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THE IMPACT OF GOSPEL CONTENT ON THE SHAPE  
OF CORPORATE WORSHIP IN SELECT BAPTIST  
CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA  
CIRCA 1650–1910

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by  
Richard Scott Connell  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

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For my bride, a princess, and a herd of boys

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## PREFACE

It has been almost twenty-five years since I first sat under the teaching of Bruce Leafblad, a music and worship professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Having moved to Fort Worth, Texas, in 1992 to respond to the call upon my life to lead worship in the local church, I thought I was going to learn about church music. What I learned most during those years was what I knew the least about. Until that time I had thought that worship was a service one attended on a Sunday morning that involved the type of singing, praying, and preaching, that led to an altar call. It seemed to me that worship was primarily an event that helped people get saved. Though I had only just begun to become aware of some problems with this model (this was during the height of influence of the Seeker Service movement), I knew there had to be more to worship. Until then, I felt as if I were more of a spectator in worship rather than an active participant. I was trying to help God affect unsaved people in a way that would persuade them to become Christians. I had a limited understanding that worship was really about God's people in dialogue with him. Furthermore, I had no idea that it was relevant to all of life.

Many of us who were in Dr. Leafblad's worship class can still recall his prescribed definition of worship (from Intro to Worship class notes, Fall 1992):

Worship is communion with God in which believers, by grace, center their mind's attention and their heart's affection on the Lord, humbly glorifying God in response to His greatness and His word.

I had never considered worship as being anything like this. What was more compelling was Leafblad's ability to take us to the biblical text to show us that this and this alone was true worship. Passages of Scripture that I had previously glossed over became alive and inspiring as the true nature of worship leapt off the page before my eyes. Scriptures

like Exodus 3, Exodus 24, Isaiah 6, John 4, Revelation 3, Revelation 4–5, and so many others now stood as mooring points for a true understanding of the reality and priority of worship. Worship had new meaning in the context of a dynamic relationship with God through Christ and in the power of his Spirit. I now understood that worship was for believers because only they could *commune* with God.

The most compelling thing to me during those days was watching Bruce Leafblad worship. It became clear to me that while he and I knew the same God through the same gospel, Bruce knew him in a far more profound way than I did. Each class period began with prayer. To this day I can close my eyes and remember what it was like to sit in his classroom as he prayed. It seemed as if heaven itself had descended upon us when he spoke to God on our behalf. On many occasions I had to peek to see if what I was beginning to see through eyes of faith could be seen with my natural eyes. I would not have been surprised at all if I had opened my eyes to witness something like what Isaiah saw in the temple or John depicted in heaven's throne room. Jesus had become very real to me and worship had become very engaging and powerful. Through worship, the Spirit was transforming me and empowering the way I lived my life. I now understand that he was doing this by showing me the glory of God in the face of Christ. This is what the gospel does.

I served as a minister of music in one of the mid-cities between Dallas and Fort Worth during my seminary days. It was thrilling to have a place to return to each Sunday to apply some of these things that I was learning in seminary. The people I served were kind and patient, and they tolerated more than I will ever know from a young and over-zealous music minister. What I longed to do most was to show them how to worship God in the manner in which I was learning from Bruce Leafblad. I wanted to teach them to worship, but I had only barely begun to understand it myself. I decided I would approach my inspirational professor with the most *Baptist* question I have ever asked: "Is there a curriculum I could buy that would help me teach my people how to worship?" I have

carried his gracious yet profound answer around with me for the rest of my life: “Scott, you cannot teach people to worship from a curriculum. You need to get before him and worship God yourself. Go into your prayer closet and worship him. Love him with your whole heart, mind, and strength. Experience him firsthand and then return to take your people where you have been.” I am still stunned by that answer (and my ridiculous question). I have spent almost twenty-five years pursuing what he helped me understand during those days at seminary. In many ways, what follows is a reflection of that journey.

At the end of my program of study in 1995, I wrote a master’s thesis with Dr. Leafblad as my supervisor. I had been meeting regularly with him for several years about worship and wanted to write a substantive research paper on the history of worship in the Baptist church. I wanted to find out how worship had become what it had among Baptists. What I produced was poorly researched, shoddily written, and overly judgmental. I still have that paper and shudder at the thought that anyone would read it today. I have returned to that topic in this dissertation, but in a much different manner and with different motives. My attempt in 1995 was to condemn the state of worship as I felt I saw it at that time—under the influence of the Seeker Sensitive movement. To quote my original paper: “The tree of Baptist worship was vast but hollow.” There is much more to the story and it is a much more *redemptive* story than I would have acknowledged then. I have learned much in the years between that paper and this one. Baptists have a rich history of true worship that needs to be told. I still have much to learn, but this dissertation is the product of two decades of trying to do exactly what my professor instructed me to do: “Experience God firsthand and take people where I have been.” This is the story of other Baptists who have sought to do the same.

There are some Baptists whose story will not be told here, but to whom this work is dedicated. Caleb, Isaac, Samuel, Noah, Jonathan, Grace, and Phinehas, you have shared your daddy with a laptop and stacks of books. Large portions of this were written

with you on my mind, if not in my lap. Your frequent visits to my desk were not interruptions. They kept me going with delight and hope for what could come next.

Mary, there is no adequate way to express all that you mean to me. You fought breast cancer twice while I worked on this. Every time I tried to postpone, you insisted that I continue, even while you were sick and in bed. You forced yourself into duty so many times to keep things going in a large household with massive demands, while sending me to write. You did have a say in this matter and it has been one word from you that kept me on task—“finish!” Your mindset as a marathon runner has served me well in my own marathon. But it is your presence in my life that has given any part of it meaning. This must be dedicated to you and our children—that we might raise those who worship in spirit and in truth. I am looking forward to many, many more years. “And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matt 6:4)

Scott Connell

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2015

CHAPTER 1  
THE ROLE OF THE GOSPEL IN WORSHIP

**Introduction**

Worship is dialogue. It is more than that, but it is not less than that. Worship is a conversation between God's people and him. As a result, a worship event conveys something about those people and their understanding of who God is. It also communicates insights about the people's perception of the nature of their relationship and how it came to be. A worship encounter cannot take place in isolation from what brought them to the place of worship, nor can it deny their understanding of its present purposes or future hope. In short, a worship service is a snapshot within the context of an ongoing relationship. Every act of worship is informed by some combination of priorities, convictions, and beliefs. These values serve as internal constraints that shape the worship; and as a result, the worshiper. All that occurs in a worship service is a part of a greater narrative that forms the worshipers' metanarrative. The Christians' metanarrative is called the "gospel," which is the good news that God has redeemed people who were estranged from him, but now through the death of Christ have been reconciled to him. It is because of the gospel and by the gospel that they first came to know God and now worship him. How then should the gospel inform their worship? How should it affect the worship conversation? If it is by the gospel that they have been turned to God, does not the gospel have a continuing role in the deepening of this relationship through the dialogical nature of worship? Should not the gospel's ongoing work be evident in the way people worship? If so, how is it evident among the tradition of a people where formal liturgy is not just absent from practice, but vehemently

rejected? Does historic Baptist worship reflect the gospel? If so, how can one “see” the gospel in a Baptist tradition?

Christopher Ellis in *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* explains the nature of what can be derived from examining worship:

Worship is a communal event. It is something which Christians do together. In fact, it is the central activity of the Christian Church. There are, of course, other things which the Church is called to do, such as share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action—which is usually called ‘mission’. But worship is the *central* activity of the Church because it is here that what it believes is most clearly expressed and it is here that it regularly encounters God and is confronted with what God has done in the past and what God has promised for the future.<sup>1</sup>

In his book, Ellis attempts to derive the theology and spirituality of English Baptists from their examples of worship from the earliest days of the seventeenth century until today. His work is an example of liturgical theology by which the beliefs of a particular Christian community are studied via its worship practices. Ellis explains, “In liturgical theology we observe the worship practices of a community and then draw from them what we perceive to be their theological meaning.”<sup>2</sup>

Due to the nature of Baptist worship, this process cannot be simply accomplished by examining prayer books or historic liturgy. Neither exists in the Baptist tradition and the history of Baptist origins reveals their deeply-held conviction to be free from such prescribed ritual. However, information does exist in other sources that reveal the form and shape of worship in Baptist congregations, as well as the content. As Ellis has demonstrated with English Baptists, even so there is enough data available to undertake a similar study of Baptist worship in North America. While this effort for Ellis was challenging due to the scarcity of records concerning the nature of Baptist worship, he was able to derive conclusions concerning Baptist worship in England as well as the

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in the Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 14.

spirituality of those Baptists. He was able to do so due to the inherent nature of worship, which makes liturgical theology possible. “In worship, we find a bringing together of what Christians believe, examples of their praying and various liturgical actions. These thoughts, prayers, and actions intersect so that it can be said that the gathering for worship is itself an expression of communal spirituality.”<sup>3</sup>

Research exists in this area regarding formal liturgical churches that follow a prescribed liturgy. However, an argument can be made that the results of a similar study of a Baptist tradition, if successful, could be more organic and authentic to the beliefs of that particular local body. A liturgical group has a prescribed liturgy by an ecclesiastical leadership group that has determined what is best in order to instruct their people.<sup>4</sup> A Baptist church derives its *liturgy*<sup>5</sup> from what local church leadership—as opposed to regional or national leadership—deems critical for worship. The evidence about this type of worship reveals a theology and spirituality that is much more authentic to that local body. While a church’s worship structure may vary slightly from week-to-week, a consistent pattern generally develops. Various churches within a particular geographic

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<sup>3</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Several authors argue that the healthiest use of a static or formal liturgy is to maintain truth and gospel focus among the worshipers. Those in leadership should be those best informed as to what the liturgy should include. The intention of leadership in such a practice should be to give people what they need to live out life best during the week after the worship service has ended. This is the robust argument of James K. A. Smith in his Cultural Liturgies series: *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009) and *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013). It is also the argument of Mike Cosper in *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church’s Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), whose church might be characterized as “neo-liturgical” in that it is Baptist, but a formal liturgy is written for each Sunday in order to re-present the gospel.

<sup>5</sup> Bryan Chapell defines liturgy as “the structure of a church’s worship service” in *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 18–19. He goes on to expand the meaning of this biblical word to include “all that’s included in worship,” citing its usage in Rom 12:1 (18). The *order of worship* would be another way to describe a church’s liturgy, but that order must be understood in terms of both the type of worship element and the content of that element. For instance, what the worshipers sang is as important as that they sang at a particular point in an order of service. The intention of my study is to, as much as is possible from the historical accounts, determine the content as well as the structure used in historic Baptist worship in North America.

area may also have variations in their worship structure. However, like-minded churches such as Baptists are likely to have consistent elements found in their worship for a number of important reasons. Some of these reasons could be due to their mutual influence. On the other hand, influences that penetrate longer periods of time in a particular church, or larger geographic regions should appear quite compelling to the researcher. An explanation for these commonalities needs to be sought and understood. These consistencies and values identified in worship services are indicators of the “liturgical theology” of a particular movement. I contend that the most important explanation for these commonalities is the work of the gospel.

Bryan Chapell, in *Christ-Centered Worship*, illustrates a worship planning process he calls “*Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice*,” the subtitle of his book. His argument is that “where the truths of the gospel are maintained there remain commonalities of worship structure that transcend worship.”<sup>6</sup> Representing a liturgical denomination (Presbyterian Church of America), his study reflects the examination of formal liturgy in similar worship traditions to demonstrate a gospel shape that recurs in the historic liturgies of the church.<sup>7</sup> He reasons that these commonalities are the result of the power and work of the gospel among redeemed people. It is beyond the scope of Chapell’s book to analyze examples of the Baptist worship tradition. However, if his premise is accurate it should be equally applicable to the North American Baptist

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<sup>6</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Chapell examines liturgies from Rome (pre-1570), Luther (ca. 1526), Calvin (ca. 1542), Westminster (ca. 1645), and Robert Rayburn (ca. 1980), all of which would be considered liturgical worshippers in the more formal sense than the Baptist tradition. Robert Rayburn’s work from his book *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1980), was not chosen due to its influence (it is not widely known or used), but due to its chronological proximity to the historic liturgies versus today. Chapell explains, “Rayburn’s work has not been the most influential on later practice, but it astutely reflects, combines, and anticipates various traditions that are. His work is particularly helpful for examining modern liturgies because it allows us to reflect on adaptations that have both intentionally and unintentionally evolved into common practice” (Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 25).

tradition's practice because the gospel is equally applicable: "Liturgy tells a story. We tell the gospel by the way we worship."<sup>8</sup>

Baptist worship in North America also tells a story. It is the story of the gospel. The Southern Baptist denomination has been characterized as the largest Protestant denomination in the world (and therefore in North America) and is among the most evangelistically minded in history. A people so determined to share the gospel with other people should have profound evidence of this gospel priority in their worship as well. As will be demonstrated below, that is the case.

This study has three major goals. First, this study will attempt to demonstrate the Biblical principles that help explain the gospel's persistence and priority in worship and therefore its benefits when intentionally emphasized. Second, it seeks to determine if the gospel's imprint has historically *shaped* the worship of Baptists in North America, as represented by a historic thread of six prominent churches representative of different chronological time periods and geographical locales in Baptist history. Additionally, the way in which the gospel has been demonstrated will be explored. The cumulative effect will tell the Baptist story of the gospel's role in worship. In effect, the story of how Baptists took the gospel they brought from England and re-presented it over successive generations of worship that has resulted in Baptist worship today.

### **Thesis**

This dissertation argues that the power of the gospel has informed the shape and content of worship in the worship tradition of Baptist churches in North America, which carries implications for how worship should be planned in the worship services of those churches today. This thesis is best understood by a more comprehensive discussion of the following facets: (1) a definition of the gospel, (2) a definition of worship, (3) the

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<sup>8</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 19.

shape of the gospel as it may be found in worship, and (4) a delineation of the scope of churches to be considered in North America.

