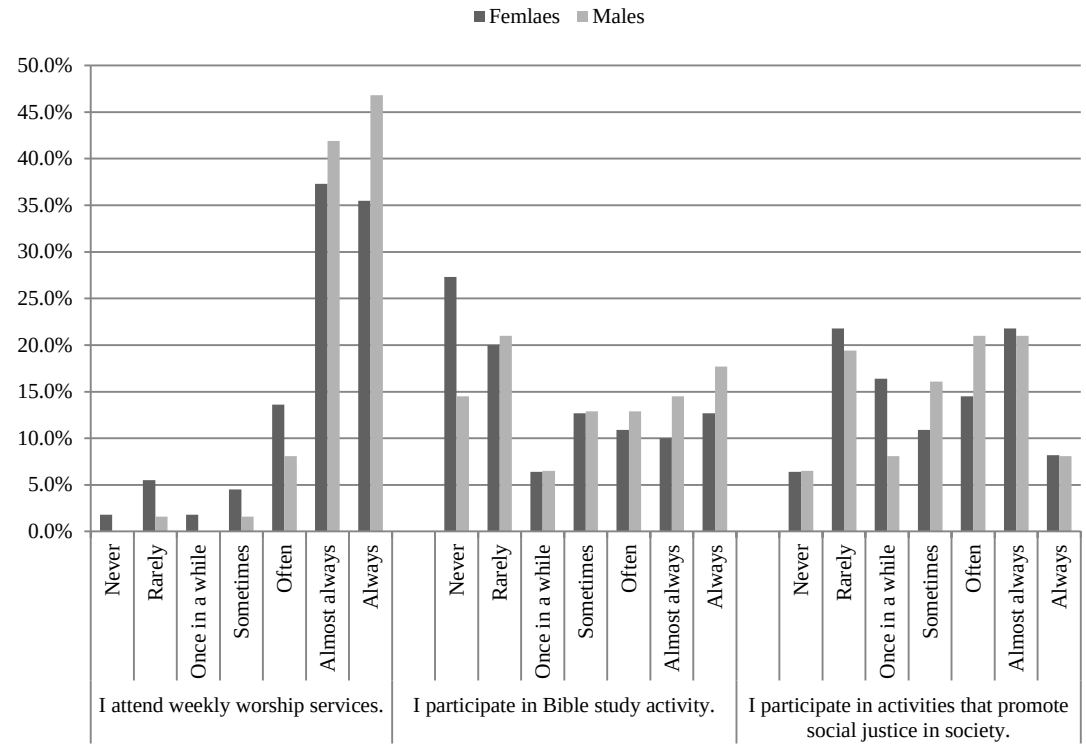

Figure 28. Survey Questions 15, 16, and 26 by Gender

Finally, when it comes to discussing Christian response to contemporary issues, females reported doing so rarely at a higher rate than males, while males more frequently reported doing so often or always than females (see figure 29). The percentages for both promoting social justice and discussing Christian response to contemporary issues are very close to the confidence interval, however, so more research is needed before solid claims can be drawn. A χ^2 analysis shows the same. All other differences between the genders fall within the confidence interval, but larger samples would clarify any findings. Until such research is possible, it seems the other categories are at or near parity between the genders.

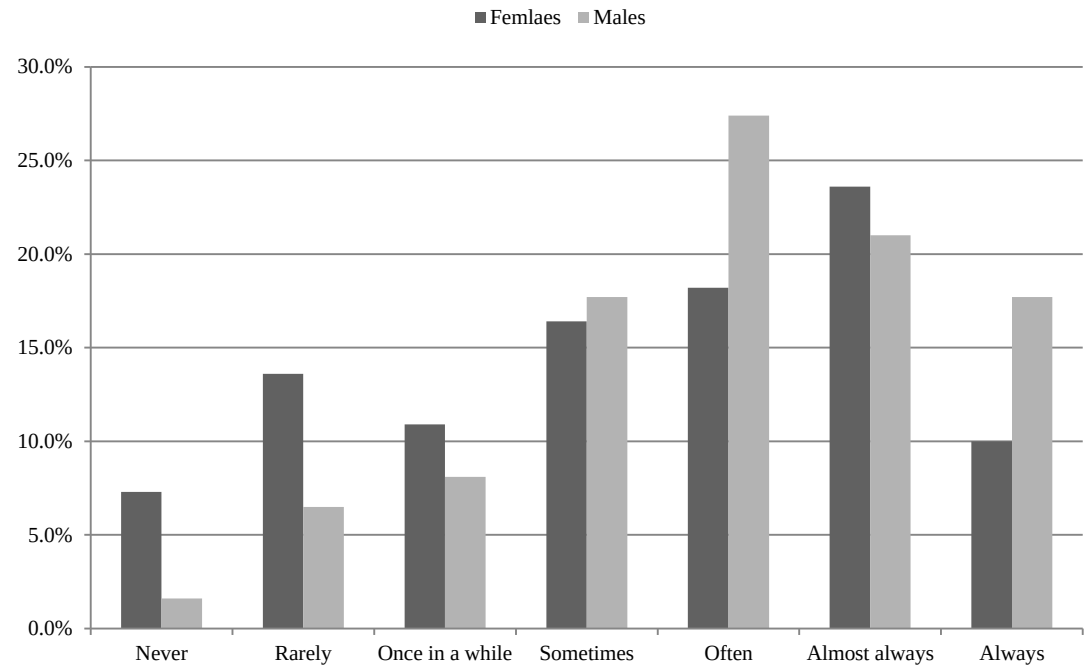

Figure 29. CFPS Question "I discuss Christian response to contemporary issues with other Christians" by Gender

Discovery

The members interviewed predominantly understand the importance of relationship—relationship as a sign of God's presence, relationship as a sign of worship, relationship as vocation. I cannot say from the research that the emphasis on relational language has achieved its goals, but I can say that it is time to be thinking about the rationale behind the relational language. The challenge going forward will be to attend to relationships in ways that reflect the ministry of the baptized. Changing a diaper, for example, is a relational and vocational activity. How do public Christian leaders provide the language and imaginative framework for this vocational activity so those with such vocational identities can experience these activities as both duty and delight? How do

public Christian leaders present relationship and vocation as public Christian worship in a way that names the false idols that can develop?

Relationships matter, and public Christian leaders should keep talking about the importance of relationships, but I think it is time to focus more clearly on the relationship God has established with us as the basis for the relationships we have with each other for the sake of the gospel. That last part, the "for the sake of," needs to be emphasized going forward. Alexander Schmemann has developed such a theology within the Orthodox Church in his book using a complementary phrase, *For the Life of the World*.[14] It will benefit the church's proclamation of the gospel if we can articulate why we are doing any particular activity. As the children's soccer game example showed earlier, many different gods can be worshipped at one event. Because relationships matter, public Christian leaders can also help people make sense of who they are in relationship with and how. *Hamlet*, act 2, provides insight and warning here.

The characters in Hamlet are driven by vocational identities that conflict, not just with the other characters, but also within each character. Hamlet wants to be a good son, both to his dead father and his living mother. This brings him into conflict with the king, his mother, and Polonius, but these same vocational identities bring him into conflict with himself as his determination to kill the king waxes and wanes and he ends up testing the call from the spirit of his father through the play within the play. Polonius, wanting to be a good father and counselor to the king, brings himself into conflict with Ophelia and Hamlet. In addition, he wants to protect the honor of his family's name, which results in

[14] Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World* (New York: National Student Christian Federation, 1964).

him sending a spy to check on his son, giving the spy permission to impugn his son's name, but not too much.

The lives of people in congregations, while hopefully less tragic than those presented in Hamlet, are no less convoluted. The daily struggle of figuring out how to be a good employer or employee, a good spouse, a good neighbor, and a good parent can be overwhelming. If we engage in these relationships without God's relationship with us, the reality of relationships can become purposeless.

The level of volunteerism among the members of these four congregations needs to be mentioned here. In 2013, the United States Department of Labor published a press release from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which noted that 26.5% of the population volunteered.[15] It is already apparent that these congregations volunteer far more than the average. The same report cites the median for annual volunteer hours of those who volunteered at 50. Restating the conservative estimate from above, the members of the four congregations studied provide 1,626 hours of volunteer hours per month, but this is an estimate. Of the sixty-one people who reported their per month volunteer hours for the congregational survey, the median monthly volunteer hours was 21.7. Extrapolated over a year, that may be as much as 260 hours, again, well above the national average.

This level of volunteerism is vocation of some kind. The people of these congregations are responding to some relationship or relationships in their lives that call or calls them to volunteer at incredibly high levels. Unfortunately, I did not know this when starting my research, so I did not ask any questions along these lines. Which god is being worshiped? Who or what is being trusted through these actions? To whom are

[15] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Volunteering in the United States, 2013," United States Department of Labor, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm (accessed March 19, 2014).

people relating that drives or encourages them to such levels of volunteerism? How is volunteering a duty? How is volunteering a delight? How much of this level of volunteerism is a reflection of autolaborological fundamentalism? Are vocational identities in conflict? If so, with whom? These are the kinds of questions for reflection that an awareness of vocational identities can bring to theological education as we move to the implications of relationality for public Christian worship.

Answering the Question

This brings me to place where I can present an answer for the research question, "How does public Christian worship center the vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?" Public Christian worship centers vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest by forming them with sacramental practices that help them perceive relationships as relationships with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Public Christian worship and Christian vocation are connected, therefore, because they help people perceive Jesus in their relationships. This, however, is also where public Christian worship and Christian vocation can differ. Describing how the centering element of public Christian worship relates to vocational identities will be more fully unpacked in the next chapter, in the closing arc of the hermeneutic circle. Before this chapter ends, I want to present to you three stories from the interviews that relate directly to the answer just given.

The first two stories run parallel to each other. Through the congregational research, I was able to interview two business owners who brought up the relationships with their employees during the interview. Both of them said they were aware of the

power dynamics of the employer-employee relationship, and so did not initiate conversations with their employees about faith or religion, but both of them noted the importance of modeling the Christian faith through their actions. For one, this meant particular attention to how people related to each other when hiring employees, showing care for the work environment. The other talked about being open with employees about the schedule of volunteering at the congregation when it conflicted with the work schedule. Both of them commented on how these practices created a space for their employees to approach them as they experienced different life situations to ask for flexibility of schedule, to talk about what they were experiencing, or even to ask for help—making hiring and scheduling sacramental practices. One of the business owners said that the congregational service helps in this by providing the space to perceive the needs of others. The other business owner said that the buffered self was broken open to perceive the presence of God through relationships with spouse and children and how they comment on perceiving the presence of God. These two stories show different ways of remembering and balancing relationships through sacramental practices as a way of centering vocational identities, and also how vocation can draw people into public Christian worship.

The third story is from a healthcare professional who works primarily with patients recovering from surgery. This interviewee talked about the importance of finding moments during the day to pray in helping center on Jesus as a way to deal with stressful situations, and how doing this simple sacramental practice made it possible to relate to patients more faithfully. This example of a sacramental practice at the workplace in a

time of stress shows one way that God calls people through the sacramental practices of public Christian worship back to God as the center of their vocational identities.

CHAPTER 5

DISCOVERY AND IMPLICATIONS (LOGOS)

The answer to the research question points to the importance of relationships. As stated above, public Christian worship centers vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest by forming them with sacramental practices that help them perceive relationships as a relationship with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Public Christian worship and vocation are connected, therefore, in that they help people perceive Jesus in their relationships. The final arc of the hermeneutic circle that outlines this dissertation leads me into a place of reflecting on the systematic theology presented in chapter 3, particularly encouraging me to attend to the law-gospel tension of vocation. This chapter begins with a reflective revisit to the idea of vocational identity, informed by the member interviews from the end of the previous chapter. This will set up the idea of entering into God-given vocational identities.

Revisiting Vocational Identity

I presented an idea of vocational identity in chapter 3 that is worth restating: vocational identity is the idea that each of us in all of our responsibilities across the set of relationships we have will change our thoughts and actions based on who is around us physically, virtually, and in our memory, so we each have multiple vocational identities. In developing a systematic theology around the idea of vocational identities, I missed an important difference in the kinds of vocational identities people have—those that are

given and those that are entered into. This is not a hard dichotomy, but a way of pointing out a difference in how people enter into relationships and, therefore, how people enter into different vocational identities.[1]

God gives vocational identities to each person in various ways. The most primary given vocational identity is that of created being, as Psalm 139 reminds us, but since the perception of this God-given vocational identity develops as we grow, we can move to the second given vocational identity, which is that of child. From this, several other God-given vocational identities follow—sibling, grandchild, cousin, patient, neighbor. If there is a faith practiced in the household that God gives to the infant, a vocational identity will also be given by the faith community, and sometimes publically as a sacramental practice within a congregational service.

As children grow, the number of given vocational identities also grows. Any kind of preschool presents the vocational identity of student, which will be given again through different relationships in kindergarten, elementary school, and throughout each person's schooling.[2] Along the way, some more particular vocational identities might be entered into from among those that have been given—friendships, significant others, possibly spouse, maybe parent, hopefully occupational identity, citizen, etc. Here we see the connection between given vocational identities and those entered into.

Vocational identities that are entered into come from given vocational identities. One of the business owners I mentioned at the end of the previous chapter talked about the hiring process. The vocational identity of the employer is present, with those people

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[1] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Respobsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1963), 52-53.

[2] Ibid., 98.

available for interview being given to the employer and the chosen qualifications for hiring being part of the vocational identity entered into by the applicants. The employer has an idea of whom they want to hire, but they have to choose from among those given to them in the application and interview process. From this example, it again becomes apparent how quickly vocational identities can compound, but this time from a vocational identity entered into. By entering into the vocational identity of employer, that person is now given vocational identities by the employee's family and friends as the family member's, friend's, or neighbor's employer.

Choosing to become an employer brought in an entire set of relationships with strangers, some of whom became employees, who brought in their vocational identities from their families and friends. Given vocational identities make possible entering into vocational identities, which lead into given vocational identities. God's abundant giving is seen in the superfluity of given vocational identities. God gives each person so many vocational identities that it is impossible to enter into or even be aware of all of them. By entering into a God-given vocational identity, however, people find a sense of meaning and purpose because they are responding to the needful presence of another. This may be something as long-term as becoming a parent, or something as short-term as helping someone on the bus have a better day by smiling when you see them.

Returning to the biblical languages—with the reminder that none of the interviewees mentioned any kind of civil office—it is worth remembering that the word "liturgy" comes from *leitourgeo*, which had specific civil uses and has been used by Christians. A simple definition of *leitourgeo* places it in the semantic range of rendering

public service or aid with the overtone of at one's own expense.[3] Given the popular idea of liturgy as "the work of the people," a strong return to the vocational identities God gives us through public service and social responsibilities seems necessary both for theological education and the leadership of public Christian leaders. The vocational identities of tax payer, voter, elected official, etc., are being overlooked. God calls us into public service, the work of the people in the world, regardless of how simple or complicated it may seem.

Entering into vocational identity need not be all consuming. Indeed, one of my underlying assumptions has been that it need not be.[4] God gives vocational identities to each of us, more than we could ever fully enter into, and in that giving makes space for us to participate in creating a trustworthy world by entering into the God-given vocational identities. An illustration may help.

I was riding in a friend's truck on the way back from an afternoon of food and conversation when we were stopped at a stoplight. We were about four cars back from the light in a lane of traffic to go straight through the intersection. Next to us was the right turn lane and the first car in that lane. That car was not moving despite the driver's best attempts to get forward momentum. The driver of the vehicle behind the stuck car got out and started to help push. Seeing this, I decided to get out of my friends truck and also help push. This is when I discovered why the car was stuck. The road leading to the intersection was an uphill ice sheet. I fell. By the time I got back up and made it the few

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[3] Cf. footnotes 3 and 4 from chapter 3. Frederick William Danker and Katheryn Krug, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 214; Thayer and Wilke, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

[4] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 27.

feet over to the stuck car, two other people had come over to help push. It took all of us, all being careful to not fall, but we got the car unstuck and made it back into our own vehicles as the light changed to green.

The stuck car is the given vocational identity, and the needful presence of another. There were plenty of vehicles around with plenty of people to help, even some pedestrians on the side of the road waiting for a bus. The first person to enter into this given vocational identity was the driver behind the stuck car. It could have been anyone, but it was him. His entry into that given vocational identity inspired three others, including myself, to also enter into this particular vocational identity. I do not know who any of the other people involved in this story are—the driver of the stuck car, the driver of the vehicle behind the stuck car, or the other two people who helped push—but we all entered into a given vocational identity. The four of us who pushed will not meet up to travel around the Twin Cities pushing cars up icy slopes. This will not become a business or an ongoing volunteer activity. This is an example, however, of a given vocational identity becoming something more as people enter into that vocational identity.

I do not want to abandon the issues of responsibility, relationships, or the meeting of passion and need, but more is happening with the vocational identities of those who completed the congregational survey or agreed to be interviewed than just these issues. How are we responsible for those we don't know? How do those with whom we have no relationship call us? What if a person's passions do not meet any needs in the world?

Here is something about vocation that is not captured in the popular shorthand of Benne's responsibilities, Wingren's set of relationships, or even Frederick Buechner's

meeting place of passion and need.[5] While I would like to say that all four of us who helped to push the stuck car did so out of a Christian sense of helping the neighbor, I cannot. Indeed, if the driver of the vehicle behind the stuck car had not gotten out to help, I do not think I would have. None of us were responsible for getting the car moving, except maybe the driver of the vehicle behind the stuck car so that he could continue on from that place to get to where his responsibilities were calling him. Since none of us knew each other, this was an instance of strangers helping strangers.

Entering into vocational identities is more than just being a good neighbor, or a good employer, or a good parent. Awareness and perception matter here, too, like they do when it comes to public Christian worship. I perceived the needful presence of the driver in the stuck car before I became aware of anything I could do to help. When I perceived the presence of the driver of the vehicle behind the stuck car, I then became aware of something I could do to help. Entering into vocational identities, therefore, is about perceiving both the presence of the needful other and how God calls me and gives me the gifts to respond—a clearer statement of given vocational identity.

Discoveries Shape Theology

The congregational research pointed out one fundamental flaw in how the vocational theology of Benne, Wingren, and Buechner is popularly received, and probably how my own will be received—the focus is still on an extended time of commitment. Any theology around vocational identities needs to also clearly claim the

[5] This is intentionally a statement of the popular misquote from Buechner. The full quote accounts for God's actions. "The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (*a*) that you need most to do and (*b*) that the world most needs to have done." Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 95.

role of the single instance response to being called, broadening the idea of vocation to account for both life-long commitments and momentary responses. This section will begin with the importance of relationships in perceiving the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus and work to the promise of vocation as that which provides God-given meaning and purpose in life.

Relationships and Faith

The member interviews point to the significance of relationships in perceiving the presence of God. The members interviewed expressed perceiving the presence and activity of God, the presence of God in worship, and God calling them into the world most frequently through relationships. What I did not hear from the members of the congregations I interviewed was God's activity in these relationships. God was also missing from the Buechner quote as cited by two rostered leaders. We seem to be caught in a place where relationships with other people matter, but God's relationship with us does not. This might just be another vestige of Modernity, but whether it is or not, a relational explanation of perceiving the presence of a trustworthy, reliable god—whatever that god might be—is absent, unless the trustworthy, reliable god is people, but this is idolatry.

Relationships do of course matter, especially when talking about some of the long-term vocational identities like parent, spouse, and child, because some of these very vocational identities serve as experiential metaphors for God's relationship with us, like parent and spouse.[6] The dominant language of God as the object of a passive verb,

[6] Cf. Deuteronomy 8:5, the entire book of Hosea, Psalm 103:13, Proverbs 3:12, Ephesians 5:23, Hebrews 12:7.

however, reveals a poor modeling by public Christian leaders of language about God's relationship with us. An expanded emphasis on relationality in theological education focusing more clearly on God's relationship with creation as the beginning of all relationships might provide a formative, long-term focus for relationships and vocational identities as being for the sake of the gospel. As H. Richard Niebuhr states it so eloquently, "I believe that [humanity] exists and moves and has [its] being in God; that [humanity's] fundamental relation is to God. That is the starting point, not the conclusion."[7] This focus provides a path for making sense of God's relationship with us through metaphorical reference to our long-term vocational identities, but also makes room to talk about the momentary vocational identities spurred on by questions of who our neighbors are.

Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age* presents the development of the buffered self as cultures of Modernity moved meaning making into the individual, and now the particular experience of each individual. Christians in particular should recognize the idolatry at work here, but as Taylor points out through his work, the church in the West often led the charge in the development of the buffered self. Part of Parker Palmer's argument in *The Company of Strangers* shows how God gives strangers and acquaintances to us as both opportunities to enter into Christian vocation for the sake of the gospel, and as a relationship that can hold the church accountable to the gospel.[8] Short-term, momentary relationships are just as important as long-term relationships because God calls each of us to participate in the ongoing creation of a trustworthy world. Relationships with family

[7] Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*, 44. The bracketed words update the language of the source to remove the use of masculine language in reference to all of humanity.

[8] Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*. Chapter 3 in particular.

and friends can give vocational identities that provide such meaning and purpose, but so can relationships with strangers and acquaintances. Palmer's work might be seen as a response to Taylor's, even though it came first, because it can help Christians see how the buffered self keeps us from relating to others for the sake of the gospel.

Duty and Delight—The Promise of Vocation

The members of the four congregations who completed the surveys reported such a high level of volunteering that something has to be at work here driving people to activity in the community. Since this was not a focus of my congregational research, I will be reflecting on what might be motivating people to such high levels of volunteerism, but this is theologically reflective speculation rather than a reporting of motivations. Three possibilities present themselves, as I see it, and these are not mutually exclusive. All of these three might be gods giving vocational identities to people, and as such, they all might be motivating factors working in people's lives.

First, it could be the Holy Spirit, and I take this possibility seriously. These high levels of volunteerism might be a sign of the efficacy of the gospel in these congregations. Second, the ideologies of Modernity might still motivate people as they work to better the common good. Third, autolaborological fundamentalism could also be a motivating factor. People could be attempting to save themselves by their works. There very well could be other motivations for volunteerism, but these three highlight the tension in relationships with God, with others, and with self that point to the promise of vocation.

The promise of vocation is god-given meaning and purpose. Entering into a given vocational identity, whether short-term or long-term, gives meaning and purpose to a

person's life by helping them realistically see their gifts and talents as a way to respond to different callings. The challenge for faith here is discerning which god is giving a vocational identity. This changes with each context and with what is being trusted. As vocational identities conflict, discernment about which god is calling may help, but given the superfluous amount of vocational identities that God gives each of us every day, not to mention all the other vocational identities into which other gods call us, choosing to enter into a vocational identity becomes challenging. The claims of the Christian faith help.