First, a clear definition of the gospel is important for the purposes of this study. Paul gives one of the clearest biblical definitions of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1–5, 54–57:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve . . . . When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Paul’s definition highlights two major components of the gospel: (1) the historic narrative of gospel events related to Jesus’ life, death, burial and resurrection, and (2) the effects are described by theological terms such as conversion (e.g., “which you received”), justification (e.g., “in which you stand”), sanctification, perseverance, and glorification (e.g., “by which you are being saved”).<sup>10</sup>

Greg Gilbert, in his book *What is the Gospel?* utilizes Romans 1–4 to identify “four crucial questions” that lead to what he refers to as “the heart of [Paul’s]

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<sup>9</sup> All Scripture citations are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

<sup>10</sup> Theological terms related to the work of the gospel and used frequently to describe the effects of the gospel are doctrines such as “redemption,” “adoption,” “regeneration,” etc. Additional aspects of the gospel that could be considered are the God’s plan and foreknowledge, predestination, God’s holiness and wrath, the nature of sin, the work of the Holy Spirit, being baptized into the Body of Christ, etc. This description should not be considered exhaustive, but merely an attempt to identify the components that are most clearly expressed in the 1 Cor 15:1–5 passage. It is beyond the scope of this work to fully “flesh out” the gospel, but merely to identify aspects of the biblical gospel so that its presence in worship may be identified. The facets of the gospel are so numerous that it is more realistic to identify it when it is present in worship content than to predict the myriad of ways that it could be present.

proclamation of the gospel”:<sup>11</sup>

1. Who made us, and to whom are we accountable?
2. What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why?
3. What is God’s solution to that problem? How has he acted to save us from it?
4. How do I—myself, right here, right now—how do *I* come to be included in that salvation? What makes this good news for me and not just for someone else?

He summarizes the answers to these four questions with four-single word responses:

God, man, Christ, and response. While he acknowledges that all of the promises and doctrines associated with the gospel are all part of the “good news of Christianity,” these four major points are the “fountainhead of the Christian good news.”<sup>12</sup> Looking back at the definition from 1 Corinthians 15 above, Gilbert’s “God-man-Christ-response” structure is evident. While Gilbert warns this should not become some “slavish formula” and that the gospel may be presented in a “variety of ways,” these four words represent the “critical truths” of the gospel.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the working definition of the gospel for this study will be the historic narrative of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ that secured the promises of God for His people and will be represented by Gilbert’s shorthand phrase: “God-man-Christ-response.”<sup>14</sup>

Many attempts have been made to define worship. As with the gospel, two aspects of worship<sup>15</sup> require biblical description: (1) the “all of life” aspect of

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<sup>11</sup>Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 31.

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* 32. Gilbert explains that these four major points are also evident in Paul’s description in 1 Cor 15:1–5; Peter’s sermons in Acts 2:38, Acts 3:18–10, Acts 10:39–43, and Paul’s sermon in Acts 13:38–39.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* 35–36.

<sup>14</sup> The “promises” of God should be seen as a play on words to include the third Person of the Trinity as the “Promise of the Father,” in addition to what he works in the believer through the myriad of gospel promises such as conversion, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification, etc.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Ellis refers to this as a “double meaning” of the word “worship.” His reference to Rom 12:1 is that of an “attitude of the heart and mind which is the only appropriate attitude of creature

“present[ing] your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1–2);<sup>16</sup> and (2) the individual and corporate “acts” of worship that characterize what we know as a “worship service”—“when you come together” (1 Cor 14:26).<sup>17</sup> While the “all of life” worship described in Romans 12:1–2 is the fountain from which individual and corporate worship events flow, corporate worship is specifically in view in this dissertation, and therefore the definition will be crafted with that focus in mind.

Some specific characteristics of this dimension of worship must be considered before a definition may be offered.<sup>18</sup> Life (and our struggle with sin) has a way of throwing us off course with our “way things ought to be” lifestyle worship (Rom 12:1–2). We need to gather with other believers who are journeying along the same narrow path in life. This gathering has the horizontal benefits of fellowship and encouragement, but the primary benefit results from the vertical encounter with God as a gathered body.<sup>19</sup> We have not ceased to be the church while scattered in our various avenues of life, but something profound occurs when we come together for worship. The first characteristic is rather logistical in that it requires an agreed time and an agreed place for a particular

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towards creator. In this sense ‘worship’ implies wonder and humility, attention and obedience, confession and self-offering. Such worship is not contained within the walls of a church building and is not restricted to what happens within a worship ‘service.’ Indeed this root meaning of ‘worship’ is an attitude of life and a way of being Christian” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 3).

<sup>16</sup> Rom 12:1. Harold Best writes about this aspect of worship in *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), which is one of the few texts devoted to this dimension exclusively, though it is intended as a tome specifically regarding the practice of the arts in “unceasing worship.”

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 14:2. See also Acts 2:42, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

<sup>18</sup> This discussion and worship definition are built upon the same effort by Christopher Ellis in *Gathering*. Since his approach to “liturgical theology” and the study of English Baptists serves as the impetus for this study of North American Baptists, his approach to and definition of worship is utilized as well.

<sup>19</sup> Ellis calls this a “journey into God” (Ellis, *Gathering*, vii).

event. Ellis explains this as “an occasion when what should be true *all* the time becomes true for a short time.”<sup>20</sup> A second characteristic of corporate worship is that while many of the elements can be practiced in private (e.g., Scripture reading, prayer, singing, etc.), this is specifically a communal event with other believers identified in a local expression of the church.<sup>21</sup> The horizontal aspect of worship is highlighted in this quality. The third characteristic of worship is demonstrative of its quintessential and vertical reality. While God’s people set the time and place, they have gathered because they are the *ekklesia* (“called out”) of God. Worship is a response to God who called them out. Ellis summarizes these characteristics of worship in the following manner: “Worship is the place where the Church is gathered by God and becomes *ekklesia*; the place where God’s Word is encountered communally and where the Church is confronted by its divine vocation.”<sup>22</sup> God’s people are the “called out” ones in other aspects than this, but their gathering in worship is a heightened expression of this identity. When gathering for worship they are reminded of their alien nature in a dark world, and the calling of God to live their lives affected by the gospel.

Ellis has provided an extremely helpful framework and model for the study of English Baptist worship. A similar model can be used with North American Baptist worship. It is only fitting that Ellis’ approach to a worship definition be considered for this study as well. Ellis suggests the following definition: Worship is “an encounter in

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<sup>20</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 3; emphasis Ellis’.

<sup>21</sup> Only the gathering of a local church body may practice the ordinances of baptism and communion. These are elements of worship given to the church by Jesus to be practiced under the authority of local church leadership and in the presence of the gathered church (see Acts 2:42). These should not be practiced in private devotion.

<sup>22</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 5. Ellis believes that the church is only the *ekklesia* when gathered, thus the need for a place to gather. While the corporate gathering is significant, and it is the primary subject of this study, insisting upon a place as part of the description for worship seems to skirt the teaching of Jesus in John 4:21 in which he disregards the need for a particular place for worship that is “in spirit and truth.” Ellis’ point is likely that any place will do, rather than a specific place being required, as the woman at the well was intimating in her question.

which God and humanity are active participants and in which ‘something’ happens.”<sup>23</sup> Three critical adjustments are made to Ellis’ definition for the purposes of this study. First, though implied in Ellis’ definition, the adjective “dialogical” is added to the noun “encounter” to emphasize the concept of a worship conversation. Second, the necessity of the gospel in worship is emphasized by adding the prepositional phrase “through Christ” after the word “participants” to demonstrate the requirement of Christo-centrism in worship. Finally, more specificity<sup>24</sup> is required regarding the “something” of Ellis’ definition by inserting worship’s fruit of “transformation” from Romans 12:1–2 and specifically 2 Corinthians 3:18.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the following definition will be utilized for the purposes of this study: Worship is a dialogical encounter in which God and humanity are active participants through Christ and in which transformation occurs. The nature of this transformation is specifically Christlikeness—becoming like the one who is held in view in worship.

A third aspect of this thesis requires the merging of the first two facets of gospel and worship. Can the gospel have a shape? If it does, how can it be recognized in corporate worship?<sup>26</sup> Here I want to return to Greg Gilbert’s four-word shorthand

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<sup>23</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 6–7.

<sup>24</sup> Apparently Ellis intends to keep some mystery about what takes place in worship. While there are some things about worship that are not quantifiable in this life, it is helpful for the purposes of this study to focus on the transformation that should occur as a result of worship. I will leave the rest of the mystery of worship to other studies and ultimately to the clarity of the day of glorification.

<sup>25</sup> Rom12:1–2, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be *transformed* by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” 2 Cor 3:18, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being *transformed* into same image form one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” This transformation is the “un-conforming of the life to the world” through the process of “renewing of the mind” that results in conforming the worshiper to the image of Christ having “beheld the glory of the Lord” in worship. To borrow the antithesis of the concept from G. K. Beale, “We Become What We Worship” in his, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> This part of this study has two goals. The identification of gospel content is one goal and

structure of the gospel: “God-man-Christ-response.” A shape emerges from this that can become very useful for analyzing and evaluating corporate worship for gospel form. A few points of explanation will help clarify. First, God is the initiator in the gospel, and he is therefore the initiator in worship. Second, man is the responder to God in the gospel and subsequently the responder to God in worship. Third, the nature of God’s initiation and man’s response is characterized by the revelation of God’s holy perfection and realization of man’s sinful need, which brings the necessity of the central figure of Christ into view through the gospel. Significant implications exist for worship regarding the representation of God’s holiness and man’s sin, and the recognition of the centrality of Christ and his work on the cross. An evaluation of historic Baptist worship will require the identification of these two core aspects of gospel-shaped worship: (1) Is Christ central to worship? (2) Is the gospel *re-presented* faithfully? Finally, there is a response to the gospel that is also inherent to worship.<sup>27</sup> Ellis refers to this as the church being “confronted by its vocation.”<sup>28</sup> Because formal worship services are intended to transform the worshiper for living out that worship in all of life, greater Christ-likeness should be the result of encountering Christ in worship. Man’s response to worship should be a life lived as it ought to be and there should be elements of worship that point to both this implication and command.

Brian Chapell has identified in his study seven elements that he considered “consistent elements” in gospel-centered historic liturgies: (1) adoration, (2) confession,

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slightly more important to my study than the second. However, the presence of gospel shape in worship is a more fascinating discovery. It would be impossible to have gospel shape without gospel content. But it would be possible to have gospel content without gospel shape. Gospel shape is preferred, but accurate gospel content is fundamentally important.

<sup>27</sup> This fourfold model also demonstrates the “back-and-forth” dialogue that is inherent in worship. God speaks, man speaks, God acts, man acts, etc., is demonstrative of the exchanges that take place in worship as well.

<sup>28</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 5.

(3) assurance, (4) thanksgiving, (5) petition and intercession, (6) instruction from God’s Word, and (7) charge and benediction.<sup>29</sup> As Gilbert asserts regarding the variety of ways the gospel is presented in Scripture while still being represented by his four-word structure,<sup>30</sup> Chapell’s model for gospel-shaped worship can be applied similarly. While a variety of components may be used to show gospel contour, a consistent shape emerges. Additionally, Gilbert’s fourfold structure of the gospel correlates with Chapell’s seven elements of gospel-shaped worship, demonstrating the commonalities of the two and the effect of the gospel.<sup>31</sup> The dynamic exchanges found in the gospel—and therefore of gospel-shaped worship—will be sought for identification in historic Baptist worship in North America (e.g., God’s initiation, man’s response, the interposition of Christ and His work, and the commission to live a transformed life). Finally, the historic information gathered will be evaluated for accurate gospel content (e.g., both the historic narrative of the gospel as well as the effects of the gospel in the believer’s life). Accurate gospel

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<sup>29</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 100. These elements by Chapell are representative of conversational markers in the dialogue of worship. Each is reflective of one of the two parties speaking in worship (God and His people) and the summation of the talking points demonstrates the shape and contour of the worship dialogue. While each element is represented by dialogue, in actuality, there is much more than the exchange of words taking place in worship. As in a conversation between two lovers in a deeply meaningful relationship, the words are attempts to express the deeper reality of affection, commitment, and devotion. We use the words in worship to express and denote what is taking place at the much more serious and lasting level.

<sup>30</sup> See Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* 31–36.

<sup>31</sup> Other models will be considered in the dissertation such as one in Bruce Leafblad, “Evangelical Worship: A Biblical Model for the Twenty-First Century,” in *Experience God in Worship*, ed. Michael D. Warden, 93–114 (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2000) and one in Kendra G. Hotz and Matthew T. Mathews, *Shaping the Christian Life: Worship and the Religious Affections* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006). Leafblad’s model begins with “revelation,” which demonstrates the initiative of God in worship. Chapell’s model assumes this and begins with “adoration” as a response to God’s revealing of Himself. In either case, Gilbert’s declaration of God’s initiative in the gospel correlates with both of these models. “Man” follows this in Gilbert’s model that correlates with Chapell’s “confession” and “Christ” correlates with “assurance.” This back-and-forth dialogue continues in Chapell’s model with “thanksgiving,” “petition and intercession,” “instruction from God’s Word,” and finally the “charge and benediction” to send the worshipers out to live a transformed life. All of this shows the dialogical nature of both models and that man ultimately is the responder to God in each of them. This is the implication of Gilbert’s “response” at the end of his fourfold structure of the gospel.

content is essential for gospel-shaped worship. Historic Baptist worship will be evaluated for three components that will serve to denote the presence of gospel form in addition to gospel content: (1) Is Christ central to worship? (2) Is the gospel content present in terms of historic narrative and effects in the believer's life? (3) Is the gospel faithfully "re-presented" according to the proposed "shape?"<sup>32</sup>

One significant caveat to this part of the study must be raised. Just as Gilbert cautioned against the concept that any structure of the gospel might be seen as "slavish," no model for gospel-centered worship should be used this way in the Baptist tradition either. A formal liturgical model will repeat the same movements in worship each week as Chapell demonstrates in *Christ-Centered Worship*. Changes in these historic liturgies are rare once established, and liturgical churches are faithful to enact the same liturgy each week. However, the Baptist tradition is not so predictable. This will not only pose a challenge initially to identify these elements, but also a delight ultimately to explore the myriad of approaches utilized in Baptist worship to emphasize and celebrate the gospel.

Fourth, there must be some delineation regarding which churches will be considered in a study as potentially vast as this one. Thousands of churches are representative of Baptist history in North America. The goal of this study is to trace a portion of the Baptist story of worship as it has been shaped by some of the most prominent influences through its history. Where there are branches in the Baptist worship "tree," the path that leads to the development of Southern Baptist worship today will be followed.

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<sup>32</sup> This question is evaluated in a less stringent manner than Chapell did with formal liturgy. In a Baptist model, the representation of seven or eight conversational elements is unlikely to be identifiable in any consistent manner. However, the presence of elements that characterize God's initiative and man's response are much more likely. Also, the presence of elements that represent the central work of the cross and the sending of the church in its vocation as a result of worship are also likely to be present. This shape is represented by a simplified threefold model for evaluation: revelation and response; mediation and response; and exhortation and response.

Finally, there are potential benefits for worship planning in today's Baptist churches that may be gained from this study. Inherent in the traditions of the past are lessons for the future. The principles gathered from this study should demonstrate principles for a potential methodology that could inform current and future worship planners. Baptists will want to keep the gospel form and content clear in worship while avoiding the slavish ritual that Baptists have historically rejected. Worship should be informed by Scripture and at the same time emphasize pneumatological freedom. This has been a hallmark of Baptist worship historically and its worship today should reflect the same. Gospel-centered worship is a reflection of the myriad of facets of the word of God and the gospel. There are common principles, but potential for flexible applications.

The purpose of such intentionality in worship design is both corrective and instructive. The corrective aspect is intended toward those worship services where little or no thought has been given to the principles discussed in this study. In these cases, the elements of worship are often thoughtlessly thrown together. Worse, the template from last week's worship service is often simply filled in with different contents, thus defaulting to a rigid liturgy that defies a main principle of Baptist worship.<sup>33</sup> This lazy practice is a poor use of the opportunity that worship liturgy affords. Churches should utilize worship as with a means of retaining the gospel weekly and ultimately, generationally. As Chapell warns, "Where the gospel is lost, worship becomes reflective of a dead tradition or an evolving heresy." In contrast, "Where the church remains true to the gospel, her worship reflects the truths she holds most dear."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Filling in the blanks" is the more common problem in Baptist worship design, especially with electronic and web-based worship planning resources. As creatures of ritual, we tend toward patterns and rigidity (e.g., the proverbial rut). Some pattern of repetition is healthy and instructive. We need some predictability in life and worship. However, there is room within the structure of healthy predictability to creatively *surprise* the worshippers with new aspects of familiar gospel themes.

<sup>34</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 101.

## **Personal Background**

The concept of gospel-centered worship has been at a heightened interest for the past decade or more. My personal interest in the gospel's role in worship began with instruction that I received from Bruce Leafblad in my graduate coursework at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary over two decades ago. He taught us a framework for worship design that was essentially gospel-centered, but he did not use that terminology at the time to describe it.<sup>35</sup> He called it the "Isaiah 6 Model" of worship. The concept captivated me then, but the years that followed have intensified a passion for an intentional structure for worship design that is informed by the gospel, while remaining flexible and variable for Baptist worship.

My initial interest for doctoral work was to explore the biblical principles of such an approach. Is such an approach biblically supported? Is gospel-centered worship the best approach to maintain the gospel as Chapell suggests? What effects would shaping worship around the gospel have on worshipers? Is this approach to liturgy possible while maintaining the freedom of Baptist worship, or would it possibly become stilted and rigid? These are the questions I explored in the first two years of my doctoral coursework. Having had the opportunity to lead and/or plan worship as a worship leader, preaching pastor, or both for twenty years now, I have become convinced that gospel-centered worship has an impact that is noteworthy. This approach is not new. However, the fact that it is an intentional model for worship design will make it new for some in the Baptist tradition.

An important question is raised at this point. Does evidence exist that Baptists in North America have used a biblically intentional approach in the past? Was the gospel-centered model employed in the past but lost, as some groups lost their grip on the

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<sup>35</sup> The concept of gospel-centrality has become common terminology in the last ten years of evangelicalism as is discussed below.

gospel? Could such an existence in the past, and such a loss, be documented, given the sparse information available regarding the specifics of worship in Baptist history?

Interest in worship is at a high point in recent evangelical history. We are well into what has been characterized as a “worship renewal.” Even popular Christian music has found the worship music genre to be a moneymaking venture. People are interested in the topic in local churches, and seminaries and Bible colleges have been attracting steady interest with worship degrees to prepare worship leaders for those churches. The number of books written on the topic is also much higher than twenty years ago.<sup>36</sup> The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, founded in the early 1990s,<sup>37</sup> and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, founded in 1997, are also representative of this recent surge in interest.<sup>38</sup> More data could be produced, but anyone involved in North American evangelicalism for the past twenty years has seen the anecdotal evidence of a worship renewal.

Another anecdotal observation that is clear to those around the North American church for the past two decades is the revitalization of interest in the gospel and what it

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<sup>36</sup> A search of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Library for materials with the subject of “worship” with a copyright date within the past twenty years reveals 7,577 items available. A search of the same for all copyrights before 1994 reveals 6,849 items. Using the SBTS library as a test case, more is available in the library from the past twenty years on the topic of “worship” than all previous years combined. Additionally, there are currently over 300,000 items for sale on Amazon.com with the keyword “worship” associated. Of these, over 55,000 are books (“Worship” keyword search, *Amazon*, accessed 24 July 2014, [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr\\_ex\\_n\\_0?rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aworship&keywords=worship&ie=UTF8&qid=1408813026](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_ex_n_0?rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aworship&keywords=worship&ie=UTF8&qid=1408813026)).

<sup>37</sup> Originally founded as the Institute of Worship Studies by Robert Webber, this institute located in Orange Park, Florida, offers academic and spiritual training with the mission to “form servant leaders in Christian worship renewal and education through graduate academic praxis, grounded in biblical, historical, theological, cultural and missiological reflection in community” (“Mission and Vision,” Institute of Worship Studies, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://iws.edu/about/mission/>).

<sup>38</sup> Located at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Their mission is to be “an interdisciplinary study and ministry center that promotes the scholarly study of the theology, history, and practice of Christian worship and the renewal of worship in worshipping communities across North America and beyond” (“Mission,” *Calvin Institute of Christian Worship*, accessed July 24, 2014, <http://worship.calvin.edu/about/mission.html>).

means to be gospel-centered. This reclamation may be one of the most important occurrences in recent history and has followed on the heels of the conservative resurgence and reaffirmation of biblical inerrancy in the Southern Baptist Convention. Groups like *Together for the Gospel* and *The Gospel Coalition* host regular conventions and produce materials to help clarify and instruct in the biblical gospel. This is a generation of evangelicals who are truly trying to “get the gospel right.”<sup>39</sup> Their quest is to become gospel-centered. Tim Challies has written the following on his blog:

Gospel-centeredness is all the rage today. We are told to live gospel-centered lives, to pray toward a gospel-centered faith, to have gospel-centered humility, to be gospel-centered parents, to form gospel-centered churches, to have gospel-centered marriages, to say goodbye at gospel-centered funerals. The gospel, we are told, must be central to all we are and all we do.<sup>40</sup>

In his article he lists fifty books he found regarding the topic of “gospel-centeredness.” He confesses some concern that only two of them were more than ten years old. Clearly, there has been a tremendous surge in interest recently in being gospel-centered.

With this simultaneous fixation on both worship and the gospel, it is not surprising there is significant interest in “gospel-centered worship.” In addition to the aforementioned, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice*, many have joined Chapell’s effort. Recent books have been written by James Torrance, Bob Kauflin, Mike Cospers, Matt Boswell, Christopher Ellis, David Peterson, Jared Wilson, Jerry Bridges, and Matt Chandler that are either fully devoted to the topic, or contribute at least significant portions or a full chapter to this topic.<sup>41</sup> In all of this effort by very

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<sup>39</sup> Many of these individuals grew up in Baptist churches where the focus was heavy on evangelism and missions, but the gospel was not clear.

<sup>40</sup> Tim Challies, “The Gospel-Centered Everything,” *Challies.com Informing the Reforming*, March 7, 2013, accessed July 24, 2014, <http://challies.com/articles/the-gospel-centered-everything>.

<sup>41</sup> For books devoted to the topic of gospel-centered worship, see James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996); Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008); Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church’s Worship tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013); Matt Boswell, *Doxology and Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship Leader*

gifted and well-intentioned practitioners in the church, there is still little scholarly work being produced in North America on the topic. Apart from Chapell, whose work is on the liturgical church, the only scholars in the aforementioned list are from outside of the United States.<sup>42</sup>

### **Review of the Literature**

The topic of the history of Baptist worship has had some attention for many years. There are several dissertations and some excellent work from North American Baptist scholars on the topic of hymnology and congregational singing. Noted hymnologists William J. Reynolds (1920–2009), David W. Music, Harry Eskew, and Paul A. Richardson have contributed several excellent volumes on the topic of hymnody and singing in the Baptist church, but very little has been published on the history of Baptist worship beyond singing. Some notable exceptions need to be mentioned.

Barrett L. Williams, Jr. wrote a Th.M. thesis in 1954 entitled, “An Investigation of Baptist Worship in America from 1620–1850.” The work is brief by research standards (less than eighty pages) and is written from a bibliography of less than thirty sources. Moreover, Williams spent a disproportionate amount of space describing the persecution of Baptist worship and devoted too little space to their actual worship practices. Perhaps the limitation of sources made his task overwhelming as he laments,

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(Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2013); Christopher Ellis, *Approaching God: A Guide for Worship Leaders and Worshippers* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009); and David G. Peterson, *Encountering God Together: Biblical Patterns for Ministry and Worship* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013). For books with major portions or chapters devoted to the topic of gospel-centered worship, see Jared C. Wilson, *Gospel Wakefulness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Jerry Bridges, *The Transforming Power of the Gospel* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012); and Matt Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> James B. Torrance (1923–2003) was professor emeritus of systematic theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Christopher Ellis is formerly Principal of Bristol Baptist College (currently pastor of West Bridgford Baptist Church). David Peterson served as Principal of Oak Hill College, London, from 1996 to 2007 and is an emeritus faculty member at Moore Theological College, Sydney.

“the investigator was unable to find any document or book devoted entirely to Baptist worship.”<sup>43</sup> Much work has been done since 1954 to identify and publish materials that Williams did not have access to. However, he provides the best starting place for identifying the elements of worship in practice in historic Baptist worship during this time period. He does not consider worship shape or content.

Amy Lee Mears wrote her Ph.D. dissertation in 1995 on the “Worship in Selected Churches in the Charleston Baptist Association, 1692–1795.”<sup>44</sup> Her research is excellent and her resources very helpful, but her consideration of worship is very compartmentalized. Interestingly, Mears states that at the time of her research in 1995, historical work with a “primary focus” on Southern Baptist worship was “sorely lacking.”<sup>45</sup> This was forty years after Williams made a similar comment.

Almost ten years after Mears, Nathan Harold Platt wrote his D.M.A. dissertation while studying at Southern Seminary on “The Historical Contributions of Basil Manly Jr. to the Congregational Song of Southern Baptists.”<sup>46</sup> As a D.M.A. dissertation, this study was focused on the musical aspects of Manly’s contributions, but his work also provides very helpful research on a different time period of Baptist history than Mears’ work. He also laments regarding his work on one of the most significant

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<sup>43</sup> Barrett L. Williams, Jr., “An Investigation of Baptist Worship in America from 1620–1850” (Th.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1954), 2.

<sup>44</sup> Amy Lee Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches of the Charleston Baptist Association, 1682–1795” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995).

<sup>45</sup> Amy Lee Mears wrote under the supervision of Raymond Bailey, Molly T. Marshall, and Paul A. Richardson. Her evaluation of worship in these historic Baptist churches analyzed the elements of worship separately such as the architecture, preaching, music, and the ordinances, rather than overall gospel form or content. Interestingly, she states herself in the preface, “There are some scholars working to expand the body of literature concerning Southern Baptist history, but work with a primary focus on worship is sorely lacking” (Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 1–2).

<sup>46</sup> Nathan Harold Platt, “The Hymnological Contributions of Basil Manly Jr. to the Congregational Song of Southern Baptists” (D.M.A. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004).

figures in the history of Southern Baptist worship: “Although Basil Manly Jr. made a significant contribution to the character, content, and quality of Southern Baptist congregational song, there has been little examination of his achievements.”<sup>47</sup>

Two recent Ph.D. dissertations are closely related to my topic. In 2013, two students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary published dissertations related to the topic of the gospel’s relationship to worship. Scott Aniol published “The Mission of Worship: A Critique and Response to the Philosophy of Culture, Contextualization, and Worship of the North American Missional Church Movement,” in which his chapter 6 discusses “worship in terms of the gospel and reveals that a biblical perspective understands that the gospel creates worshipers and not the other way around.” Ultimately, his dissertation argues that “biblically-regulated, gospel-shaped corporate worship that communicates God’s truth through appropriate cultural forms will actually have the most missional impact.”<sup>48</sup> His argument regarding the value of “gospel-shaped corporate worship” is similar to my argument, and while his topic is the missional church movement, his concluding recommendation is a premise for this study. Second, Matthew W. Ward published the monograph *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive*, in which he discusses how English Baptists wed the gospel and worship.<sup>49</sup> What Ward has done in his study with English Baptists is similar to what I do with North American Baptists in my study.

The gospel’s relationship to worship is becoming a prominent area of interest among evangelicals and in particular, Baptists. While recent studies are beginning to

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<sup>47</sup> Platt, “Basil Manly Jr.,” 3.

<sup>48</sup> Scott Aniol, “The Mission of Worship: A Critique and Response to the Philosophy of Culture, Contextualization, and Worship of the North American Missional Church Movement” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), Abstract.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew W. Ward, *Pure Worship, The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014). This is a monograph from the dissertation.

close in on my topic, a gaping hole still exists for this study. No academic study seems to exist that seeks to understand our Baptist predecessors' view toward the gospel's role in congregational worship in North America. Ward has addressed the issue as it relates to English Baptists that at least, in part, chronologically precedes my topic. Ellis has also done significant work on this topic with English Baptists. Their work has proven extremely helpful to mine.