God promises gospel-centered meaning and purpose through Christian vocation. God's promise of gospel-centered meaning and purpose gives both delight and duty as God's promise and law interact with the world, our culture, and our buffered selves. God gives each of us the vocational identity of child—and in some cases sibling—before we have the ability to enter into any vocational identities. God gives parents and siblings those vocational identities, which both delight us and bind us to particular duties. The same is true for our interactions with strangers. Whether we are able to enter into relationship with a stranger or not, God gives us vocational identities that can delight us as we participate in God's ongoing creation of a trustworthy world, but can also bind us to particular duties for the sake of the gospel and the neighbor. When we enter into the particular duties of these God given vocational identities, God's promise in vocation gives us entry points as actors into the story of Jesus, taking on particular roles in his story, not as generic and interchangeable representations of different stations in life and society or part of a background crowd or chorus, but as unique persons responding to others because of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus.

God's promise in vocation runs deeper than finding a way to respond to others out of faith because it also frees us to give vocational identities to others when we are in need. The power of the law is often palpable in such moments, even if the assessment of our faults may err, and we become aware of our failings before God and others. In these moments, the duty of vocational identities and our failing therein may be the source of pain and grief. God speaks the promise of vocation into these moments. One part of the faith God gives us is the freedom to confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and call others to help. The delight of Christian vocation is the freedom to admit that we need others, and this is a good thing because we trust and rely on the movement of Jesus' Spirit.

The Lutheran concern of the proper distinction between law and gospel—in the strict sense—necessitates a brief excursus into the difference between relationships of vocation under the law and the promise. Motivation presents itself as one immediate difference, but this move becomes anthropological almost instantly. To show the anthropological understanding: if the motivation to enter into a God-given vocational identity is external, then the law is at work; on the other hand, if the motivation to enter into a God-given vocational identity is internal, then the promise is being lived out. Such a move to motivation both removes the relationship God established with us in Jesus from the vocation and simplifies motivation to a false dichotomy. If there is a third use of the law when it comes to vocation, then it is in this misapplied sense of who is using the law.

The law is a good gift from God. Relationships from the law that call us into vocation show God at work in both killing the old person within us—the second use—and creating a trustworthy world—the first use—for "the achieving of this God's moral

ends is indeed a political achievement, a perfecting of 'his rule,' for his story is the story of his action with and in community."[9] God's good will revealed in the law eviscerates a hard dichotomy between relationships from the law and the promise of vocation, but there is still a distinction.

The promise of meaning and purpose in vocation come from God's promises in Jesus, and are thus eschatological. The promise comes from God's purposes, which are relational because of God's nature. As Jenson writes,

> No eschatological vision… can be appropriate that does not begin and end with God and *his* purposes for his community of creatures. Our "blessedness" is always to be defined by the moral will of the Lord. And no eschatological vision can be right that abstracts the blessed from their communal reality as the people, the temple, the polity, the joint body, and the communion of God.[10]

The meaning and purpose God gives in the promise of vocation create different relationships not through external or internal motivation, but through the hope Jesus' faith gives us. Said another way, when we enter into God-given vocational identities, we risk relationship with others, relationships in which God's purposes call us into vocation. When we eschew relationship and God-given vocational identities, we sin because we turn away from God's purposes. "We are sinners in that we take no risks."[11] The lack of risk taking makes given vocational identities legalistic requirements that can both hold us accountable and also allow us to hold others accountable. Such mutual accountability can lead to a negative impulse because it is based on a tally of autolaborological actions rather than relationships.

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[9] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), Kindle edition, at 69%, location 4369.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 148.

God's promise in vocation is meaning and purpose. We encounter the first use of the law in vocation because there are too many God-given vocational identities for each of us to enter into. When we risk relationship with other beings that God has created, however, God gives our lives meaning and purpose as we become co-creators with God of a trustworthy and reliable world. The promise from other gods that call us into vocation is not meaning and purpose, but some other end that moves us to trust something other than the God revealed to us in Jesus. The central issue of Christian vocation is not anthropological motivation but the question of which god is ultimately trustworthy and reliable.

The model of relationships as a way into Christian vocation returns to God again and again because all relationships start with the relationship God established with us—the gospel. The gospel establishes a particular relationship between God and humanity while also calling us to be in relationship with each other through Christian vocation. It is our duty and delight to relate to others because of the relationship God has established with us and them. It is our duty and delight to relate to God because of the relationship God has given us and our relationships with others.

Translating Translations of Worship

It is our duty and delight that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to God the Father through God the Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Despite the idea expressed in the opening sentence from the proper preface of a communion liturgy—one that by the ideals of the ELCA expressed in *The Use of the Means of Grace* is being heard weekly—the idea of worship for most of the

people I interviewed was the congregational service.[12] This is in spite of the fact that three of the four congregations had some version of this opening sentence printed in the missal on the Sundays when I visited. The actions and positions of public Christian worship do not center the vocational identities of most of the people I interviewed outside of the congregational service. Relationships are still important, however, in experiencing both the presence of God and the profundity of public Christian worship.

Rather than rail against misunderstandings of public Christian worship, since among other influences, the current biblical translation supported by the ELCA flattens the idea of worship, the importance of relationships—especially relationships with public Christian leaders—should be highlighted as a way to expand the idea of public Christian worship. The three stories of those who I interviewed that mentioned instances of sacramental practices outside of the congregational service provide examples of modeling and entering into public Christian worship at other times and in other places. Another possibility is to actively connect relationships with public Christian worship through sacramental practices in sermons, Christian education, and various congregational communications. I will avoid particular examples of implementation here because this should rightly be based on the particular relationships in any given context. My encouragement toward modeling and connecting public Christian worship to relationships through sacramental practices beyond the congregational service does apply directly to theological education. The move to framing relationships in the context of the gospel provides the opportunity to do so through the sacramental practices of public Christian worship, but this moves me into the last section of this chapter.

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[12] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, 39, Application 35B.

Implications

This section points to some direct implications for both public Christian leaders and theological education about the aim of the continuing use of relational language, expanding imaginations about public Christian worship through modeling and conversation, and then bringing these together so members of congregations see their vocational identities as meaningful and purposeful because of their Christian vocation. Examples of particular practices—sacramental or otherwise—lifted up in this section serve as illustrations, not templates. Given the importance of relationships, particular practices will need to be developed in each context with an eye toward the goal of helping people enter into public Christian worship in a way that helps them enter into the vocational identities God gives them because of the relationship God has established with creation in Jesus, thus helping people discover the purpose and meaning of their vocational identities through public Christian worship.

Knowing Who Knows Us

The use of relational language in theological education should continue, but such language must be intentionally reframed to begin in God's relationship with creation. Such a shift in linguistic style reflects a redirected theology away from an anthropological origin and toward a divine origin. From the Christian perspective, this is not just an interesting educational concept, but a sacramental practice necessitated by the Incarnation of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Psychology, anthropological theology, archeology, and other disciplines do provide insights from a human perspective into how God relates to us today and how that relationship developed in the past. Their impact in theological education and congregations is shown in the findings of this research,

however, if relational theology is not redirected to begin with the relationship God established with creation in Jesus, the result will be idolatry.

A Christian relational theology that points to a sense of promise in vocation must begin with God—at the least with God's relationship with creation. Deists refer to a god that created all there is, or at least started it all going. Other faiths that espouse some kind of divine being describe how that god relates to creation. The unique Christian claim is of God who chose to relate to humanity as a human, experiencing the limitations of locality, temporality, need, desire, and even a perceived absence of the presence of God, all for the sake of removing the penalty of the law that would keep us from participating in that relationship because of fear or shame. Starting relational theology with God's relationship to creation in Jesus helps us see given vocational identities in both our long- and short-term relationships.

God has established this relationship with creation in Jesus and is not limited to our relationships with people. We humans have a relationship with other created things. A relational theology starting with the relationship God establishes with us as part of the larger creation opens given vocational identities to humanity's relationship with other creatures. This includes other animals, but also plants, minerals, water—anything that was created.

This theology is not a use or stewardship of things, but a relationship within creation. We now know that the sun will come up because of the rotation of the planet, not because it goes away and has to be coaxed out; that seeds sprout and grow and yield fruit because of the right mixture of nutrients in the soil, moisture, and sunlight, not because some god grants us favor or withholds it; and that many illnesses can be cured by

bolstering the body's natural defenses, not through the right kind of sacrifices and a lot of wishing. The theology presented in this dissertation still sees God at work in the rotation of the planets, seeds yielding their fruit, and the healing gifts of medicine, now in ways that are more informed by interdisciplinary insights. God-given vocational identities call us to enter into a relationship with the law that enhances our stewardship of creation through deeper understandings of creation.

Theology drawn from relational anthropology need not ever deal with humanity's relationship to the rest of creation. If Taylor's argument of the buffered self is accurate, such a theology could lead back into the instrumentalization that relational anthropology was trying to avoid by twisting the goals of a relational approach to some egotistical solipsistic relational focus. Such egotistical solipsism has room to talk about stewardship and even presents a god. By not starting with the relationship God establishes with creation in Jesus, however, a person with this view still reflects the negative end of Modernity's approach to creation and other people—all that is not the self is a means to an end and only has value as determined by the self based on the use of the thing. Christianity challenges us to start with God's relationship to all of creation, which includes God's relationship with us, but knowing about God's relationship with us is easily distorted through our relationships with the many other trustworthy, reliable things in creation.

Relational theology must begin with God's relationship to creation. This has probably been stated too many times already but this is the point. If a god is a thing on which your heart relies, a thing in which you put trust, then all relationships are potential pathways to idolatry. Even a non-instrumentalist understanding of relationships presents

us with an abundance of relationships, some of which are trustworthy and reliable—the sun rising every morning, for example. Trustworthy, reliable relationships are gifts from God, but if theological education and public Christian leaders do not actively and intentionally speak and teach of the primacy of God's relationship with creation within all of our relationships, the understanding of church as relationships with other humans will dominate the imagination of Christians.

An emphasis on God's relationship with creation from public Christian leaders and in the theological education thereof can show that all relationships are given vocational identities. Beginning our theology with God's relationship to creation and moving to God's relationship with each creature sets the stage for the importance of the relationships between God's creatures. Knowing about the relationship God has established with us in Jesus is not simply an intellectual exercise, although some education is helpful for raising awareness about this primary relationship. At some point, however, we also need to experience God's relationship with us.

Experiencing Who Knows Us

Relational anthropology helps relational theology in coming to terms with how people learn to experience God's relationship with us by paying significant attention to the parent-child relationship. One example is Siegel's *The Developing Mind*, which presents the relationship between mother and child as the relationship where children learn about trust, for better or for worse.[13] The importance of the parent-child relationship has even been referred to in popular culture, finding expression in movies like *Fight Club*

[13] Daniel J. Siegel, *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1999), Kindle edition.

where failure of the parent-child relationship develops into a theology that motivates depersonalizing, anarchical violence.[14] These examples show some competing ways in which Modernity is returning to the importance of this relationship.