The North American Baptist story needs to be told. A comprehensive research effort regarding the worship practices among Baptists in North America does not appear to have been attempted since Barrett's M.C.M. thesis in 1954. The weaknesses of this effort have already been mentioned above and there is no connection with the gospel in his findings. Additionally, no research effort exists of any kind to understand how our Baptist predecessors took the gospel they brought from England and fashioned it for worship in a new country.<sup>50</sup> While time and space prevent any realistic attempt to cover a broad swath of the churches in this time period, prominent representatives of the story can be identified that trace an influential thread from the formative years of the Philadelphia Association of Baptist churches to one of the largest Southern Baptist Churches in the convention at the dawn of the twentieth century.

### **Methodology**

The primary question this study seeks to answer is, "How did Baptists in North America take the gospel initially brought from England and *re-present* it in worship for successive generations of Baptist worship?" This will require both the identification of a stream of prominent Baptist churches in North America as well as a methodology for

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<sup>50</sup> The recently released eleven-volume *B&H Baptist History Collection* contains no single volume devoted to Baptist worship. "B & H Baptist History Collection," *Logos.com*, accessed August 1, 2014, <https://www.logos.com/product/4134/bh-baptist-history-collection>.

studying the information that describes their worship. The study of prominent Baptist churches should be reflective of the major streams of historic Baptist worship.

A portion of this dissertation will include a theological and philosophical analysis of the nature of corporate worship. This will be accomplished through examining the fields of liturgical theology, liturgical anthropology, and a biblical theology of worship. This study is predominantly an effort in historical research. After considering the nature of corporate worship, the bulk of the study will require the identification and research of primary source materials to learn the story of Baptist worship in North America. Due to the necessity of primary and accurate secondary source material, a certain amount of delimitation has already taken place by virtue of the information available for study. Very little has been written about the vast majority of Baptist churches in North America, especially the oldest churches. Many have ceased to exist with little record of their existence. Of what is written, very little is ever said in them about a church's worship form or gospel content.

Of those churches covered in this study, some are included partially because there is information about them to study. However, the churches selected are also considered due to their prominence in North American Baptist history and in particular, the historic thread that this effort is seeking to identify. Other than some figures and movements that had immediate influence on Baptists, all historical figures and churches included in this study are Baptist.

The following criteria were used for determination of inclusion in this study and in this order of priority:

1. Prominence of influence upon Baptist worship
2. Prominence of influence upon Baptist church life in other areas
3. Representation of a chronological period of Baptist history not already covered
4. Availability of information to be studied

Pennepek Baptist Church and the Philadelphia Association are an essential component as one of the first Baptist churches in America and the first association of Baptists. They serve as a starting point for the North American Baptist worship story. Also, First Baptist Church of Charleston (“Charleston Tradition”) and Sandy Creek Baptist Church (“Sandy Creek Tradition”) are requirements for such a study on Baptist worship due to their influence in worship style and tradition. These three churches form the foundations of Baptist worship established in the eighteenth century in chapter 4. In some cases, a church may be chosen for study due to the prominence of the pastor at the time such as Siloam Baptist Church in Marion, Alabama,<sup>51</sup> which has historical significance to Southern Baptists in particular. It also has personal significance to me, as it is the church where my mother and grandparents were members. Jarvis Street Baptist Church is the Canadian Baptist representative and is from outside the Southern Baptist Convention. It represents evangelical strength in the north. I also have personal interest in Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, because of their proximity to, and relationship with, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. These last three churches provide examples of the worship synthesis of the nineteenth century in chapter 5.

Few robust historical accounts of Baptist churches exist,<sup>52</sup> especially from two and three hundred years ago. The historical accounts that exist rarely mention the order

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<sup>51</sup> Siloam Baptist Church had a prominent role among Baptists by helping to establish Judson College in 1838, Howard College in 1841 (which became Samford College), the *Alabama Baptist* in 1843, and the Southern Baptist Domestic Board of Missions in 1845 (became the Home Mission Board and now the North American Mission Board) which was housed in Marion until 1882 (see Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* [Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998], xix).

<sup>52</sup> FBC Charleston has a significant history by Robert A. Baker, Paul J. Craven, Jr. and R. Marshall Blalock, *History of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, 1682–2007, 325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*, Charleston Association Series (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2007); FBC Providence has several, but a most significant one has just been published in the Baptists in Early North America Series, J. Stanley Lemons, ed., *First Baptist, Providence*, Baptists in Early North America, vol. 2 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2013). There are other rather substantial efforts on the history of FBC Boston and FBC Philadelphia, and numerous forthcoming volumes from the *Baptists in Early North America* series. All of these serve this research effort.

or content of their worship services.<sup>53</sup> However, some interesting volumes have been written about the most prominent Baptist churches. There are also some historical accounts of Baptist Associations<sup>54</sup> and State Conventions<sup>55</sup> that contain helpful information. Biographies and dissertations on prominent Baptist figures and the topic of worship have been written that are within the purview of this study. A wealth of information has been left in the prefaces to hymnals as well as studies done on the most popular hymns and hymnals utilized in each time period.<sup>56</sup> Finally, a variety of other sources have been found in historic journal articles, diary entries, letters, church minutes and records, and newspaper accounts to provide the information necessary to conduct this study. Other historians, for different purposes, have identified and addressed some of the materials helpful to this study, while other information waits to be discovered.

The methodology of this study is patterned after the approach used by

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<sup>53</sup> According to Ted Rivera, who wrote a single volume devoted work to the topic of Jonathan Edwards on worship, “The oldest extant order of worship in North America is found handwritten in the front pages of *The Psalms of David* (Boston, 1801), a double volume that also includes *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Both of these volumes are by [Isaac] Watts, and printed by Samuel Hall.” This was the pulpit hymnal of the church in Hubbardston, Massachusetts, and is an example of Puritan worship, though not specifically Baptist worship. Since this dates no earlier than 1801, if Rivera is correct, there is no other example of a recorded order of worship from a church of any kind from the eighteenth century or earlier (see Ted Rivera, *Jonathan Edwards on Worship: Public and Private Devotion to God* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010], 9). Horton Davies has done some work on this topic of early American worship order and content in his volume, *The Worship of the American Puritans, 1629–1730* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> For example, Barnett L. Williams Jr. wrote his dissertation on Baptist worship from 1620–1850 and Amy Lee Mears wrote her dissertation on the worship of Charleston Baptist Association churches.

<sup>55</sup> For example, Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, is over 700 pages about the history of Alabama Baptists.

<sup>56</sup> For example see Platt, “Hymnological Contributions,” in which he describes Manly’s Preface to *Baptist Chorals* (1859) as “a pulpit from which to articulate his philosophy of congregational song” (71). See also, Irvin Henry Murrell, Jr., “An Examination of Southern Ante-Bellum Baptist Hymnals and Tunebooks as Indicators of the Congregational Hymn and Tune Repertories of the Period with an Analysis of Representative Tunes” (D.M.A. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984), and David Louis Gregory, “Southern Baptist Hymnals (1956, 1975, 1991) as Sourcebooks for Worship in Southern Baptist Churches” (M.C.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994).

Christopher Ellis to perform a similar study of English Baptists in *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition*. His work is founded upon the approaches of French liturgist Louis Bouyer and Alexander Schmemmann in the field of liturgical theology. The relationship between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* is a complex consideration, especially in Baptist worship. Schmemmann argued in his work,

Liturgical theology . . . is based upon the recognition that the liturgy in its totality is not only an ‘object’ of theology, but above all its source, and this by virtue of the liturgy’s essential ecclesial function: i.e., that of revealing by the means which are proper to it (and which belong only to it) the faith of the church; in other words, of being that *lex orandi* in which the *lex credendi* finds its principal criterion and standard.<sup>57</sup>

Schmemmann’s claim was that “historically, as well as theologically, worship comes before theology” and quoted *lex orandi, lex credendi* to support this.<sup>58</sup> This belief that theology flows “from” worship is a critical clarification for Schmemmann and other liturgiologists to contend for the use of formal liturgy as the preferred approach to worship. In response Ellis warns,

Using Baptist worship as a case study for doing liturgical theology in a Free Church context will enable us to see some of the difficulties of giving uncritical authority to the theology embodied in worship. The free nature of that worship requires that there be norms and guidelines which will ensure that the worship indeed expresses what the Christian community believes.<sup>59</sup>

Ellis provides a four-stage methodology that he has founded upon Schmemmann’s work, but adjusted for the unique aspects of Baptist (e.g., “free”) worship.<sup>60</sup>

1. Establish the liturgical facts (“What happened in historical worship?”).

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<sup>57</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, “Liturgical Theology: Remarks on Method,” in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas Fisch (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982), 137–38.

<sup>58</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 23–24. The first three steps of this methodology are from Alexander Schmemmann whereas Ellis adds the fourth step as an adjustment specifically for Baptist (e.g., “free”) worship.

2. A theological analysis of those liturgical facts (“What impact does the order of the elements of worship have?”).<sup>61</sup>
3. A synthesis of the inherent theological meaning from the witness of the *epiphany* itself (“What was the exposition of faith as a result of worship?”)
4. An analysis of the exposition of faith of the worshipping community under a broader theological scrutiny (“Does what worship seemed to align itself with what other sources of theology plainly teach?”).<sup>62</sup>

This is the methodology that will be employed for the study of the Baptist churches representative of Baptist worship in North America. It will be the process that will be used to discern the function and relationship of the gospel to worship among Baptists.

Chapter 1 has introduced the subject of the relationship between the gospel and worship. This chapter has provided working definitions of both the gospel and worship, and explained the heightened interest in both contemporary evangelical thought and practice. The thesis of the dissertation has been presented which contends that a “gospel-shaped” method of worship design is not only historically identifiable in Baptist worship, but preferable to other methods of free church worship design. An explanation has been suggested of the background of what has been done in the study of Baptist worship and what has been left out. Finally, an explanation was provided regarding the rationale behind which churches were selected for the study.

Chapter 2 lays the foundation for the study. The work of Christopher Ellis and

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<sup>61</sup> Schmemmann’s contention here is that worship is “undergirded by an *ordo*, or pattern, and this *ordo* is manifested through the way in which the individual components interact . . . an item in worship, though outwardly unchanged, may have a different theological meaning when placed at different points in a service” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 23–24).

<sup>62</sup> Ellis explains, “The exposition of the third stage is, as we have seen, essentially descriptive. But if we are going to arrive at a point where it can have an authoritative status for guiding the Church in its believing and in its worship, then it will be necessary to engage with other theological expressions of faith within the Christian community, such as creeds, confessions of faith, analytical theology and especially, Scripture. While worship embodies a theology which we will attempt to identify, clarify and expound, that theology also needs to bear the same scrutiny which any other theological endeavours may properly face” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 24).

his study of the Baptists in England is utilized to introduce liturgical theology. The work of James K. A. Smith on liturgical anthropology is also considered. The explanation of how worship “works” forms the main goal of this chapter and the theological and philosophical underpinnings of how *liturgy* impacts the worshiper. Finally, Andrew Fuller’s work on religious affections is utilized to demonstrate how the gospel affects the internal state of man in worship. A synthesis of these three concepts develops the working theory of how spiritual formation occurs as a primary result of gospel-shaped worship. This chapter concludes with an examination of the Baptist usage of the regulative principle.

Chapter 3 builds upon the foundation of the previous chapter by developing the concept of gospel-shaped worship. First, a shape of the gospel is proposed. Second, the work of Bryan Chapell and the gospel-shaped liturgy of the liturgical tradition are introduced. Various models for gospel-shaped worship will be considered and synthesized into a working form for this study. The work of G. K. Beale and the biblical theology of idolatry are introduced to foster the concept of “we become what we worship.” This brings the chapter to its culmination in a theological consideration of 2 Corinthians 3:18 and beholding the “glory of the Lord” in worship by which the worshiper is conformed into the same image “from one glory to another.”

Chapters 4 and 5 are the heart of the dissertation as historic examples of worship from Baptist churches are considered in this inquiry regarding the evidence of the gospel in their worship form and content. This inquiry is carried out in a chronological sequence that seeks to tell the story of Baptist worship in North America. Baptists from Colonial America to twentieth-century Kentucky will be examined in an effort to set forth examples of gospel-shaped worship. Correlations between the form of worship and the state of the church at the time are investigated. The attempt has been made to find examples of Baptist worship that trace the story thread from the first

Baptists in North America to the Southern Baptists of the twentieth century. Chapter 4 establishes the Baptist foundations of practice at Philadelphia, Charleston, and Sandy Creek in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 5 continues the historic journey into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as churches in Alabama, Toronto, and Louisville are examined. These represent the worship synthesis of traditions that were established in the previous century. The effects of revivalism from the Second Great Awakening that began the nineteenth century are evident in each of these churches and their worship reflects varying degrees of impact. These churches build upon the foundation laid by the first Baptists in North America and create trajectories upon which Baptists today are either building, or to which they are adjusting.

The Conclusion will seek to summarize the thesis and arguments. A reflection of the process will afford the opportunity to draw conclusions from the merging of the biblical, theological, philosophical and historical data. Final observations of historic Baptist worship will be drawn from the study and summarized in order to demonstrate that gospel-centered worship design is not only historically verifiable in Baptist history, but also is preferable for worship service design today. Where the gospel has been maintained in worship, the churches have grown. Finally, suggestions for further study will be presented regarding gospel-centered worship and Baptist worship history.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A WORSHIP SERVICE'S FORM AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

#### **Introduction**

The process of discerning gospel content in worship is a nuanced process that initially requires the utilization of the principles and perspective of the field of liturgical theology. Alexander Schmemmann (1921–1983) is heralded as one of the field's most influential voices. Liturgical theology has received much attention in liturgical church worship, but not as much in non-liturgical traditions. While the application of liturgical theology is somewhat unique to Baptist worship, it is not unprecedented as will be demonstrated by the work of Christopher Ellis on English Baptists. This methodology will assist in the identification of the *re-presented* gospel in selected examples of historic Baptist worship in chapters 4 and 5. James K. A. Smith's approach to liturgical anthropology is also referenced in this chapter, building upon the work of liturgical theology. This is a somewhat less clearly defined field and is sometimes categorized under the umbrella of liturgical theology as an additional subcategory. However, Smith's recent work in the Cultural Liturgies Series has provided a framework for understanding the role of liturgy in worship that is applicable to Baptist worship. The purpose of including this emphasis is to demonstrate the impact that the re-presented gospel can have upon Baptist worshipers.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) famously identified the religious affections as

that which was awakened among those who were truly converted.<sup>1</sup> While there has been some research done on the impact of Edwards directly upon Baptists in both England and North America,<sup>2</sup> it is Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) who made application of Edwards’ work in a distinctly Baptist context. It is Fuller’s work that will be utilized to demonstrate the power of the gospel upon the affections of Baptists in worship. This clarifies the locus of work of liturgical anthropology in its worship application. Specifically, it shows the effect of the gospel upon the inner nature of man in life, and thus worship. Finally, Scripture’s role in worship is critical to this study. Early Baptists such as those who aligned themselves with the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 and its successor in some churches, the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742, also aligned themselves with the regulative principle of worship. This had a profound impact upon the way Baptists worshiped. Thus, an investigation of worship’s content and form requires some consideration of the regulative principle, especially as this study interacts with those who advocate sacramental theology and church tradition in worship.

This chapter outlines a process that begins with liturgical theology and ends with the regulative principle in its explanation of the dynamic and direct relationship between worship form and spiritual formation. The content of this chapter informs chapter 3 in the designation of the gospel’s priority in worship form and content; and chapters 4 and 5 in its methodology of research of Baptist worship in North America. The form and content of worship services have a specific correlation to the effect upon those who participate in worship. The nature of the worshipers’ participation on Sunday

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 193ff. Edwards wrote this treatise as part of his defense of the legitimacy of the work of the Spirit of God in the First Great Awakening by discerning those signs of true conversion.

<sup>2</sup> See Tom J. Nettles, “Edwards and his Impact on Baptists,” in *Founders Journal* 53 (Summer 2003): 1–18, accessed August 23, 2014, <http://founders.org/fj53/edwards-and-his-impact-on-baptists>.

is demonstrated in their lives the rest of the week. Their lives are “lived out worship” that has been informed and empowered by corporate worship. In short, the gospel’s accuracy on Sunday is critical for the gospel’s relevance in the lives of worshipers during the rest of the week. Where the gospel is maintained, due to its role in spiritual formation, the church is built. Conversely, where the church flounders, it is more than likely that the gospel has been distorted or misplaced altogether in corporate worship.

### **Liturgical Theology**

The foundation for liturgical theology has been at least partially established upon the historic statement of Prosper of Aquitaine (390–455), written around A.D. 435–443. The oft-quoted shortened version of the phrase—*lex orandi, lex credendi*—leaves much room for both interpretation and appropriation. The relationship of the church’s prayer (i.e., worship) to what it believes (i.e., faith) is a peculiar mystery. Does worship inform faith or does faith inform worship or both? To what degree does one influence the other? Kevin Irwin, Professor of Liturgical Studies at Catholic University, expresses a common interpretation regarding the context of Prosper’s phrase when he writes, “The liturgy manifests the Church’s faith” and can be “a theological source to the degree that it is founded on Scripture and is the expression of a praying Church.”<sup>3</sup> Irwin’s quote brings a more focused appropriation of this historic phrase and informs the direction of this study. In historic worship content and form (e.g., “liturgy”), the researcher should expect

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin Irwin, *Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 6. Also quoted in Dwight W. Vogel, ed., *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 4, 10. The full phrase, *ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* (“let the law of that which must be prayed establish the law of that which must be believed”), written in the *Indiculus* of Prosper Aquitaine was an argument against the error taught by the semi-Pelagians, in which the practice of the church is set alongside 1 Tim 2:1–6. While the original context and meaning of his phrase may never be completely clear, this phrase has served as a touchstone for the work of liturgical theology and the use of liturgy. Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Orthodoxy, among other traditions, have all laid claim to the phrase’s relevance to them. It is most often cited in regard to the authority of the rite of apostolic tradition. Here, its relevance is only as valid as its adherence to Scripture’s authority.

to find a demonstration of the faith and theology of that community of worship, insofar as it is founded on Scripture.

Alexander Schmemmann was a pioneer thinker in the modern, liturgical theology movement of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> His life's work has been characterized as “the focused, consistent pursuit to define liturgical theology and establish its fundamental principles.”<sup>5</sup> He summarizes the historic relegation of the field

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<sup>4</sup> As a small child, Alexander Schmemmann emigrated with his family from Estonia to the Russian enclave in Paris, where he grew up and studied, becoming a presbyter in the Russian Orthodox Church. He is viewed by many as a patriarch of the liturgical theology movement of the twentieth century. Bruce T. Morrill and Don E. Saliers write, “For Schmemmann the content and practice of the liturgy constituted the Church’s very life . . . . The heart of Schmemmann’s liturgical theology is the principle that Christian faith and truth are made incarnate and manifested in the liturgy. The genuine experience of the Church is the liturgy, the ‘rule of faith’ experienced within the ‘rule of prayer.’ Schmemmann’s is a functional definition of liturgy, for the function of worship is to give Christians a practical knowledge of the integral connection between religion and life. The liturgy’s power to judge, transform, and change believers and their world lies in what Schmemmann identifies to be the basis and content of Christian worship.” Bruce T. Morrill and Don E. Saliers, “Alexander Schmemmann: Liturgy as Life for the World,” in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, 52–53. Schmemmann’s attempt to reform the liturgy was “to make the liturgical experience of the Church again one of the life-giving sources of the knowledge of God” (Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* [Portland, ME: The American Orthodox Press, 1966], 7). While Schmemmann’s approach to liturgical theology is very helpful, his approach to the Orthodox liturgy was misguided. Schmemmann’s theological error is rooted in the error of the Orthodox Church as a whole and its effectual loss of the gospel. There is so much wrapped up in the mystery of the liturgy that it became an end of itself and the nature of the church (and existence), and hope for the world, was reliant upon the church’s participation in the liturgy. Schmemmann believed that worship is “inseparable from the church and without it there is no Church. But this is because its purpose is to express, form, or realize the Church – to be the source of that grace which always makes the Church the Church, the people of God, the Body of Christ, ‘a chosen race and a royal priesthood’ (I Peter 2:9).” He lamented regarding the state of worship in his day, “But in the contemporary approach to worship there is the characteristic absence of an understanding of it as the expression of the Church, as the creation of the Church and as the fulfilment [*sic*] of the Church.” He feared, “In this sense the Church in her sacramentally hierarchical structure is the instrument of this mystery [performance of divine worship seen as a sacred, supra-temporal, immutable mystery] and is subordinated to it.” In sum, he felt the Orthodox Church of his day misunderstood worship to be an act of temporary contact with the transformative mystery of worship (e.g., the Eucharist) rather than realizing it was the transformative mystery of worship. In his view, it was the worshiper who came to worship to be “transformed again into a member of the church.” Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 23–24.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce T. Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 73. Morrill summarizes Schmemmann’s theology of the liturgy as “fundamentally the epiphany (manifestation) of the inextricable relationship between the Church, the kingdom of God, and the world” (75). Schmemmann writes, “It must be clear by now that the tragedy which I denounce and deplore [that of the state of liturgy in the twentieth century] consists not in any particular ‘defect’ of the liturgy—and God knows that there have been many such defects at all times—but in something much deeper: the *divorce between liturgy, theology, and piety*, a divorce which characterizes the post-patristic period of the history of our Church and which has altered—not the faith and

of liturgics and his effort to draw attention to this important approach to theology:

The study of liturgics, understood as liturgical theology, has appeared comparatively recently within the system of theological disciplines. What was called liturgics in the religious schools was usually a more or less detailed practical study of ecclesiastical rites, combined with certain symbolical explanations of ceremonies and ornaments. Liturgical study of this kind, known in the West as the study of ‘rubrics,’ answers the question how: how worship is to be carried out according to the rules, i.e. in accordance with the prescriptions of the rubrics and canons. But it does not answer the question what: what is done in worship. It does not set forth the meaning of worship either as a whole or in its separate parts. It does not define the place of liturgical tradition in the life of the Church and her members.<sup>6</sup>

Previous to his modern movement, liturgics was largely a subject of interest only to the clergy, but not to theologians. Schmemmann explains the recent catalyst for change in attention to it: “What broke through this indifference for the first time was the revival of historical interest in worship . . . . This liturgical revival or movement, which in the last analysis has led also to the rise of liturgical theology, began almost simultaneously in different parts of the Christian world in the years following the First World War.”<sup>7</sup>

Gordon W. Lathrop, Professor of Liturgy at Lutheran Theological Seminary brings clarity: “liturgical theology . . . . inquires into the meaning of the liturgy, to use the ancient name of the assembly for worship and its actions.” It does so by asking, “How the Christian meeting, in all its signs and words, says something authentic and reliable about God, and so says something true about ourselves and about our world as they are understood before God.”<sup>8</sup> In short, the aim of liturgical theology is “to interpret the

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not too much the liturgy—theology and piety. In other terms, the crisis which I try to analyze is the crisis not of liturgy but of its *understanding*” (Alexander Schmemmann, “Liturgical Theology, Theology of Liturgy, and Liturgical Reform,” in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theology Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas Fisch [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990], 41).

<sup>6</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 3. Lathrop considers the worshipers participation in the liturgy to be *primary* liturgical theology and thus the “spoken discourse that attempts to find words for the experience of the liturgy and to illuminate its structures” to be *secondary* liturgical theology. Secondary liturgical theology often appears as a historical research effort. Lathrop would consider the resulting phenomenological observations and suggestions often

meaning of the Christian gathering.”<sup>9</sup> The question that this thesis’ methodology seeks to answer is related to the gospel’s role in Baptist worship. How did the gospel bring meaning to worship among Baptists in North America?

### **Definition**

As one of the movement’s patriarchs, Schmemmann offers the following oft-quoted definition to which Lathrop and countless others tether their work: “As its name indicates, liturgical theology is the elucidation of the [theological] meaning of worship.”<sup>10</sup> In his view the movement could not be content simply to explain the “how” of worship; but to inquire of the “why” and even the “what” of worship. Schmemmann explains,

Therefore the task of liturgical theology consists in giving a theological basis to the explanation of worship and the whole liturgical tradition of the Church. This means, first, to find and define the concepts and categories which are capable of expressing as fully as possible the essential nature of the liturgical experience of the Church; second, to connect these ideas with that system of concepts which theology uses to expound the faith and doctrine of the Church; and third, to present the separate data of liturgical experience as a connected whole, as, in the last analysis the “rule of prayer” dwelling within the Church and determining her “rule of faith.”<sup>11</sup>

Schmemmann’s charge to the field was to move beyond the task of simply explaining how liturgy was to function in the church’s worship. It was not enough to have the right liturgy and readings for the day, though he was concerned that the liturgy of his day was deficient compared to that of Patristic liturgy. He introduced the concept of historical study to the field of liturgical theology to assist in the “elucidation of meaning” of the

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intended to reform worship as *pastoral* liturgical theology (6). According to his designations, the majority of this research effort is that of secondary liturgical theology (historical).

<sup>9</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 14.

liturgy. His motive was to aid the worshiper by providing not only a historical survey and theological explanation of the meaning of worship, but as a result, a reformed liturgy as well. He believed this reformation should be informed by the past.

Schememann's influence in liturgical theology is so prominent that his methodological approach should be considered as well. It is his methodology that has at least partially influenced Gordon Lathrop's study as a Protestant (Lutheran) and specifically informed Christopher Ellis' study of English Baptists.<sup>12</sup> Schememann writes, "If liturgical theology stems from an understanding of worship as the public act of the Church, then its final goal will be to clarify and explain the connection between this act and the Church, i.e. to explain how the Church expresses and fulfils [*sic*] herself in this act."<sup>13</sup> If theology is expressed in worship, as the Early Church seemed to confess in the principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*, then the practice of its liturgy is an expression of what it believes and who it is. Furthermore, the connection between what it believes and how it expresses itself in worship should reveal something of the church's communal spirituality. This is the critical place of liturgical theology amidst the broader field of

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<sup>12</sup> See Lathrop, *Holy Things*, and Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004). References to Schememann's writing and methodology can be found in the notes and bibliographies of numerous texts on liturgical theology such as Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh, eds., *Foundations in Ritual Studies: A Reader for Students of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004); Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Meaning for Later Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Irwin, *Context and Text*; Kevin W. Irwin, *Liturgical Theology: A Primer* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990); Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1984); Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), among many others.

<sup>13</sup> Schememann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 14. Schememann writes concerning the explanation of worship, "It ought to be the elucidation of its theological meaning. Theology is above all explanation, 'the search for words appropriate to the nature of God' (Θεοπρηεῖ λόγοι), i.e. for a system of concepts corresponding as much as possible to the faith and experience of the Church. Therefore the task of liturgical theology consists in giving a theological basis to the explanation of worship and the whole liturgical tradition of the Church."

theology. It can reveal what a written confession or statement of faith cannot, or it can confirm the church's adherence to them. Schmemmann summarizes, "In the last analysis they all have the same goal: the setting for and explanation of the doctrine of the church."<sup>14</sup>

One other aspect of liturgical theology's task must be noted before Schmemmann's methodology may be introduced. It is one thing to understand the theological meaning of the individual elements of worship. Praying, singing, reading Scripture, chanting, preaching, etc., have significance as isolated elements of worship and research efforts have certainly been undertaken to consider each as independent elements of worship. Liturgical theology for Schmemmann has as its primary concern the *ordo* of worship—the meaning of the elements in context. Schmemmann explains,

It is a whole, within which everything, the words of prayer, lections, chanting, ceremonies, the relationship of all these things in a 'sequence' or 'order' and, finally, what can be defined as the 'liturgical coefficient' of each of these elements (i.e. that significance which, apart from its own immediate content, each acquires as a result of its place in the general order of worship), only all this together defines the meaning of the whole and is therefore the proper subject of study and theological evaluation.<sup>15</sup>

The renewal of interest in liturgical theology corresponds to the modern liturgical renewal movement, as is evident in the many volumes that have been written in consideration of the theology of formal liturgy. However, very little has been done utilizing the same type of methodology to consider the *ordo* of Free Church worship. Even less has been done to consider the same in Baptist worship. There appears to be only one model at present for this type of study in Baptist worship. Schmemmann's foundational methodology for the task among liturgical traditions will be presented and then an addition must be made for the characteristically "free" worship of Baptist

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<sup>14</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 15.

churches, as suggested by Christopher Ellis from his study.<sup>16</sup>

## **Methodology**

Schmemmann's concern for arbitrariness regarding the theological use of liturgical material led him to standardize a methodology for the process. The first step is to establish the liturgical facts. This requires historical research to survey how the church has worshiped and what liturgy it has employed. Due to the variety of expressions in worship history, "it is very important to know, first, whether all these changes express the Church's 'rule of prayer' in equal measure, and second, whether it is possible to find in liturgical development itself some law, something which in fact makes it a development of the age-old and immutable *lex orandi* and not just a series of more or less accidental metamorphoses."<sup>17</sup> One must also consider the variety of worship forms and structures over time to consider what consistencies have developed and where there have been changes in the *ordo*, what are the possible explanations for these changes. It is possible that the motives behind these changes are part of the true "rule of faith" emerging through the *lex orandi*. Baptist worship in particular may be prone to some of these variables as the result of "accidental metamorphoses," as Schmemmann regards them.