The parent-child relationship is raised up in both the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions as important. Wisdom literature in the Bible points out the importance of the parent-child relationship.[15] Martin Luther, in *The Large Catechism*, notes when explaining the Fourth Commandment:

> This, I say, should be the first and greatest reason for us to keep this commandment. If we had no father or mother, we should wish, on account of this commandment, that God would set up a block of wood or stone that we might call father or mother. How much more, since he has given us living parents, should we be happy to show them honor and obedience. For we know that it is highly pleasing to the divine Majesty and to all the angels, that it vexes all the devils, and, besides, that it is the greatest work that we can do, except for the sublime worship of God summarized in the previous commandments. For God has exalted this walk of life above all others; indeed, he has set it up in his place on earth. This will and pleasure of God ought to provide us sufficient reason and incentive to do cheerfully and gladly whatever we can.[16]

He also expands the parent-child relationship to include all positions of authority, an understanding of relationships that moves from relational anthropology to relational theology focusing on God's relationship with creation expressed in the relationships of people in positions of authority and trust.[17] With this move, the relationships that public Christian leaders have with others provide opportunities to enter into public Christian

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[14] *Fight Club*, directed by David Fincher, screenplay by Jim Uhls, DVD (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox, 2002).

[15] Cf. Proverbs 4 and 23:15-28.

[16] LC 1.125-126.

[17] LC 1.141, 143, 150, and 161.

worship outside of the congregational service in order to better perceive and attend to the relationship God establishes with creation.

Two of the interviews from the congregations come to mind because one member and one rostered leader each talked about a youth leader or minister who modeled public Christian worship outside of the congregational service when they were youth. Taking Luther's read of the Fourth Commandment, these youth leaders were acting in a way worthy of trust and also acting in a way that modeled for the youth how sacramental practices can center vocational identity in different times and places. They used their position of trust to point to the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. This is a strong model for public Christian leaders and theological education.

Public Christian leaders have opportunities to help those who trust them perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus through sacramental practices that lead into public Christian worship, thus providing experiences of God both in the congregational service and elsewhere. Public Christian leaders can create the space for this experience in the congregational service, but they can also create this space everywhere else. The goal is to help others perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus, to help others experience the relationship God has established with them and all of creation in Jesus.

This goal cannot be achieved solely through the traditional sacramental practices of baptism, communion, repentance, etc., because these sacramental practices by themselves assume an awareness of God's relationship with us outside of public Christian worship. Sacramental practices together with active times of reflection help people verbalize their experiences for theological reflection. Providing times for theological reflection and verbalization can be done in formal settings like during pastoral counseling

or as part of Christian education, but they can also be done during fellowship, pastoral visits, council and committee meetings, etc. Remember the results of the interviews from above: every member interviewed save one—who claimed agnosticism during the interview—gave an answer to the prompt, "How is God calling you to be active in the world?" Those who gave answers included two other members who also claimed agnosticism during their interviews.

Theological education can provide the space for public Christian leaders to both become comfortable with doing theological reflection outside of sacramental practices and learn ways of helping others do theological reflection. Those familiar with the work of the Rev. Dr. Tony Everett, retired professor of pastoral care at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, will be familiar with his acronym of theological reflection: W.I.G.I.A.T., or "Where is God at in all this?" This one simple question is an example of equipping public Christian leaders to do theological reflection by helping others enter into theological reflection and verbalize insights gained thereby. Given the results of the interviews, the direct question, "How is God calling you to be active in the world?" with the follow-up question, "How might God be active in your primary relationships?" seemed to provide the space and focus for people to enter into theological reflection. Theological education provides the opportunity for public Christian leaders to find and develop questions of theological reflection for themselves and others. This opportunity should not be missed. Theological reflection provides the time and place to discover the promise of Christian vocation, God's promise of meaning and purpose through given vocational identities.

Relating to Who Knows Us

Relationships involve multiple parties. Sacramental practices serve as both a way for God to relate to us, but also as a way for us to communicate with God. *Hamlet*, act 2, provides an unexpected insight into this aspect of sacramental practices.

The end of act 2 has Hamlet in soliloquy reflecting on his process of discernment. Spurred on by the First Player's emotional recital, Hamlet reflects on his unwillingness to act on the call from the ghost of his father. He ends up deciding on talking the players into performing the play within a play, noting that "The play's the thing/ Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."[18]

Jenson's point of all of us being actors in the story of Jesus with Hamlet's reflection on discernment that, "the play's the thing," connects sacramental practices with our part in the relationship God establishes with us. The Holy Spirit does call us into public Christian worship through sacramental actions even though we might not always perceive the Spirit's presence. In those moments when we cry out with Jesus without knowing it, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" sacramental practices provide a way for us to be in relationship with God. From an anthropological perspective, when we find ourselves perceiving the absence of God, sacramental practices can provide a way for us to, "catch the conscious of the King."

Sacramental practices, following this line of thought, help outline something of the relationship between God and humanity. I will not claim that sacramental practices entirely describe this relationship, but they are a part of it. Sacramental practices come to us from previous generations and are developed by us in our relationships with God and

[18] *Hamlet*, 2.2.606-7.

each other. God gives us a full relationship in the relationship that God establishes with us in Jesus because God also gives us sacramental practices as ways to participate in the relationship.

Questions of theodicy find room here because this relationship is fully a relationship. Despite the formality of some sacramental practices, God expects the full range of emotions and experiences to be part of the relationship. Public Christian leaders can open sacramental practices in various ways that recognize as full a range of emotions as possible. While we are probably not trying to determine if God killed our father and then married our mother, sacramental practices still provide a way for us to "catch the conscious of the King" around all areas of life, and not just those that we think are safe for God. Such an awareness challenges an exclusively celebratory attitude sometimes forced on congregational services by a unipolar communion approach to sacramental practices.

Vocational Promise

Modernity and the development of the buffered self have pushed us into thinking that each of us must alone discover our own meaning and purpose. This is problematic for Christians because we confess that God gives our lives meaning and purpose, and that this God-given meaning and purpose can be found in God-given relationships, as the biblical creation narratives tell us.[19] The promise of Christian vocation, however, is discovered in public Christian worship and theological reflection, which should not be a surprise given the need for discernment around which god we are worshipping.

[19] Cf. Genesis 1:28-30 and John 1:12-13.

The reality of idolatry presents a challenge to the promise of vocation. Many vocational identities make promises, often about lifestyle or level of happiness afforded thereby. The unique Christian vocation promises life but on the other side of death, all there is in creation but on the other side of detachment from material wealth and possessions, joy and peace but on the other side of pain and suffering. No wonder we turn to other gods. The promises of vocation from idols, however, do not warn you of their cost, are fleeting, and will pass away. God calls us to Christian vocation through the cross in all of the God-given vocational identities into which we could enter.[20] It is not a surprise that we are sometimes loath to enter into those God-given vocational identities. This is why keeping the relationship God established with creation in Jesus central and foremost is so important.

God calls each of us through our relationships, both with God and with others, into vocations where the old person in us will be drowned so that the new person in us might rise up. These God-given callings invite us to discover our meaning and purpose through our relationships to other people, whether long-term or short-term. Public Christian worship and theological reflection help us discover what it means to be actors in Jesus' story and open us to the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives us the faith to respond to Hamlet's soliloquy that it is better to be and to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune than not to be.[21] God-given meaning and purpose are not found in success or wealth, but in the cross of Jesus, where success and wealth do not save us from

[20] Kolden, *The Christian's Calling in the World*, 46.

[21] *Hamlet*, 3.1.58-62.

suffering and death but are part of God-given vocational identities, given for the sake of the gospel.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter provides a place to aggregate the insights from this journey around the hermeneutic circle of this dissertation. First I restate the research question and the answer developed through the pairing of systematic theology and sociological research in congregations. The exploratory nature of the sociological research for this dissertation, then, necessitates active statements of areas for further research. After that, and since this is the concluding chapter, the insights and goals for theological education and public Christian leaders that have been noted in previous chapters will also be restated more formally. Finally, the questions raised up through this dissertation will be presented here in one place.

A Quick Summary

The research question for this dissertation was, "How does public Christian worship center the vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?" The answer proposed in chapter 4 was that public Christian worship centers vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest by forming them with sacramental practices that help them perceive relationships as relationships with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. This answer together with the systematic theology developed in chapter 3 points to some direct implications for our understandings of public Christian worship, vocation, relationships,

sacramental practices, and the importance of perception. Some secondary emphases indicated by this work are issues of idolatry, how we talk about God, and the lingering effects of Modernity.

The idea of public Christian worship has been expanded to a general understanding of whatever we do when we perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. The idea of Christian vocation has been similarly expanded to a general understanding of whatever we do when we perceive both the needful presence of another and the gifts God has given us to respond to that needful presence for the sake of the gospel. These ideas share focal points of relationships, actions, and participation.

Further Research

This section lists some edits for another use of the instrument found in appendix A as well as some ideas for further research. First, I work through the *Life and Worship Survey*, noting the changes and areas that need further research as mentioned in chapter 4. Then, I comment briefly on how the gender issues reflect Modernity but are worth continued study. Next, I will recommend a direction for further research into the use of relational language. Finally, I will lift up the importance of doing more research into the levels of volunteerism previously noted.

Life and Worship Survey

The Life and Worship Survey needs some adjustments if it is to be used again. Question 4 should be adjusted regularly based on the political climate and legal status of various relationships in different areas of the country. Questions 10 and 11 can be removed entirely. The aims of these questions are covered in Part 4: Measurement of Volunteer Work. The follow-up to the answer of question 12, “I was a member of another

ELCA congregation before joining this congregation," should be edited to read, "Please give the city and state of the congregation where you were previously a member." I would advise deletion of question 13 unless the researcher is particularly looking for an awareness of hymnal usage. In that case, I would reword the question, "Which hymnal or hymnals have you used during worship throughout your life?" Question 14 should add "Hand Bells and/or Chimes" as an option.

Two questions from the *Christian Faith Practices Scale* deserve more focused research. Question 12, my question 26, "I participate in activities that promote social justice in society," and question 13, my question 27, "I discuss Christian response to contemporary issues with other Christians," need larger sample sizes to help make sense of the results. I am aware that Sherr continues to gather data from the CFPS, therefore I encourage Lutherans to use this instrument in congregational settings and to share the results with both Sherr and myself. This way the impact of Lutheran congregations can be seen in Sherr's data and to help me make sense of the data I have already gathered among Lutherans. The CFPS is easily found online, in journal archives, and in appendix A of this dissertation as Part 3 of the congregational Life and Worship Survey.

I would commend the *Manuel on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* to all public Christian leaders and anyone who would do further research into volunteerism. While this instrument can readily be adapted to a written or web-based survey as I have done, personal interviews should yield even more information—the way the instrument was designed to be used. This instrument could help public Christian leaders get a better sense of how active their members are in volunteering, and should be the starting point for researches looking into this topic.

Gender Equality and Modernity

This metric should continue to interest researchers as our culture seems to move inexorably toward the value end in the fact-value split of Modernity. As gender issues continue to be brought before our culture and the general population takes up philosophical language of Post-Modernity, this metric can remind us that Modernity continues to affect us. Further research can use the data herein as a reference point for measuring the rise of gender equality and the move away from the fact side of Modernity. Further research into volunteerism should highlight gender as a helpful lens for attending to the effects of Modernity.

Impact of Relational Language

The emphasis on relational language in theological education and anthropological psychology has had an impact in congregations. In the four congregations of this research, there seems to be a strong undercurrent, if not a critical mass, of people who perceive the presence of some trustworthy, reliable god, and perceive the needful presence of the other and the gifts they have to respond to the needful presence of the other in their relationships. Further research could continue to measure the use of relational language in conversations about public worship and vocation, but I would suggest a deeper exploration of which gods are being worshipped and giving vocational identities.