The second step in Schmemmann's methodology is that of theological synthesis. Having established the liturgical facts, some theological conclusions regarding these facts must be drawn. "The theological synthesis is the elucidation of the rule of prayer." According to Schmemmann, this is where the understanding of the *ordo* is critical. As he emphasizes, this is where "both historically and theologically the liturgiologist is above

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<sup>16</sup> Ellis bases his methodology on the work of Schmemmann and represents that methodology in full in his work (Ellis, *Gathering*, 23–24).

<sup>17</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 16–17.

all dealing with the basic structures of worship.”<sup>18</sup> Here is the key component to the work of liturgical theology and why the service considered as a whole is where the theological meaning is truly derived. Schmemmann explains,

The significance of these basic structures is that only in them is there any full expression of the general design of worship, both as a whole, and taken in its separate elements. They fix the “liturgical coefficient” of each element and point to its significance in the whole, freeing it from arbitrary symbolic interpretations. Thus when we compare rubrics which have long been accepted as mere “rubrical details” and establish their position in their respective liturgical structures, they sometimes reveal their theological meaning and the tradition is as it were “decoded.”<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, this step moves the study from the initial establishment of the details of worship liturgy to the interpretation of these elements within the context of the overall structure of worship, leading to a theological synthesis of the information. The theological meaning of an element (i.e. its “liturgical coefficient”) is heightened and even defined by its placement among the other elements. Gordon Lathrop illustrates the emphasis of “response” in the structure of liturgy. He urges, “See how communal meaning occurs as these things [elements of worship] are juxtaposed to each other.”<sup>20</sup> Response is a key aspect of structure in worship order. Many times the worshiper is responding to another element of worship and the initiating element, along with its worshipful response, is key to understanding meaning and theology. The theological synthesis is an attempt to get inside the “experience” of historic worship to understand its meaning. Schmemmann here concludes, “What is needed more than anything else is an

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<sup>18</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 17–18. Schmemmann explains, “These structures can be defined as worship as a whole, i.e. the interrelatedness of all the individual services and of each liturgical unit in particular . . . but its basic kernel—the rhythm of the ‘Lord’s Day’ as the day of the Eucharistic commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ—is integral to the liturgical tradition itself, and in this sense appears as its original and basic structure.”

<sup>19</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 11.

entrance into the life of worship, into life in the rhythm of worship.”<sup>21</sup>

The third step of Schmemmann’s methodology is to take the approximation of historic worship’s experience gained from the first two steps and attempt to discern the “rule of faith” that resulted from the “rule of prayer.” This was the most important step for Schmemmann as it is the step of theological synthesis. Ellis explains the meaning of this step to Schmemmann as “the release of the inherent theological meaning from the witness of the liturgical *epiphany* itself.”<sup>22</sup> Schmemmann’s interpretation of *lex orandi, lex credendi* differs here from some others. He did not interpret the phrase rigidly and in a unidirectional manner (e.g., in the order the phrase is read from left to right) as “literalists” did in the movement.<sup>23</sup> He believed most strongly that faith was built into the worshiper as a result of worship. Here is also where his Russian Orthodox position is most evident. While the church gathered as corporate worshipers, they departed as individual followers of Christ empowered to live a transformed life before the face of the world. In Schmemmann’s view, that transformation required the liturgy to take place. Worship empowered their lives by incarnating faith.

Schmemmann concedes regarding this third step of his methodology, “Up to now liturgical scholarship has scarcely touched this whole area, and yet it occupies a prominent place in the real Church and requires therefore its own theological and liturgical evaluation and explanation.”<sup>24</sup> An adjustment regarding the third aspect of Schmemmann’s methodology is addressed below with the addition of a fourth step by

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<sup>21</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Schmemmann actually paraphrases the phrase by adding the word *est*, thus rendering it, “the rule of prayer *is* the rule of believing.” Christopher Ellis comments, “In other words, what is expressed in worship becomes the basis and norm for what the Church is to believe—theology flows *from* worship” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 17; emphasis Ellis’).

<sup>24</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 21.

Christopher Ellis. Also, a clarification of this study's approach to the "resulting faith" of worship is addressed under the topics of "liturgical anthropology" and "religious affections," and later in chapter 3, as spiritual formation as the result of worship is considered. While Schmemmann emphasized this aspect of participation in the liturgy to an extreme and untenable position for this study, there are aspects of faith and spirituality that are informed by worship and additionally, spiritual formation does take place as a result of worship.<sup>25</sup> It is more than the mere transfer of doctrinal information. It is the right doctrinal information, empowered by the Spirit through the word of God. It is the word of God that reveals Christ and conforms the believer to the image of the Son of God who is central to Christian worship. This is because of right theology and not in order to trump theology formed outside of the liturgy.

### **An Additional Step for Baptist Worship**

In *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition*, Christopher Ellis offers an additional step to Schmemmann's methodology for his own study of Baptist worship in England. Operating from the conviction that "worship is embodied theology," he recognizes that a study of the liturgical theology of Baptist worship cannot be approached exactly the same way as one of a formal liturgical

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<sup>25</sup> By the end of Schmemmann's life, the aspect of faith became his largest concern regarding the crisis of liturgy in worship in his day. His concern was that faith be defined as "a praxis informed by the definite message of the Gospel and to contrast such practical belief with a religion of 'mere contemplation' or 'purely-believed in faith'" (Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 85–86). Schmemmann explains elsewhere, "Faith is always and above all a meeting with the Other, conversion to the Other, the reception of him as 'the way, the truth and the life,' love for him and the desire for total unity with him, such that 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20)" (Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988], 144). While this sounds almost evangelical in its vocabulary, evangelicals would not agree with his concept of faith's "incarnation" exclusively in and because of the liturgy. Where Schmemmann is extreme from his Russian Orthodox position is that the "fundamental principle" of his liturgical theology seemed to be that "Christian faith and trust are made 'incarnate' in the liturgy," which is the "living experience of the Church, by which Schmemmann means the liturgy, the 'rule of faith' experienced within the 'rule of prayer'" (Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 87).

tradition.<sup>26</sup> Schmemmann claimed, “Historically, as well as theologically, worship comes before theology.”<sup>27</sup> Ellis quotes Geoffrey Wainwright, a Methodist, who argues, “Protestantism has largely held that theology should control worship and what is expressed in it.”<sup>28</sup> Building upon this distinction Ellis offers the following assessment:

Using Baptist worship as a case study for doing liturgical theology in a Free Church context will enable us to see some of the difficulties of giving uncritical authority to the theology embodied in worship. The free nature of that worship requires that there be norms and guidelines which will ensure that the worship indeed expresses what the Christian community believes.<sup>29</sup>

In an effort to establish an additional guideline, Ellis adds a fourth step to Schmemmann’s methodology. This step is necessary for this study, as theology must inform worship.

Here is the full methodology with Ellis’ addition.

1. Establish the liturgical facts (“What happened in historical worship?”).
2. A theological analysis of those liturgical facts (“What impact does the order of the elements of worship have?”).<sup>30</sup>
3. A synthesis of the inherent theological meaning from the witness of the *epiphany* itself (“What was the exposition of faith as a result of worship?”).
4. An analysis of the exposition of faith of the worshipping community under a broader theological scrutiny (“Does what worship seemed to align itself with what other

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<sup>26</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 17. This claim of worship’s primacy to theology is addressed also in the work of James K. A. Smith in the next section on liturgical anthropology. It is their premise that the liturgy’s existence before formal theology gives the liturgy authority as a source of theology. It is the position of Wainwright, Ellis, and this study that theology must inform liturgy in order for it to appropriately embody it therefore form the church’s faith. The fact that liturgy preceded the giving of the law or a closed canon does not mean that what it espoused was in all cases true. Theology and doctrine were given to correct false liturgy. Schmemmann’s driving desire was to return to the liturgy of the Patristics to recover that liturgy which to him was most authoritative in its delineation of theology.

<sup>28</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 18.

<sup>30</sup> Schmemmann’s contention here is that worship is “undergirded by an *ordo*, or pattern, and this *ordo* is manifested through the way in which the individual components interact . . . an item in worship, though outwardly unchanged, may have a different theological meaning when placed at different points in a service” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 23–24).

sources of theology plainly teach?”).<sup>31</sup>

### Clarification

In spite of the rapid growth of research effort in liturgical theology for half a century, the parameters of the field still lack a universally-agreed-upon clarity. There is a broad understanding of what liturgical theology may encompass, as has been established by Alexander Schmemmann, but also disagreement as to whether what one researcher refers to as “liturgical theology” will find acceptance by another practitioner. Dwight Vogel of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, has recently suggested examining the field “as a geography of the landscape of a certain kind of human activity. Some liturgical theologians focus their attention on one part of the landscape, some on another.”<sup>32</sup> Building upon the recent work of a liturgical theology seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy, Vogel suggested the following “provinces” for the geography of liturgical theology: Theology of Worship, Liturgy as Theology, Theology of Liturgy, Theology in Liturgy, Theology because Liturgy: Doxological Theology, and Liturgy and Life.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ellis explains, “The exposition of the third stage is, as we have seen, essentially descriptive. But if we are going to arrive at a point where it can have an authoritative status for guiding the Church in its believing and in its worship, then it will be necessary to engage with other theological expressions of faith within the Christian community, such as creeds, confessions of faith, analytical theology and especially, Scripture. While worship embodies a theology which we will attempt to identify, clarify and expound, that theology also needs to bear the same scrutiny which any other theological endeavours may properly face” (Ellis, *Gathering*, 24).

<sup>32</sup> Vogel, *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, 4. Vogel is professor emeritus of theology and ministry at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, where he was dean of chapel and coordinator of the doctoral program in liturgical studies.

<sup>33</sup> Vogel, *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, 4. “Theology of Worship” is an attempt to separate the broader concept of worship from the narrower concept of liturgy, which is a communal act of worship (6). “Liturgy as Theology” is that perspective that views liturgical theology as the actual celebration of the liturgy (7); see also Lathrop, *Holy Things* (n8). “Theology of Liturgy” focuses on a theological reflection of the church’s act of worship, such as the paschal mystery (Vogel, *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, 8–9). “Theology in Liturgy” uses liturgy as a source for systematic theology (10). “Theology because Liturgy: Doxological Theology” is based upon the premise that all theology is generated by and reflective of liturgy (12). “Theology and Life” is a theological reflection on the relationship between liturgy and our lived experience (12).

This study encompasses elements of a number of Vogel's "provinces," but the next section regarding liturgical anthropology is rooted in what he describes as "theology in liturgy." Vogel explains this area was designated at the liturgical theology seminar as "theology informed by liturgy."<sup>34</sup> He cautions, "Just how this should take place depends upon the theologian's interpretation and appropriation of *lex orandi, lex credendi* . . . . The comma between the two terms does not specify the relationship between the two, and therein lies the challenge for this province of liturgical theology."<sup>35</sup> This study advances the premise that this phrase has validity read both directions. What the church prays has been informed by what it believes, and that what it believes has by spiritual appropriation been manifested by what it prays. Having found error with Schmemmann's approach to this second aspect, it is necessary to consider an alternative explanation of how worship appropriates faith. Schmemmann's insistence that the liturgy is authoritative, and that theology is subordinate to it, is contradictory to the Protestant view and that of this study. However, biblically informed liturgy provides a dynamic similar to that espoused by Schmemmann. But first, the relationship between worship form and spiritual formation must be established to build the foundation for biblically informed liturgy's capacity to appropriate faith.

### **Liturgical Anthropology**

This section explains why what is included in worship form and content matters, which will ultimately lead us to the need for Scripture and theology to inform liturgy. The first reason to make adjustments to the liturgy is due to the need for biblical fidelity and allegiance to Scripture.<sup>36</sup> It is imperative that what we do in worship be in

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<sup>34</sup> Vogel, *Primary Sources in Liturgical Theology*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Vogel, *Primary Sources in Liturgical Theology*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Schmemmann would almost certainly argue that the right liturgy should adjust our

submission and obedience to what God has required in worship. The matter of a regulative principle will be addressed in the last section of this chapter. Where choices can be made between biblically-acceptable alternatives, an informed decision needs to be made regarding the form and content of worship that is preferable. Worship's effect upon the worshiper, and the worshiper's opportunity to engage with the most effective theology in liturgy is the best reason to adjust the form and content of worship.

Returning briefly to the work of Alexander Schmemmann, his efforts in the area of liturgical theology provide at least three motivating goals for this work. While it may seem strange that a Russian Orthodox priest and teacher would have any significant influence on a research effort on Baptist worship (especially with the aforementioned disagreement), it must be acknowledged that his work has influenced many to join the task of liturgical theology for the benefit of their church's worship, including Ellis in his study of Baptists in England. Three goals for this work are drawn from the life-work of Schmemmann and are likely similar to those of many others who have seen Schmemmann's work and thought something similar should be done in their sphere of worship. These are (1) the impetus to add historical research to inform the task of liturgical theology; (2) a methodology to present a theological synthesis of the act of worship that is centered upon Christ and the gospel; and (3) the call to a liturgical *ressourcement* in worship. The last goal is the purpose of the first two.

The first of these goals is that of adding historical research to the task of liturgical theology. This aspect has already been established above, but it should be emphasized that the motive for this effort was to find a better way for worship. Understanding that the liturgy of worship can be established initially by careful thought, but then drift over time due to "accidental metamorphoses," Schmemmann advocated

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understanding of doctrine and theology.

historical research to discern how things began and where changes were made, attempting to discern why those changes were made. Were they the result of a purposeful effort to instill theology, or an accidental drift? How did we end up where we are today in worship? While Schmemmann sought the more authoritative liturgy to trump theology, this study seeks the more “theologically-sound liturgy.” The same concern for “accidental metamorphoses” will be maintained as that of Schmemmann, but for a different reason.