The use of relational language runs a risk of idolatry that should not be ignored. Further research into the use of relational language should look particularly into which relationships are considered trustworthy or reliable. While this may be peculiarly Lutheran language around what a god is, the notion of trust goes right to the center of

relationships in both the long-term and short-term sense. Continued research down this line of thought could also lead to insights about racism, classism, ageism, sexism, etc., as many harmful prejudices find some root in both a lack of trust and a complex set of relationships.

Motivations for Volunteering

The incredibly high levels of volunteerism reported in the four congregations researched cries out for further study. One obvious approach would be to broaden the number of congregations studied, as this might show my own findings to be anomalous. Another approach would be to try and uncover the motivations for volunteering. This path seems more rewarding, even though it will be harder to accomplish. When compared to the results from the MMVW, the results from the CFPS question, "I volunteer time to help those less fortunate," seem contradictory, but here again, we see the importance of perception. On a scale from "Always" to "Never," where does the slightly over half an hour of weekly volunteering fall for the person filling out the survey? In the CFPS, the most common result was "Often," but in comparison with the national averages, it looks more like "Always." There are some perceptions at work here both motivating and undervaluing the amount of volunteerism in these—and I would guess other—congregations.

Implications from Findings

This particular trip around the hermeneutic circle does suggest some direct actions for theological education and public Christian leaders. This section presents these actions as insights from the sociological research and goals set through the sociological research and the systematic theology developed above. First, I will note the importance of both

theological education and public Christian leaders using active God language. Second, I spend some time on sacramental practices—making sense of them with each other, and expanding our imaginations for what they are and who can lead them. Third, I will draw out some insights about the levels of volunteerism in congregations, suggesting an important assumption and actions for public Christian leaders. Finally, I will reiterate the importance of keeping the relationship that God has established with creation in Jesus as the primary relationship.

God, Present and Active

The overwhelming use of "god" as the object of passive verbs in speech at least indicates that those interviewed could speak of God but not, by and large, as an other with whom a relationship can be formed or who might be active in the world.[1] Theological education needs to substantially and intentionally talk of God as the subject of active verbs for the sake of forming public Christian leaders in this habit. Public Christian leaders, in turn, need to speak of God as the subject of active verbs as a model for those who have called them to lead. The heavy emphasis on and experience of relationships demands this change in speech patterns.

A god that need not be present or active is at best the god of Deism who shows no continuing involvement with creation. Jesus entered into creation because of the relationship God began with creation. Jesus became human in order to be in relationship with humans as a human, and as the only acceptable offering to repay our debts. Jesus sent his Spirit to continue the relationship God established with creation in Jesus' incarnation after his ascension. Jesus has promised to return and heal all relationships,

[1] Cf. chapter 4 for particulars on this use of "god."

even across death. The biblical witness testifies to God establishing a relationship with creation that develops and deepens over time—something that would not happen with a god that is the object of passive verbs. If God is only a passive object, then we have no story in which to act.

Theological education must intentionally speak of God, present and active in relationship to creation. Public Christian leaders need to speak of God, present and active in the lives of those who have called them to lead. We must be more aware of when our language does not match the faith we confess so that we might repent and live into our Christian vocation for the sake of the gospel.

Sacramental Practices and Meaning-Making

We want to explain things. Knowing this, theological education and public Christian leaders bear the reasonability for equipping leaders who can and do explain our various sacramental practices. For theological education, this includes but is not limited to the practical realities of teaching the skills for leading congregational services. Nothing in this paragraph should be a new concept.

This research shows that the practices of educating public Christian leaders in the particulars of leading and explaining congregational services are not sufficient. People are making sense of sacramental practices by themselves. This is not necessarily negative, but public Christian leaders can and ought to assist in this meaning-making. Public Christian leaders enter into a vocation of helping the Spirit-gathered people of God attend to the relationship God has established with creation in Jesus. There are several implications, therefore, for both public Christian leaders and theological education.

Sacramental practices can draw us into public Christian worship as the Spirit helps us perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Public Christian leaders should openly speak of God's action in drawing people into sacramental practices. This verbalization of God's action provides several layers for meaning-making around sacramental practices, but with the intentional focus on God's relationship with us. The focus for public Christian leaders who seek to help people in their meaning-making around sacramental practices is the role of Jesus in establishing a particular relationship with humanity. Public Christian leaders can help this meaning-making by continually pointing out how any given sacramental practice engages in the relationship with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus.

This issue of trust, the issue of faith, reflects the point of our various sacramental practices. At some point, these sacramental practices bring us face-to-face with the crucified and risen Jesus, an encounter where God leads us into public Christian worship. Public Christian leaders must help those who have called them to lead make sense of such experiences. A move from relational anthropology to relational theology brings Jesus' trustworthy promises into the conversation, showing through the gospel the sinful reality of human relationships and God's response in Jesus.[2] Actively and consistently pointing to the trustworthy, reliable Jesus when speaking of and doing sacramental practices as the one who is seeking to deepen the relationship with us therein should help to provide a faithful starting point for meaning-making.

The importance of relationships also necessitates intentional education that connects the relationship God has established with creation in Jesus and our relationships

[2] For the Lutherans who care about these things, this is the gospel in the general sense, cf. FC 5.

to each other. One of the challenges of having multiple vocational identities is that we separate the vocations in order to make sense of them. Public Christian leaders have the opportunity in congregational worship and when teaching about sacramental practices to connect God's relationship with us in Jesus to our relationships with each other. Taking such opportunities will help people enter more fully into public Christian worship as a way to center their various vocational identities around Jesus. Given the vocation of public Christian leaders, one might wonder what experiences they have to help make some of these connections. It is here that theological education has some responsibility.

A simple summary of the implications for theological education for education about sacramental practices would be intentional training on how to both do and lead others in theological reflection. The issues of learning how to lead various sacramental practices are part of this theological reflection, but so are some other topics. First and foremost is an active focus on forming leaders who lead and reflect from within a God-centered relational theology. This focus gives practical issues intentional weight by showing that even the placement of hands proclaims something about which god we are worshipping.

What is being proclaimed, however, might not always be what is intended. Theological education, therefore, must also include training that attends to how others interpret the actions of sacramental practices. Public Christian leaders need training on how to enter into a deeper level of theological reflection with those who call them to be leaders. Given the difference in sacramental practices I saw in just the four congregations of this research, public Christian leaders need to be comfortable with substantial variety in sacramental practices. Theological education offers the opportunity for public

Christian leaders to learn how to enter into open and reflective conversation with others around sacramental practices and what they mean for other people.

Once this skill of listening is learned, theological reflection can then ask the question of which god is being worshipped. This is the most delicate part of education about sacramental practices. As mentioned in chapter 3, many gods vie for our attention. Theological education can help public Christian leaders reframe relationships that others experience as trustworthy and reliable in order to connect such relationships to the relationship God has established with creation in Jesus, or to move them into a place of repentance by reflecting on the idolatry of misplaced trust. The long history of the church presents us with sacramental practices that seek this kind of reflection, even if different words are used to express it. Part of theological education, therefore, is educating public Christian leaders on the resources the church has developed over two millennia, but doing so within the context of theological reflection in order to see both the need for and the danger in simply adopting old rites.

Expanding Ideas of Sacramental Practices

Older sacramental practices are worth exploring, just like new ones are worth developing, because perceiving the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus has happened in the past and is happening today. Sacramental practices that have helped and do help others enter into public Christian worship are worth exploring and experiencing. My emphasis here is less about developing new sacramental practices within congregational services than it is about equipping people with sacramental practices that they can practice in various times and places outside of congregational services to help them perceive the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus.

Public Christian leaders have the most direct avenue for this call to equip those who have called them to lead. Education around, modeling of, and continuing to invite others into the leadership of sacramental practices present the most direct ways of accomplishing this. An abundance of resources already exists from many different Christian publishing houses offering prayers and devotions for households of many different kinds, not including older sacramental practices that may have been forgotten and new ones that are being developed.

Theological education can help public Christian leaders make sense of the abundance of resources developed to aid in sacramental practices outside of worship. Places of theological education also serve as an access point to historic and developing sacramental practices. The continuing theological education of public Christian leaders presents an ongoing opportunity for stretching their imaginations about sacramental practices outside of congregational services. In addition, centers of theological education can offer general classes on sacramental practices outside of the congregational service, and can train public Christian leaders on leading such classes in locations where the congregation's gathering space is the place to gather for theological education.

Reflecting on Volunteerism and Vocation

I strongly encourage public Christian leaders to use the MMVW in their congregations. My guess is that your results will be as surprising as my own. I feel a challenge in the high level of reported volunteerism pushing at a subconscious assumption that people are not doing enough. The challenge is to what we mean by enough.

A strict tithe of time each week would be 16.8 hours. Accounting for eight hours of sleep each night, this becomes 11.2 hours. From this metric, volunteering just over half an hour a week does not seem like much. A more contextual metric might provide another view. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25.4% of the population volunteered between September 2012 and September 2013.[3] The MMVW showed that 63% of the members of the congregations who completed the surveys volunteered in the previous four weeks. What do we think is enough?

Vocation provides an expansive way to think about volunteering. Parenting, for example, takes a significant amount of time, but does not officially count as volunteering. Through the particular Christian vocation of proclaiming the good news of God in word and deed, God calls Christians to enter into this vocational identity all the time, but this is not considered volunteering. Rather than looking for more things to encourage people to do, what if public Christian leaders helped people attend to how God is calling them into many different given vocational identities through what they already do? Theological education can form public Christian leaders to help others discern how God is giving them vocational identities in their current vocations to proclaim the gospel. There is no panacea for this short of the *eschaton*, but helping public Christian leaders reflect on their own call into public Christian leadership may provide some guidance.

Centering Relationships on Jesus

The shorthand for this section could be, "Proclaim the Gospel," especially among Lutherans. Language of centering, however, points to the role of public Christian worship in proclaiming the gospel. Public Christian leaders and theological education should be

[3] "Volunteering in the United States, 2013."

encouraged by this research about the effects from modeling both public Christian worship outside of the congregational service and relational language. Both of these should continue, with a particular emphasis on modeling public Christian worship outside of the congregational service.

The relationship that God has established with creation in Jesus needs the same level of modeling, especially since this relationship for Christians is the reason for sacramental practices outside of the congregational service and the use of relational language. Modeling a language that returns people to God's relationship with them in preaching, teaching, and theological reflection will help both public Christian leaders and those who have called them to lead keep the eschatological focus that drives Christian vocation into the world God gives us. Continually raising up the gospel in various settings reminds Christians of our common God-given vocation in baptism and points to Jesus as the meaning and purpose of their other vocational identities.

Questions

The questions collected here come from throughout the dissertation. They can help public Christian leaders, theological educators, and all Christians attend to how they perceive to the presence of the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Some of these questions might also lead to further research.

For Discerning Vocational Identity

- Given all the possible claimants for the trustworthy, reliable god, what is the distinction between entering into relationships in the world because of God and doing so because of a god?
- Where do you place your trust?

- What is being worshipped? Which god is being worshiped?
- What is the perceived presence of the trustworthy, reliable god?
- Who or what is being trusted through these actions?
- If the self is the trustworthy, reliable god, what is the point, what is the hope?
- How are we responsible for those we don't know?
- How do those with whom we have no relationship call us?
- What if a person's passions do not meet any needs in the world?
- Are vocational identities in conflict? If so, with whom?