The second of these goals was to establish a methodology that would strengthen the effort of theological synthesis—the “elucidation of meaning” in worship. In particular, his concern was to see the juxtaposition of the various elements of worship and their meaning in the whole of worship. The ultimate meaning for Schmemmann always led to the person and work of Christ. The Eucharist was the ultimate goal of worship for him and he went so far as to say that where the Eucharist was absent, the liturgy was not complete. While Baptist worship does not always include communion and the preaching of the word has taken the central position of worship from the table, the centrality of Christ and the message of the gospel is no less critical to worship. The meaning of worship in the juxtaposition of its various elements within the whole form of worship should still point ultimately to the incarnation, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the application of his gospel. Worshipers need to be led from their weak and weary lives to the cross and the empty tomb each week in worship. They then need to be sent out with gospel empowerment for their week ahead.

The third goal requires the borrowing of a term from the liturgical renewal movement. The French poet and essayist Charles Péguy (1873–1914) coined the term *ressourcement* to describe a movement “from a less perfect tradition to a more perfect tradition, a call from a shallower tradition to a deeper tradition, a backing up of tradition, an overtaking of depth, an investigation into deeper sources; a return to the source in the

literal sense of the word.”<sup>37</sup> His intention, and that of those associated with this movement, was purely within the context of formal liturgy.

There is a risk in using the term “liturgy” so frequently while quoting the works of Orthodox and Catholic liturgiologists who advocate historic liturgy for worship. While there has been a movement among Baptists to advocate formal liturgy as a new direction of Baptist worship, which has been historically “non-liturgical,” this work is not one of those. In many ways, it is quite the opposite. However, every worship service of every tradition has a form and shape to it. Whether “formal” or “informal,” “scripted” or “unscripted,” “liturgical” or “non-liturgical,” there is a “liturgy” that informs each worship service. There is a shape to the whole of worship that gives its individual elements meaning. Schmemmann believed the end of any work in liturgical theology should be a call to worship reform. This study is a call to a Baptist *ressourcement* that does not include a call to formal liturgy. There are some things about the way Baptists worshiped in the past that needs to be recovered and renewed. There are also some things about historic Baptist worship that do not need to be replicated, but that should inform our worship today. A worship reform is necessary among Baptists and one of the main reasons for such reform is due to the profound effect of the worship “liturgy” upon the worshiper.

### **Revelation and Response**

The various elements of worship structure essentially form the narrative (e.g., “story”) of worship, which in turn become interwoven into the stories of the lives of worshipers. Every story has its own dialogue. Bruce Ellis Benson, Professor of

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<sup>37</sup> Charles Péguy, quoted by Nicholas Heady, Jr., in “Evangelical Ressourcement,” *First Things Blog*, May 2011, accessed October 7, 2014, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/05/evangelical-ressourcement>. This quote was made in a book review of Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 2011).

Philosophy at Wheaton College, refers to this as the “call and response” of worship.<sup>38</sup> Benson writes, “I think it is safe to say that there is nothing more basic to human existence than the call and response structure. It is, quite simply, the very structure of our lives.”<sup>39</sup> Allen Ross, Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Beeson Divinity School, prefers the phrase “revelation and response,” but his concept is similar. “The revelation of glory revealed in Scripture will inspire all we do in the name of worship.”<sup>40</sup> He categorizes the response to revelation in two aspects. The first is that of immediate response in the worship event, which fosters the second—a dynamic of relationship with God that is then lived out that week after the worship service. Ross warns, “If worshippers leave a service with no thought of becoming more godly in their lives, then the purpose of worship has not been achieved.” He elaborates,

Genuine worship is the natural and proper response to the revelation of the holy Lord God of glory. It will bring about reverential fear, confession, sacrifice, praise, and commitment. And when worship responds correctly to divine revelation, all four spiritual senses will be satisfied so that people will grow in grace and knowledge, live out their spiritual heritage, become one in the Lord, and walk in righteousness.<sup>41</sup>

There is a rhythm to the dialogue of worship’s story; it is this revelation and response of worship that reverberates in life. These various worship elements juxtaposed against one another in the overall form of worship create a dynamic effect. As Schmemmann advocated, it is this juxtaposition that gives the elements their meaning that in turn describes the dynamic effect of worship. Godly living is the anticipated response to God’s revelation and therefore sanctification should be the product of worship. This

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<sup>38</sup> Bruce Ellis Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life: Embodying the Arts in Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 19.

<sup>39</sup> Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 49.

<sup>41</sup> Ross, *Recalling the Hope*, 60.

rhythm of a life of worship is established and rehearsed in corporate worship.

The concept of liturgy is rooted in the New Testament word λειτουργία (*leitourgia*), which carries a broader connotation than simply that of a worship service. Benson explains, “Although ‘liturgy’ is used almost exclusively today in connection with church services, it originally referred to how people *lived*. For instance, all of the uses of the term λειτουργία (*leitourgia*) in the New Testament describe various virtuous actions of ministry and service.”<sup>42</sup> The word essentially carries a strategic double meaning. While it is used to describe the form of a worship service, its broader connotation is that of the form of life. Our lives should be seen as liturgical. J. J. von Allmen wrote in *Worship: Its Theology and Practice*, “A superficial reading of the New Testament is sufficient to teach us that *the very life of Jesus of Nazareth is a life which is, in some sense, ‘liturgical.’*” Allmen goes on to write that the life Jesus led was “*the life of worship.*”<sup>43</sup> Our lives should also be lives of worship in that everything that we say and do should be said and done as an offering to God (e.g., our “*λειτουργία*”).<sup>44</sup>

Charles Price and Louis Weil, in their *Liturgy for Living*, use specific terminology to distinguish these two aspects of the term “liturgy.” “Intensive liturgy” describes what happens when Christians assemble to worship God. They encounter

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<sup>42</sup> Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 24. Benson states in a footnote, “The one possible exception to this is in Acts 13:2, in which the people of the church of Antioch are said to be ‘worshipping [λειτουργούντων] the Lord and fasting.’ But this reference seems to indicate only worship in general, not a particular sort of ritual” (24n3). Kittel states of this usage of the Greek word that Acts 13:2 is “the first to attest a transfer of the important OT cultic term to the purely spiritual Christian service of God, even though the reference be only to a small prayer fellowship of leading men. It thus opens up the way for broader development.” Kittel’s basic description of the movement of use of λειτουργία in the New Testament is to that of “righteous conduct” (G. Kittel, “λειτουργέω, λειτουργία, λειτουργός, λειτουργικός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1967), 4:226–27.

<sup>43</sup> J. J. von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 21, 23; emphasis von Allmen’s, quoted in Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 24. “Superficial” is a poor choice of words to describe any manner of reading the Bible.

<sup>44</sup> See 1 Cor 10:31 and Col 3:17.

“Christ’s life and death” as “the one liturgy.” “Extensive liturgy” describes what happens “when the gathered community scatters into the world to live obediently to the Christ whose one liturgy was encountered at prayer.” The authors go on to say, the two types of liturgy are “directly related . . . To engage in either intensive or extensive liturgy drives one to seek out the other.”<sup>45</sup> This demonstrates the interrelatedness of the two. While we are called to live “liturgical” lives that are pleasing to God, there is also a liturgy that is found in the worship service. Every church has a liturgy, regardless of tradition. Even those in the Free Church tradition have a form of worship. Baptists have a “liturgy” even though considered a “non-liturgical” tradition. Philip E. Thompson writes, “Baptists have liturgy because Baptists worship and serve God in community. Liturgy is most basically ‘the people’s work’ (*leitourgia*) of serving God.” He continues, “God acts in and through worship itself to form persons and communities in a pattern of life.”<sup>46</sup> The worshipers’ response to God in life is rehearsed by the way worshipers are guided to respond to God in worship services. The liturgy in worship matters because the liturgy of life is at stake.

### **James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom***

The remainder of this section relies heavily upon the work of James K. A. Smith in his two volumes (soon to be three) of the Cultural Liturgies series. Smith, Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College, has referred to human beings as “*homo*

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<sup>45</sup> Charles P. Price and Louis Veil, *Liturgy for Living* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2000), 14–15. The authors describe the relationship: “From the extensive liturgy of a Christian’s life in the world, one comes to the intensive liturgy for assurance, pardon, and renewal. From the intensive liturgy, one ‘goes forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.’”

<sup>46</sup> Philip E. Thompson, “Baptists and Liturgy—the Very Idea!” *Review and Expositor* 100 (Summer 2003): 318. In this article, Thompson expresses his concern that while Baptists “have not been historically silent on this aspect of worship, they have not given adequate attention to its formative dimensions.” He contends, “Because of a shift toward a more individualistic anthropocentrism in Baptist theology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the significance of the present action of God in worship has often been diminished.”

*liturgicus*” in order to explain how liturgy works in life. Building upon an Augustinian framework in *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Smith declares, “We are, ultimately *liturgical animals* because we are fundamentally desiring creatures. We are what we love, and our love is shaped, primed, and aimed by liturgical practices that take hold of our gut and aim our hearts to certain ends.”<sup>47</sup> It is not what we think that defines us, as Descartes<sup>48</sup> would suggest. It is not what we believe that defines us, though advocates of worldview such as Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff might disagree.<sup>49</sup> According to Smith, Augustine would argue that it is what we love that defines us.<sup>50</sup> Smith explains, “I want to articulate a more robustly Augustinian anthropology that sees humans as most fundamentally oriented and identified by love.” Human beings are intentional creatures in that they are “aimed” at something. This aim or intention is another way of saying “love.”<sup>51</sup> “Augustine would

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<sup>47</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 40. Smith describes humans *primarily* as *homo liturgicus* in contrast to being primarily *homo rationale*, *homo faber*, *homo economicus*, or even *homo religiosus*. He explains, “We are more concretely *homo liturgicus*; humans are those animals that are religious animals not because we are primarily believing animals but because we are liturgical animals – embodied, practicing creatures whose love/desire is aimed at something ultimate.”

<sup>48</sup> René Descartes, “I think, therefore I am,” *Discourse on Method of Rightly Conducting One’s Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1637; repr., Auckland, New Zealand: The Floating Press, 2009), 24.

<sup>49</sup> Alvin Plantinga speaks of “properly basic beliefs” and Nicholas Wolterstorff of “control beliefs” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 43n6). Smith explains here that his criticism is not an outright rejection; “rather the point is that the emphasis on belief does not go far enough.” It is “insufficiently Augustinian” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 46). Later Smith elaborates, “Our precognitive disposition—our fundamental mode of ‘intending’ the world—is love or desire, and it is out of this fundamental ‘understanding’ (*Verstehen*) that we can come to “know” (70). This conclusion echoes an ancient wisdom in the ancient tradition, which might be formulated as an axiom: ‘desire forms knowledge’” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 70).

<sup>50</sup> Smith explains in a footnote, “Recall that what distinguishes Augustine’s two cities (the earthly city and the city of God) is not ideas or beliefs, but *love*” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 46n12).

<sup>51</sup> Smith tends to use the terms “loving” and “desiring” interchangeably and cites Augustine’s *Homilies on 1 John 4:6*: “The whole life of the good Christian is a holy longing . . . . That is our life, to be trained by longing; and our training through holy longing advances in the measure that our longings are severed from the love of this world.” Smith continues, “In the book [*Desiring the Kingdom*], I basically make no distinction between *love* and *desire*, eschewing any distinction between *eros* and *agapē* . . . . As

argue that the most fundamental way that we intend the world is *love*.” Smith continues, “We are primordially and essentially agents of love, which takes the structure of desire or longing.” There is a distinction here between things that we say we love such as food or sports, and ultimate loves. Smith defines ultimate loves:

That to which we are fundamentally oriented, what ultimately governs our vision of the good life, what shapes and molds our being-in-the-world—in other words, what we desire above all else, the ultimate desire that shapes and positions and makes sense of all our penultimate desires and actions.<sup>52</sup>

This is another way of describing what we worship. What we love or desire ultimately is what we worship and thus worship is an expression of the ultimate aim of our lives.<sup>53</sup> It is not a question of whether or not we love something any more than it is a question of whether or not we worship something. These are identical inquiries. It is a question of *what* it is that we love ultimately and therefore worship. This is lived out in the liturgy of life, but it is rehearsed in the liturgy of some version of a worship service.<sup>54</sup>

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will become clear . . . *agapē* is rightly directed *eros*” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 50–51).

<sup>52</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51. Smith defines “the good life” as “an implicit picture of what we think human flourishing looks like.” He cites the work of Charles Taylor who writes, “Every person, and every society, lives with or by some conception(s) of what human flourishing is: What constitutes a fulfilled life? What makes life really worth living? What would we most admire people for?” (Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007], 16). Smith argues, “Our ultimate love moves and motivates us because we are lured by this picture of human flourishing.” Therefore, “we become certain kinds of people; we begin to emulate, mimic, mirror the particular vision that we desire.” This teleological goal for Smith is the kingdom. “This is just to say that to be human is to desire “the kingdom,” *some* version of the kingdom, which is the aim of our quest.” He continues, “There are many different visions of what “the kingdom” looks like. The shape of the kingdom is contested, generating very different stories and thus different kinds of peoples, citizens who see themselves as subjects of rival kings” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54–55).

<sup>53</sup> See also G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Smith gives elaborate accounts of a “shopping mall liturgy” (Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 19–22), sporting events with patriotic liturgy that serve as a “military-entertainment complex” complete with national anthem and military jet flyovers (103–12), and “liturgies of the university” which take place in “cathedrals of learning” (112–21), all of which propagate various “pedagogies of desire.”