For Leading and Educating Public Christians

- How do public Christian leaders provide the language and imaginative framework for vocational activity so those with vocational identities can experience vocational activities as both duty and delight?
- How do public Christian leaders present relationship and vocation as public Christian worship in a way that names the false idols that can develop?

For Further Research

- To whom are people relating that drives or encourages them to such levels of volunteerism?
- How much of this level of volunteerism is a reflection of autolaborological fundamentalism?
- How is volunteering a duty?
- How is volunteering a delight?

Conclusion

Public Christian worship centers vocational identities of individuals in the mid and upper Midwest by forming them with sacramental practices that help them perceive relationships as relationships with the trustworthy, reliable Jesus. Other gods will seek to usurp the relationship that God has established with creation in Jesus. It falls to public Christian leaders and theological education to equip people with the sacramental practices that help them enter into public Christian worship so that the people might discern which god they worship first. Keeping God's relationship with us the primary relationship that makes all other relationships possible and meaningful keeps God's promise in vocation before us so that we might enter into our Christian vocation through all of the vocational identities God gives us—to be actors in the story of Jesus. As we live into the Christian vocation God gives all the baptized, others will see the gospel being proclaimed in word and deed, and they will know that the actors are come hither.

APPENDIX A

Life and Worship Survey

Please note that the margins of this letter and the following survey have been changed to fit the available space and style formats. The initial letter fit entirely on one page.

Implied Consent Letter for Surveys

<Insert Date>

Dear member of <Insert Name of Congregation>,

You are invited to participate in a study of worship practices and participation in civil society. I hope to learn how worship practices influence the way you live your life. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a member of <Insert Name of Congregation>.

If you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed survey. Your return of this survey is implied consent. The survey is designed to help you describe your worship experience, your congregational involvement, and your civil engagement. It will take about thirty minutes. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to describe how worship in this congregation shapes your life. Any discomfort or inconvenience to you derive is only from the amount of time taken to complete the survey.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with Luther Seminary and/or with other cooperating institutions, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Baylor University, the International Labor Organization, or this congregation. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask. If you have additional questions later, contact E. L. Bodenstab by phone at <Insert Phone Number>, by mail at <Insert Address>, or by email at ebodenstab001@luthersem.edu.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
E. L. Bodenstab

Life and Worship Survey

Part I: Demographics

This part of the survey is informed by the U. S. Census Bureau's 2010 census. Although not exactly the same, the options provided are close and will be compared with the census data. Please fill out this section with that context in mind.

1. Of which congregation are you currently a member?
   (Please give congregation's name, city, and state.)
   _____

2. In what year were you born? _____

3. What is your gender? (Circle one)
   a. Female
   b. Male

4. What is your marital status? (Circle one)
   a. Never Married
   b. Married, Not Separated
   c. Separated
   d. Widowed
   e. Divorced
   f. Other Committed Relationship
   g. Don't Know

5. What is your race/ethnicity? (Circle all that apply)
   a. White
   b. Black or African American
   c. Hispanic or Latino
   d. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   e. Asian
   f. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   g. Other (Please specify: _____)

6. What is the highest grade in school that you finished? (Circle one)
    a. Less than 9th grade
    b. 9th to 12th grade, no diploma
    c. High school graduate (includes equivalency)
    d. Some college, no degree
    e. Associate's degree
    f. Technical degree
    g. Bachelor's degree
    h. Graduate or professional degree

7. What is your occupation? (Circle one)
    a. Management, business, or financial
    b. Computer, engineering, or science
    c. Education, legal, community service, arts, or media
    d. Healthcare practitioner or technical
    e. Healthcare support
    f. Protective service
    g. Food preparation or serving related
    h. Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
    i. Personal care and service
    j. Sales and related
    k. Office or administrative support
    l. Farming, fishing, or forestry
    m. Construction or extraction
    n. Installation, maintenance, or repair
    o. Production
    p. Transportation
    q. Material moving
    r. Retired
    s. Unemployed

8. What was your total annual household (family or single living alone) income range? (Circle One)
    a. Less than $10,000
    b. $10,000 to $14,999
    c. $15,000 to $24,999
    d. $25,000 to $34,999
    e. $35,000 to $49,999
    f. $50,000 to $74,999
    g. $75,000 to $99,999
    h. $100,000 to $149,999
    i. $150,000 to $199,999
    j. $200,000 or more

Part II: Congregational Activities

This section of the survey will help describe the overall membership of your congregation.

9. In what year did you become a member of this congregation?
   _____

10. What volunteer position(s) do you currently hold in this congregation?

11. What volunteer position(s) have you held in this congregation?

12. Which one of the following statements describes your church experience prior to becoming a member of this congregation? (Circle One)
    a. I have always been a member of this congregation.
    b. I was a member of another ELCA congregation before joining this congregation.
       (Please give name and city: _____)
    c. I was a member of a non-ELCA Lutheran congregation before joining this congregation.
       (Please give the Lutheran affiliation: _____)
    d. I was a member of a church in another Christian denomination before joining this congregation.
       (Please give the denomination: _____)
    e. I was a member of a non-Christian religious group before joining this congregation.
       (Please give the religious group: _____)
    f. I was not a member of any religious group before joining this congregation.
    g. Other
       (Please identify: _____)

13. Which hymnal or hymnals have you used during worship? (Circle all that apply.)
    a. American Lutheran Hymnal
    b. Augustana Synod Hymnal
    c. Common Service Book
    d. Concordia Hymnal
    e. Evangelical Lutheran Worship
    f. Lutheran Book of Worship
    g. The Lutheran Hymnal
    h. Lutheran Hymnary
    i. Service Book and Hymnal
    j. This Far By Faith
    k. With One Voice
    l. Worship & Praise
    m. None

n. Other (Please specify below)

14. What kinds of instruments are used for leading congregational singing at the worship service you most frequently attend? (Circle all that apply)
    a. Organ
    b. Piano
    c. Keyboard/Synthesizer
    d. Guitar/Bass
    e. Brass
    f. Strings
    g. Woodwinds
    h. Drums
    i. Prerecorded Music
    j. None
    k. Other (Please specify below)

Part III: Christian Faith Practices Scale

from Sherr, et al., at Baylor University
Used with permission.

Describe how often you participate in each of the following activities. Be as honest as possible, describing your true level of participation and not how active you would like to be.

Please circle your answer to the right of the statement.

	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Always
15. I attend weekly worship services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I participate in Bible study activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I share the Christian story with others (evangelism).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I study the teachings and history of the Christian church.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I pray.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I confess my faults to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. I forgive and work toward healing relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I encourage others, especially when they fail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I give financial support to my church.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I provide hospitality and care to strangers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I volunteer time to help those less fortunate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I participate in activities that promote social justice in society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I discuss Christian response to contemporary issues with other Christians.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part IV: Measurement of Volunteer Work

from the International Labour Office, Geneva
Used with permission.

So far you have been asked about worship and faith practices. The next few questions are about unpaid noncompulsory work that you did, that is, time you gave without pay to activities performed either through organizations or directly for others outside your own household.
(Note: Work is understood here to be an activity that could, in principle, be done for pay.)
(Note: Reimbursement of expenses does not disqualify an activity.)

28. In the last four weeks did you spend any time on this kind of unpaid activity? (Circle one)
    a. Yes (Proceed to 29)
    b. No (Proceed to 36)

29. If so, please tell me what kind of unpaid work you did. Please mention as many activities as you can remember. Why don't you start with the unpaid work that you did most recently/on which you spent the most time.
    a. Volunteer Activity: _____
    b. Do you recall approximately how many hours you spent on this unpaid activity in the last four weeks?
        i. Yes
        (Please indicate number of hours: _____)
        ii. No
        (Please indicate how many time you did this activity: _____)
    c. And how many hours did you spend doing this unpaid work the last time you did it or on average each time you did it?:
    _____

d. Did you do this unpaid work for or through an organization? (Circle one)
    i. No
    ii. Yes (Please name organization)
    _____
    iii. Please circle which of the following best describes the organization for which you worked. (Circle one)
    1. Charity/nonprofit organization/NGO/union/religious organization
    2. Business
    3. Government
    4. Other, including community
    5. Not sure

30. Is there any other unpaid non-compulsory time you gave without pay to activities performed either through organizations or directly for others outside your own household in the last four weeks?
    a. Yes (Please proceed to 31)
    b. No (Please proceed to 36)

31. If so, please tell me what kind of unpaid work you did. Please mention as many activities as you can remember.
    a. Volunteer Activity: _____
    b. Do you recall approximately how many hours you spent on this unpaid activity in the last four weeks?
        i. Yes
        (Please indicate number of hours: _____)
        ii. No
        (Please indicate how many time you did this activity: _____)
    c. And how many hours did you spend doing this unpaid work the last time you did it or on average each time you did it?:
    _____
    d. Did you do this unpaid work for or through an organization? (Circle one)
        i. No
        ii. Yes (Please name organization)
        _____
        iii. Please circle which of the following best describes the organization for which you worked. (Circle one)
        1. Charity/nonprofit organization/NGO/union/religious organization
        2. Business
        3. Government
        4. Other, including community
        5. Not sure
32. Is there any other unpaid non-compulsory time you gave without pay to activities performed either through organizations or directly for others outside your own household in the last four weeks?
    a. Yes (Please proceed to 33)
    b. No (Please proceed to 36)

33. If so, please tell me what kind of unpaid work you did. Please mention as many activities as you can remember. Why don't you start with the unpaid work that you did most recently/on which you spent the most time.
    a. Volunteer Activity: _____
    b. Do you recall approximately how many hours you spent on this unpaid activity in the last four weeks?
        i. Yes
        (Please indicate number of hours: _____)
        ii. No
        (Please indicate how many time you did this activity: _____)
    c. And how many hours did you spend doing this unpaid work the last time you did it or on average each time you did it?:
    _____
    d. Did you do this unpaid work for or through an organization? (Circle one)
        i. No
        ii. Yes (Please name organization)
        _____
        iii. Please circle which of the following best describes the organization for which you worked. (Circle one)
        1. Charity/nonprofit organization/NGO/union/religious organization
        2. Business
        3. Government
        4. Other, including community
        5. Not sure
34. Is there any other unpaid non-compulsory time you gave without pay to activities performed either through organizations or directly for others outside your own household in the last four weeks?
    a. Yes (Please proceed to 35)
    b. No (Please proceed to 36)

35. If so, please tell me what kind of unpaid work you did. Please mention as many activities as you can remember.
    a. Volunteer Activity: _____
    b. Do you recall approximately how many hours you spent on this unpaid activity in the last four weeks?
        i. Yes
        (Please indicate number of hours: _____)
        ii. No
        (Please indicate how many time you did this activity: _____)
    c. And how many hours did you spend doing this unpaid work the last time you did it or on average each time you did it?:
    _____
    d. Did you do this unpaid work for or through an organization? (Circle one)
        i. No
        ii. Yes (Please name organization)

_____

iii. Please circle which of the following best describes the organization for which you worked. (Circle one)

1. Charity/nonprofit organization/NGO/union/religious organization
2. Business
3. Government
4. Other, including community
5. Not sure

36. Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX B

Announcement Block for Quantitative Survey

Your Opinion Matters!

We've agreed to help a PhD student from Luther Seminary do research for his dissertation, and he needs your help!

Hi! I'm E. L. Bodenstab, and I'm studying the connections between faith and life. I would like your opinion and encourage you to take a 30-minute survey, available from the church office, on your church's website, or online at http://tinyurl.com/kwwr4ho. I'm coming to visit from [insert dates here] and would like as many as possible to have taken the survey by then.

Many Thanks,
E. L. Bodenstab

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

This form has been modified on layout to fit the available space. No content has been changed.

Informed Consent Form
Worship Centering Vocational Identity

You are invited to be in a research study of the relationship between worship and vocation. You were selected as a possible participant because you were randomly selected from a list of the members of this congregation. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: me as part of my doctoral thesis project in Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary. My advisor is the Rev. Dr. Patrick Keifert, Olin S. and Amanda Fjelstad Reigstad Professor of Systematic Theology.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is: to explore what people do when they gather together for worship and how that helps them to see what they do outside of worship as part of how God intends them to be faithful in the world.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: for a period not to exceed sixty minutes, read and reflect on Luke 10:1-17, pray, give basic demographic information, reflect on questions about faith and life, and share those reflections with the interviewer.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The direct benefits of participation are: none. Indirect benefits to yourself/or the general public of participation are a deeper understanding of the practices of individuals which help them connect their faith and life. This may inform how pastors and other leaders in the ELCA lead congregations and are trained, and may help worship planners to more intentionally include the connection between faith and life.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept confidential. If I publish any type of report, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All data will be kept in a locked file in my apartment in Lauderdale, MN; only my advisor, Patrick Keifert, and I will have access to the data and any video recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed. While I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality, anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the small number to be studied. The raw data and video recordings will be deleted and erased by December 24, 2017.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Luther Seminary and/or with other cooperating institutions, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Church Innovations, or this congregation. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is E. L. Bodenstab. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me by mail at <Insert Address>, by email at ebodenstab001@luthersem.edu, or by phone at <Insert Phone Number>. You may also contact my advisor at <Insert Address>, by email at pkeifert@luthersem.edu, or by phone at <Insert Phone Number>. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date_____

Signature of investigator _____ Date_____

I consent to be videotaped:

Signature _____ Date_____

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations in the published thesis document.

Signature _____ Date_____

Created 04/22/12

APPENDIX D

Congregational Member Interview Protocol

1. Greeting and Introductions
2. General Instructions
    a. Present informed consent form
    b. Read through form and ask, "Do you understand that I will be asking you about your faith and life, that I will be video recording your answers, and that I might anonymously quote you in my project?"
        i. If no, then ask about questions and clarifications.
        ii. If yes, have them sign the informed consent form in the three indicated places.
    c. Turn on video recorder
3. Dwelling in the Word and Prayer
    a. Read Luke 10:1-12
    b. Pray: "Jesus, as you send us into the harvest field, send also your Spirit, that we might speak and hear how you call us to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God. Amen."
4. Basic Data Gathering
    a. Gender
    b. Age
    c. Race/Ethnicity
    d. Tenure in Congregation
5. Questions from *Church FutureFinder*
    a. "Tell a story about how you sense God's presence and activity in this congregation."
    b. "Describe an experience of profound worship you have had."
    c. "Tell about the ways people fight in this congregation. Tell about a situation where you and other people were involved in a problem at church and how it was handled."
    d. "Tell a memory that give you anxiety about the future of this congregation. Tell a memory that gives you hope."
    e. "If you were to leave this congregation for five years, without contact, what would you expect to see when you returned? What would you hope to see?"
    f. "What tells you God is present here in worship?"
6. Vocational Identity Questions
    a. How is God calling you to be active in the world?
        i. Tell a story of when you were aware of God outside of worship.

ii. How do you balance responsibilities between family, work, and this congregation?
iii. How might God be active in your primary relationships?

b. Describe your prayer life outside of worship.

7. Concluding Prayer and Thanks

Pray: "Jesus, continue to send us into your harvest, and empower us with your Spirit to always pray for more workers. Amen."

APPENDIX E

Looking and Listening Form

The following form has been slightly modified to fit in the allowed space. Pat Taylor Ellison gave me this form for use in the member interviews. The box containing what looks like a random set of letters and number is the space provided for demographic data gathering. The M F in the upper left corner is for gender. Below that the O I F is for my impression of the interviewees place in the congregation as Outsider, Insider, or Family.[1] The numbers 1 through 9 in the upper middle record the decade of the interviewee's age. Beneath that is a section for recording tenure of membership: -2 as less than two years, 2-5 as two to five years, 5-10 as five to ten years, and 10+ as more than ten years. The collection of letters in the right side of the box is for recording the race/ethnicity of the interviewee: AA as African America, H as Hispanic, P as Pacific Islander, N as Native American, AS as Asian, and W as White.

[1] Cf. Keifert's *We Are Here Now*, 78 for more on these groups.

Looking and Listening:
recording stories from congregations

Congregational Discovery Interviews

These questions have been written to encourage you to talk about your experiences of life and work in your church. The questions ask you to recall times, places, situations, emotions, images, and specific words whenever possible. ALL answers are helpful and tell a lot about how your church lives and works. Every response is greatly appreciated and will be entered into the *Church FutureFinder* online database for people to read who wish to learn about congregations and their mission.

Interviewer:_____

Date:_____

M	F		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		AA		N
													H		AS
O	I	F	M:	-2		2-5		5-10		10+			P		W

1.	2.
3.	4.

5.	6.
7.	8.

By checking the box below, I give my permission for the summaries of my answers recorded on this page to be entered into *Church FutureFinder*, the online database that will be searchable by members of the public and church leaders around the world. My name will not appear anywhere, but my responses will be found within a study that bears my church's name.

☐

APPENDIX F

Rostered Leader Interview Protocol

1. Greeting and introduction
2. General Instructions
    a. Present informed consent form
    b. Read through form and ask, "Do you understand that I will be asking you about your faith and life, that I will be video recording your answers, and that I might anonymously quote you in my project?"
        i. If no, then ask about questions and clarifications.
        ii. If yes, have them sign the informed consent form in the three indicated places.
    c. Turn on video recorder
3. Dwelling in the Word and Prayer
    a. Read Luke 10:1-12
    b. Pray: "Jesus, as you send us into the harvest field, send also your Spirit, that we might speak and hear how you call us to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God. Amen."
4. Basic Data Gathering
    a. Gender
    b. Age
    c. Race/Ethnicity
    d. Tenure in Congregation
5. Vocational Identity Questions
    a. Which congregation or congregations did you attend while growing up and through college?
        i. Describe their worship.
        ii. How was vocation discussed?
        iii. How do you think those experiences formed your current understanding of worship and vocation?
    b. What seminary or seminaries did you attend?
        i. Who taught your worship class or classes?
        ii. How was vocation discussed?
        iii. How do you think that training formed your current understanding of worship and vocation?
    c. Where did you do your internship?
        i. Describe their worship.
        ii. How was vocation discussed?
        iii. How do you think that experience formed your current understanding of worship and vocation?

   d. What other congregations have you served?
      i. Describe their worship.
      ii. How was vocation discussed?
      iii. How do you think that experience formed your current understanding of worship and vocation?
   e. Describe this congregation's worship when you arrived.
   f. Describe your role in worship planning.
   g. How would you explain worship to a member of your congregation?
   h. How would you explain vocation to a member of your congregation?
6. Concluding Prayer and Thanks

Pray: "Jesus, continue to send us into your harvest, and empower us with your Spirit to always pray for more workers. Amen."

APPENDIX G

Worship Planning Team Interview Protocol

1. Greeting and Introduction
2. General Instructions
    a. Present informed consent form
    b. Read through form and ask, "Do you understand that I will be asking you about your faith and life, that I will be video recording your answers, and that I might anonymously quote you in my project?"
        i. If no, then ask about questions and clarifications.
        ii. If yes, have them sign the informed consent form in the three indicated places.
    c. Turn on video recorder
3. Dwelling in the Word and Prayer
    a. Read Luke 10:1-12
    b. Pray: "Jesus, as you send us into the harvest field, send also your Spirit, that we might speak and hear how you call us to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God. Amen."
4. Basic Data Gathering
    a. Genders
    b. Ages
    c. Races/Ethnicities
    d. Tenures in Congregation
    e. Tenures on Worship Planning Team
5. Group Questions
    a. Describe how this team was formed.
    b. Describe your worship planning process.
    c. How is God calling this congregation to be active in the world?
        i. How is that expressed in worship?
6. Concluding Prayer and Thanks

Pray: "Jesus, continue to send us into your harvest, and empower us with your Spirit to always pray for more workers. Amen."

APPENDIX H

Administrative History for the 1989 Document *A Statement on Communion Practices*[1]

At the 1989 churchwide Assembly "A Statement on Communion Practices," originally prepared for and adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's predecessor church bodies, was approved for continued use in the ELCA (CA89.4.23). The 1989 Churchwide Assembly also approved a response to memorials from six synods on a study of sacramental practices. The response indicated that the Conference of Bishops had recommended that a statement on sacramental practices be prepared as a guide to the ELCA and that such a study be carried out by a committee comprised of persons representing the Conference of Bishops, the teaching theologians of this church, the Division of Ministry, the division for Congregational Ministries (DCM), and the Department for Ecumenical Affairs. At its April 1989 meeting the Church Council requested that the Conference of Bishops prepare a time line and process for this study for consideration by the council at its November 1989 meeting.

In its specific response, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly referred the memorials from synods to the Conference of Bishops for use in the development of a study on sacramental practices (CA89.8.119). Because of budget reductions implementation of the study process was delayed. In response to the delay, the 1991 Churchwide Assembly took the following action:

> To direct the conference of Bishops, Division for Congregation [Ministries], and the Budget [and Finance] Committee of the Church Council to develop and report to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly a strategy for funding and conducting a communion-practices study and statement.

At its November 7-9, 1992, meeting the Church Council took the following action:

> To designate the Division for Congregational Ministries as the lead unit in preparing the report and possible recommendation on a sacramental-practices statement, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Budget Development Committee of the Church Council, for presentation to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly (CC92.11.108).

[1] This entire appendix is from Thoreson, E-mail message to author. Used with permission.

At its March 12-13, 1993, meeting the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries took the following action:

> after consultation and counsel from the Conference of Bishops, [the board] recommends the plan for developing a sacramental practices statement to the Church Council for consideration, acceptance, and ratification by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly.

Because of the reduction in the projected level of income available to the churchwide organization in 1993, funding for this study was not available until 1994. The time line for the project was extended twice, so that the statement, "The Use of the Means of Grace," ultimately was presented to and approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

A 16-member Task Force on Sacramental Practices composed of synodical bishops, teaching theologians, congregational leaders, and the staff and board of the DCM, was named in August of 1993 and began its work with a meeting on November 18-21, 1993. Members of the task force were Bishop Richard F. Bansemer, the Rev. Karen G. Bockelman (chair), Ms. Judith Ann Cobb, Ms. Marilyn Comer, the Rev. Joseph Donella, the Rev. Julie A. Ebbesen, Ms. Mavis Hamre, Prof. Sarah Henrich, the Rev. Richard Hermstad, the Rev. Craig Johnson, the Rev. Ivis LaRiviera-Mestre, Prof. Gordon W. Lathrop, Bishop Charles H. Maahs, Ms. Marilyn Miller, the Rev. Paul H. Rohde, and Prof. Ralph Smith. In 1995 Prof. Robert Hawkins assumed the position left vacant by the death of Prof. Smith. The Rev. Nancy Amacher, chair of the Worship Committee of the DCM board, replaced the Rev. Julie A. Ebbesen, the previous chair. The lead staff person from DCM was the Rev. Paul R. Nelson, director for worship. During Pr. Nelson's illness in 1994-1995, the Rev. Michael Rothaar served as acting director for worship. The Task Force named an Editorial Committee, which was charged with drafting a statement. The Editorial Committee was composed of Prof. Gordon Lathrop, Ms. Marilyn Miller, the Rev. Paul Rohd, and the Rev. Karen Bockelman, with the Rev. Paul R. Nelson, the Rev. Mary Ann Moller-Gunderson (director for DCM), and Ms. Ruth Allin from DCM staff also attending.

The DCM defined the goal of the task force as "a theologically responsible guide to contemporary practice." The process included the review of preliminary materials in April-May 1994 by approximately 100 reviewers, including seminary professors of systematic and liturgical theology, ten percent of the synod worship leaders network, and a broad range of specific ministries, including multicultural settings, ecumenical settings, and others. The Conference of Bishops and the DCM board also reviewed the preliminary materials. The Task Force then revised and developed the preliminary materials based on this feedback.

A first draft, approved by the Conference of Bishops, the DCM board, and the Church Council, was mailed to all rostered leaders of the ELCA in April 1995. The draft was accompanied by a study guide and contained a response form. The release of the first draft initiated a year-long process of commentary, including a forum at the 1995

Churchwide Assembly. Taking these responses into account, the Task Force and Editorial Committee revised the first draft during the summer and fall of 1996. The resultant draft was reviewed and approved by the Conference of Bishops, the Church Council, and the DCM board. The statement was discussed, amended, and approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (CA97.5.27) for "guidance and practice" in the ELCA.

APPENDIX I

Finding Aid for the 1989 Document *A Statement on Communion Practices*[1]

Background:

See ELCA 128/10/5.

Description:

These records were collected by the Rev. Paul R. Nelson, director for worship in the Division for Congregational Ministries, and by the Rev. Michael Rothaar, acting director for worship, 1994-1995. Categories include general information about the Task Force; meetings; drafts of the statement on sacramental practices, the study guide, and the Spanish-language version, *El Uso de los Medios de Gracia*; reviews and responses to the various drafts; and materials used as background for the study.

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Separations: None

Restrictions: None

Provenance: Transferred to the ELCA archives by Ms. Ruth Allin, associate director for worship program coordination, November 2000.

Processor: Ruth E. Hamilton, director for archives administration

Container List:

General

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Pre-Task Force Documents, 1976, 1982, 1985-1986, 1988-1989
	2	Budgets, 1993-1996

[1] This entire appendix is from Thoreson, e-mail message to author. Used with permission.

Box	Folder	Contents
	3	Companion Resources, n.d.
	4	Correspondence, 1993-1996
	5	Fact Sheet, April 13, 1995
	6	Mandate, n.d.
1	7	Members, 1993, 1995, 1996
	8	Memos, 1993-1996
	9	Miscellaneous, 1993-1994
	10	Paul R. Nelson's Committee Notes, n.d.
	11	Paul R. Nelson's Transparencies for 1995 Board Meeting
	12	News Releases and *The Lutheran*, 1994, 1996
	13	Statistical Background Information, 1993-1994
	14	Teleconferencing Proposal, 1997
	15	Timelines, 1993-1994, 1996

Background Materials

Box	Folder	Contents
1	16	Confirmation, n.d.
	17	Distributed October 29, 1993 (1 of 2)
	18	Distributed October 29, 1993 (2 of 2)
	19	Distributed January 31, 1994
	20	Distributed January 26-29, 1995
	21	Ecumenism, 1990
2	1	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), Sacramental Practices, 1987, 1989, 1991
	2	ELCIC, Worship Resources for a Growing Church I, Pastoral Essays on a Statement on Sacramental Practices, 1992
	3	Holy Communion and Health, 1985-1987, 1995
	4	Infant and Children Communion, 1980-1982 (1 of 2)

Box	Folder	Contents
2	5	Infant and Children Communion, 1980-1982 (2 of 2)
	6	*Lutheran Quarterly*, 1996
	7	Rothaar, 1995
	8	Sacraments, n.d.
	9	Sources, 1994-1995
	10	Worship, n.d.
	11	Resource Packet, Manuscript Drafts, 1994
3	1	Resource Packet, Supplementary Articles, n.d.

Drafts

Box	Folder	Contents
3	2	n.d.
	3	January 1994
	4	January 1994 (with commentary)
	5	January 6, 1994
	6	January 7, 1994 (Bockelman)
	7	January 13, 1994
	8	January 15, 1994
	9	January 15, 1994, revised by teleconference January 31, 1994
	10	February 1994 (with cover letter)
	11	March 1994
	12	April 1994
	13	May 18, 1994 (Gordon Lathrop)
3	14	May 25, 1994 (Ralph F. Smith)
	15	June 3, 1994, Work Group on Word
	16	June 4, 1994
	17	June 8, 1994

Box	Folder	Contents
	18	June 14, 1994
	19	July 1, 1994
	20	September 1994
	21	October 1994
	22	October 1994 (style analysis)
	23	November 1994 (Lathrop)
	24	November 30, 1994
4	1	December 1994
	2	January 1995 (with cover letter) (1 of 2)
	3	January 1995 (with cover letter) (2 of 2)
	4	February 8, 1995
	5	March 1995
	6	March 13, 1995
	7	April 1995 (1 of 2)
	8	April 1995 (2 of 2)
	9	July 18-21, 1996 Meeting
	10	July 19, 1996
	11	August 1996, Preamble
	12	August 28, 1996, Allin and Nelson edits
4	13	August 28, 1996, Editorial Committee (1 of 2)
5	1	August 28, 1996, Editorial Committee (2 of 2)
	2	September 4, 1996
	3	September 12, 1996
	4	September 12, 1996 (Nelson edits)
	5	September 13, 1996 (Lee edits)
	6	October 11, 1996
	7	October 12, 1996

Box	Folder	Contents
	8	October 12, 1996, with edits for November Church Council
	9	November 11, 1996 (1 of 2)
	10	November 11, 1996 (2 of 2)
	11	November 11, 1996 (Lee edits)
	12	November 11, 1996, Camera-ready version
	13	n.d.
6	1	1997 (Post-Churchwide Assembly)
	2	Baptism, n.d.
	3	Rohde, n.d.
	4	Study Guide, December 13, 1994
	5	Study Guide, February 1995
	6	Study Guide, March 1995
	7	Study Guide, March 10, 1995
	8	Study Guide, March 11, 1999

Meetings

Box	Folder	Contents
6	9	November 18-21, 1993, Task Force Agenda and Summaries
	10	January 13-14, 1994, Editorial Committee Meeting
	11	January 31, 1994, Editorial Committee Conference Call
	12	February 17, 1994, Editorial Committee Conference Call
	13	May 5, 1994, Editorial Committee Conference Call
	14	May 26, 1994, Task Force Conference Call
	15	June 2-5, 1994, Task Force Brainstorming Ideas
	16	June 2-5, 1994, Task Force Meeting Agenda and Materials (1 of 2)
	17	June 2-5, 1994, Task Force Meeting Agenda and Materials (2 of 2)
7	1	June 7, 1994, Communiqué concerning June 2-5 meeting

Box	Folder	Contents
	2	September 15-16, 1994, Editorial Committee
	3	November 21-22, 1994, Editorial Committee
	4	December 29, 1994, Editorial Committee Conference Call
	5	January 26-29, 1995, Task Force
	6	March 5, 1995, Editorial Committee Conference Call
	7	May 29, 1996, Task Force
	8	June 27, 1996, Task Force
	9	July 18-21, 1996, Task Force (1 of 2)
	10	July 18-21, 1996, Task Force (2 of 2)
8	1	September 12, 1996, Task Force Conference Call
	2	October 4-8, 1996, Conference of Bishops
	3	October 12, 1996, DCM Board Worship Committee Resolution
8	4	November 11, 1996, Church Council
	5	1997 Churchwide Assembly (1 of 2)
	6	1997 Churchwide Assembly (2 of 2)
	7	1997 Churchwide Assembly Actions

Reviews and Responses

Box	Folder	Contents
8	8	Responses, February 1994
	9	Reviewers of Preliminary Materials, April-May 1994
	10	Response of DCM Board to Preliminary Materials, March 1994
	11	Conference of Bishops Responses to Preliminary Materials, March 1994
	12	Conference of Bishops Responses, April-May 1994
	13	Responses to Preliminary Materials, April-May 1994 (1 of 2)
	14	Responses to Preliminary Materials, April-May 1994 (2 of 2)
9	1	Responses to Preliminary Materials, May 1994

Box	Folder	Contents
	2	Responses to Preliminary Materials, Unsolicited, April-May 1994
	3	Summary of Individual Reviewers' Responses to Preliminary Materials, May 1994
	4	Responses to Preliminary Materials, n.d.
	5	"Sacramental Practices Forum," 1994
	6	*Forum Letter* Review, May 21, 1994
	7	Cover Letter for Response to First Draft, April 1995
	8	Response Form, 1995
	9	Review Process, April 1995-May 1996
9	10	Responses to First Draft, Emerging Areas of Concern, January 1996
	11	Responses to First Draft, Summary, n.d.
	12	Responses to First Draft, Summary, January 15, 1996
	13	Responses to First Draft, Summary, May 1995-June 1996
	14	Responses to First Draft, May 1996
	15	Responses to First Draft, Miller, n.d.
	16	Responses to First Draft, Nelson, n.d.
	17	Responses to First Draft, Rothaar, May 22, 1996
	18	Responses to First Draft, Wengert, May 5, 1996
	19	Responses, Conference of Bishops and Church Council, April 1995
	20	Responses, DCM Board, March 1996
	21	Responses, ELCA Colleges and Seminaries, May 1996
	22	Responses, 1995 Churchwide Assembly Forum
	23	Responses, Johnson, Truemper, Senn, Peters, n.d.
	24	Reaction to Summer 1995 issue of *Dialog*
	25	Editorial, *Lutheran Forum*, Summer 1995
	26	Review in *Lutheran Commentator*, January/February 1996
	27	Review in *Worship*, July 1996
10	1	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (1 of 13)

Box	Folder	Contents
	2	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (2 of 13)
	3	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (3 of 13)
	4	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (4 of 13)
	5	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (5 of 13)
10	6	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (6 of 13)
11	1	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (7 of 13)
	2	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (8 of 13)
	3	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (9 of 13)
	4	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (10 of 13)
	5	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (11 of 13)
12	1	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (12 of 13)
	2	Responses, April 1995-July 1996 (13 of 13)

El Uso de los Medios de Gracia

Box	Folder	Contents
12	3	Draft, n.d.
	4	May 1996
	5	May 1996
	6	November 11, 1996
	7	Draft, n.d.
13	1	October 1997 (1 of 2)
	2	October 1997 (2 of 2)
	3	Study Helps, 1997 (1 of 2)
	4	Study Helps, 1997 (2 of 2)
	5	Sacramental Practices, Amendments, August 1997
	6	Sacramental Practices, Electronic Bulletin Board, 1994
	7	Sacramental Practices, Study Documents Set One, n.d.

Audio/Visual

Box	Contents
14	Audio recording of Task Force meeting July 18-21, 1996: 15 90-minute cassettes
	Color slides of Task Force Members, 1997

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