**James K. A. Smith,**  
*Imagining the Kingdom*

Smith's second book, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, explains how the liturgy of a worship service rehearses the liturgy of life. To use Smith's terminology, having set "ultimate desire" upon the Kingdom of God, the worshiper begins to "imagine" it through worship. This is where he describes the need for formulating a "pedagogy of desire," which is a strategy for spirituality. "The driving center of human action and behavior is a nexus of loves, longings, and habits that hums along under the hood, so to speak, *without needing to be thought about*." He summarizes, "We are what we love precisely because we do what we love."<sup>55</sup> The obvious question then is how to adjust the motivating aim of desire so that it is the right object. The answer lies in being able to capture the imagination, which takes place in the context of worship services. Smith outlines the process of worship:

In short, the way to the heart is through the body, and the way into the body is through story. And this is how worship works: Christian formation is a conversion of the imagination effected by the Spirit, who recruits our most fundamental desires by a kind of narrative enchantment—by inviting us narrative animals into a story that seeps into our bones and becomes the orienting background of our being-in-the-world.<sup>56</sup>

The rituals and practices of worship are what Smith refers to as "habitations of the Spirit" which serve as "embodied practices that are conduits of the Spirit's transformative power. The Spirit marshals our embodiment in order to rehabilitate us to the kingdom of

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<sup>55</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 12; emphasis Smith's. Smith defines "the imagination" as "a way to name [the] everyday capacity for [an] unconscious 'understanding' of the world." He contends, "The formation of the imagination is a liturgical effect" (18–19).

<sup>56</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 14. Smith explains, "My point is that Christian worship shapes our orientation to the world precisely by priming and calibrating our imagination." Later he writes, "Our action emerges from how we *imagine* the world. What we do is driven by who we are, by the kind of person we have become. And that shaping of our character is, to a great extent, the effect of stories that have captivated us, that have sunk into our bones—stories that "picture" what we think life is about, what constitutes "the good life" (32). Smith seems to overemphasize the role of the body in liturgy in this quote. The mind is the greater agent in reaching the heart/affections and while participation in liturgy has the effect of engaging the body, it does so in order to impact the mind (see Rom 10:14, 12:1–2). Knowing God requires the primary engagement of the mind (John 17:3). Engaging the imagination is to engage the mind.

God.”<sup>57</sup> Much needs to be said about the role of the word of God and its use in worship, but that will be saved for the discussion regarding the regulative principle.

### **Liturgical Anthropology**

“Liturgical anthropology” is a unique combination of terms for many and while combining the definitions of its separate terms is useful, its use here is again informed by the writing of James K. A. Smith.<sup>58</sup> In this case, it is less a general field of study and more a description of human beings as those who are defined by what they love, rather than what they think or believe. It is also a description of what shapes their ultimate love and its teleological aim. Smith explains, “A liturgical anthropology is rooted in both a kinasthetics and a poetics—an appreciation for the ‘bodily mass of meaning’ (kinasthetics) and a recognition that it is precisely this bodily comportment that primes us to be oriented by story, by the imagination (poetics).”<sup>59</sup>

The use of story and narrative to shape us is what Smith describes as the Spirit’s “condescending” to us.

Just as God’s revelation accommodates itself to the hermeneutical conditions of our finitude, so the transforming Spirit of God meets us as the finite creatures of habit we are. The sanctifying Spirit condescends to meet us as narrative, imaginative, ritual animals, giving us practices and liturgies for our sanctification.<sup>60</sup>

The gospel narrative is just that—a story. It is a story that human beings are called to participate in. Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen write in *The Drama of*

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 15.

<sup>58</sup> “Liturgical” is defined as “of, relating to, or having the characteristics of liturgy;” “Liturgy” is defined as “a fixed set of ceremonies, words, etc., that are used during public worship in a religion;” and “Anthropology” is defined as “the science of human beings; *especially*: the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environment and social relations, and culture.” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (based upon the print version of *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed.), s.v.v. “Liturgical,” “Liturgy,” and “Anthropology,” accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 29.

<sup>60</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 33.

*Scripture*, Scripture “tells the biblical story of redemption as a unified, coherent narrative of God’s ongoing work within his kingdom.”<sup>61</sup> This is a story of a kingdom established, and then marred by sin. It continues with what the authors refer to as “the long road of redemption to restore the lost as his people and the world as his kingdom. The Bible narrates the story of God’s journey on that long road of redemption.” Bartholomew and Goheen draw implications as if laying the foundation for Smith’s liturgical anthropology. “If our lives are to be shaped by the story of Scripture, we need to understand two things well: the biblical story is a compelling unity on which we may depend, and each of us has a place within that story.”<sup>62</sup> Smith describes his similar perspective: “This is why our most basic, passionate orientation to the world is primed and shaped by stories; it is stories that train and prime our emotions, which in turn condition our perception and hence our action.” He summarizes, “Our shorthand term for such a narrative practice is *worship*.”<sup>63</sup>

The final component of liturgical anthropology has to do with the response in worship. It is in the rhythm of worship (e.g., liturgy) that new desires are shaped. Having established desire as that which defines human beings; and having expressed the

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<sup>61</sup> Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 11.

<sup>62</sup> Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 38. At this point in Smith’s book, he begins to allude to his own version of *ressourcement*, though he does not use the term. He writes, “Having fallen prey to the intellectualism of modernity, both Christian worship and Christian pedagogy have underestimated the importance of this body/story nexus—this inextricable link between imagination, narrative, and embodiment—thereby forgetting the ancient Christian sacramental wisdom carried in the historic practices of Christian worship and the embodied legacies of spiritual and monastic disciplines. Failing to appreciate this, we have neglected formational resources that are indigenous to the Christian tradition” (39). Later, regarding the need for stories Smith writes, “We need stories like we need food and water: we’re *built* for narrative, nourished by stories, not just as distractions or diversions or entertainments but because we constitute our world narratively. It is from stories that we receive our ‘character,’ and those stories in turn become part of our background, the horizons within which we constitute our world and engage in action” (129). In essence, they “*picture* the good life for us in ways that resonate with our imaginative nature. Over time, we are formed as a people who desire a certain *telos* because we have been immersed in liturgies that have captured our imagination by aesthetic means . . . . This is how worship works” (137; emphasis Smith’s).

*telos* of the vision of “the good life” as love’s ultimate aim; the key to change of action begins with a change in desire, which includes a change of *telos*. Smith writes, “Desire shapes how one sees and understands the world, and so the key question for the Christian in pursuit of knowledge is first to consider the shape and “aim” of one’s desire, and to seek specifically to increase one’s desire for God.” How does this occur? Smith contends, “Through participation in concrete Christian practices like confession.”<sup>64</sup> Participation in the liturgy of the kingdom that conveys the vision of “the good life” most desired by the worshiper aligns that citizen to that kingdom.

Each kingdom has its own liturgy.<sup>65</sup> Smith defines liturgy as those “*rituals of ultimate concern*: rituals that are formative for identity, that inculcate particular visions of the good life, and do so in a way that means to trump other ritual formations.”<sup>66</sup>

Participation in a liturgy creates habits that define us. Smith writes, “Whether we intentionally choose to participate in a practice, or unintentionally just find ourselves immersed in it over time, the result is the same: the dispositions become inscribed into our unconscious so that we ‘automatically’ respond the way we’ve been conditioned.”<sup>67</sup>

Liturgy is how the story of God’s Kingdom is woven into the Christian’s life. This takes

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<sup>64</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 71.

<sup>65</sup> Smith laments, “The devil has had all the best liturgies” (Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 40). He includes a chapter in his first volume of this series on “secular” liturgies entitled “Lovers in a Dangerous Time.” Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 89–129.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 86; emphasis Smith’s. In his diagram on p. 87 he shows concentric circles of rituals, practices, and liturgies which “liturgies” in the inner circle. This indicates that there are practices that trump other rituals and there are liturgies that trump other practices and rituals; but liturgies are those practices and rituals that are of “ultimate concern.” He later explains, “The ritual [including liturgy] is not an end in itself or merely a script for one ‘compartment’ of life. Because it effectively implants a *habitus* in the body, that *habitus* begins to govern action *across* one’s life” (95).

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 81. He explains, “Since research indicates that only about 5 percent of our daily activity is the product of conscious, intentional actions that we ‘choose,’ one can see that there’s a lot at stake in the formation of our automatic unconscious.” Later he warns, “All habits and practices are ultimately trying to make us into a certain kind of person. So one of the most important questions we need to ask is: Just what kind of person is this habit or practice trying to produce, and to what end is such a practice aimed?” (83).

place most formatively in worship. It is in worship that citizens of the Kingdom of God are immersed in the dispositions of the kingdom. Worship provides the opportunity to “practice” the liturgy of life. At this point in Smith’s work, he begins to advocate sacramentality<sup>68</sup> as preferable to some of the more cognitive approaches utilized in Protestant worship today:

Historic Christian worship is fundamentally formative because it educates our hearts through our bodies (which in turn renews our mind), and does so in a way that is more universally accessible (and I would add, more universally effective) than many of the overly cognitive worship habits we have acquired in modernity.<sup>69</sup>

In support of sacramentalism, Smith quotes Amos Yong’s blanket criticism of Protestant worship: “This is especially problematic in Protestantism with its conviction that salvation is effectively mediated through ‘knowledge’ (of theological or doctrinal content) and that the catechetical process should be focused on cognitively imparting such knowledge to those seeking Christian initiation.”<sup>70</sup> Smith then pushes the model to an extreme position as he reveals his own articulation of *lex orandi, lex credendi*: “So if we want to discern the shape of a Christian worldview, it is crucial that we recall the priority of liturgy to doctrine. Doctrines, beliefs, and a Christian worldview emerge *from* the nexus of Christian worship practices; worship is the *matrix* of Christian faith, not its ‘expression’ or ‘illustration.’”<sup>71</sup> Certainly these things emerge from worship practices,

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<sup>68</sup> Smith quotes Schmemmann here: “sacramental” means “that for the world to be a means of worship and means of grace is not accidental, but the revelation of its meaning, the restoration of its essence, the fulfillment of its destiny.” Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1963), 121, quoted in Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 143.

<sup>69</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 137.

<sup>70</sup> Amos Young, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Later Modernity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 208, quoted in Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 137–38. Young asserts, “Protestants can now learn from Catholic and Orthodox traditions, especially with regard to how human knowing of God is mediated through formation, imitation, affectivity, intuition, imagination, interiorization, and symbolic engagement.”

<sup>71</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 138; emphasis Smith’s. The problems with Smith’s assertion are at least twofold. (1) To indicate that we should “recall the priority of liturgy to doctrine” is to insinuate that the fact that Old Testament worship existed before the giving of the law, or that Christian worship was

but not without them having also informed these same practices. An unbiblical pattern of liturgy will produce unbiblical doctrines, beliefs, and worldview, even in Christian worship. The examples of this occurring are numerous along the Christian worship landscape.

While this work does not advocate sacramental theology<sup>72</sup> as Alexander Schmemmann and James K. A. Smith do from their practices of formal liturgy, their priority of the gospel is advocated here.<sup>73</sup> Referring to what he deems “*catholic* (universal, historical) elements of Christian worship,” Smith emphasizes the core issue of liturgy and liturgical anthropology:

These elements are deemed crucial parts of Christian worship precisely because they are essential showings (rather than tellings) of the gospel of Christ and because they are crucial aspects of training-by-doing, opportunities for practicing and rehearsing what it means to be the people of God, who desire the kingdom of God.<sup>74</sup>

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practiced before a closed canon of Scripture establishes liturgy’s authority to doctrine (see Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 138–39 for this argument of his). There is truth to the statement that worship existed before Scripture was formally given or the canon closed. Cain and Abel worshiped as early as Genesis 4. All of the Patriarchs built altars, offered sacrifices, and worshiped God before God gave instructions to Moses regarding the proper way to do so at Mt. Sinai. (See Ross, *Recalling the Hope*, Part 3, for an excellent discussion on this fact, but also the need for the “Proclamation of Truth” to correct false worship.) (2) Though Smith does not expressly state that liturgy somehow holds priority to Scripture, to say that it does to doctrine, which is derived from Scripture, is dangerously close. The authority of Scripture needs to be expressly stated in his argument for liturgy and he does not do so. This is the problem with many of the traditions that advocate formal liturgy and sacramentalism. These issues are addressed later in this chapter under the topic of regulative principle.

<sup>72</sup> For a rich survey of the community of voices advocating Baptist sacramentalism under the banner of Baptist catholicity, see Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006), which is a volume of the *Studies in Baptist History and Thought* series.

<sup>73</sup> Though Smith affirms the aforementioned criticisms of Protestantism by Amos Young, and adds some of his own, he attempts to qualify his position: “I don’t necessarily mean to favor a particular *style* of worship; rather, the emphasis is on the formative, embodied practices that constitute Christian worship – and many of these are shared across a diversity of styles, denominations, and theological traditions” Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 152.

<sup>74</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 153. Even here, Smith’s disregard for the practices of Protestant worship that he considers overly cognitive is evident. However, he bemoans a reality that this work can heartily embrace: “In this respect, I think it is important to own up to the fact that perhaps some of our worship habits are missed opportunity . . . thereby shut[ting] down channels for the Spirit’s work.” He believes these channels and missed opportunities are elements of liturgical tradition not currently

The gospel is the story of Christianity and it must also be the story of Christian worship. If worshipers are to find their place in the story of God's kingdom, they will do so by being invited into the rhythm of the gospel narrative in worship. This is the role of liturgy—to draw into the story of the gospel. How the liturgy of worship affects the worshiper will be discussed by drawing on the work of Jonathan Edwards and Andrew Fuller on the nature of religious affections.

### **Religious Affections and Worship**

#### **Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections***

Clarity regarding Jonathan Edwards' use of the term "affections" is required first to understand how Fuller may have understood this term. John Smith describes Edwards' use of the term in his introduction to the Yale edition of Edwards' famous work thus: "The essential point is that the affections manifest the center and unity of the self: they express the whole man and give insight into the basic orientation of his life."<sup>75</sup> This includes emotions, but they are far more than emotions. In a study of Edwards, Sean Michael Lucas describes them similarly: "When a spiritual or religious sensation brings about an exercise of one's will (or habit, disposition, or inclination) so that the individual obeys God, that is a holy affection."<sup>76</sup> He continues, "Clearly, then, if someone is going to have holy affections, he will need a new disposition not bent on or inclined toward self-love as its greatest good, but bent on or inclined toward love for God as its greatest good."<sup>77</sup> This comes from the "new sense of the heart" created by the Holy Spirit at

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practiced. This work takes a different approach, which is expressed below.

<sup>75</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 14.

<sup>76</sup> Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 94.

<sup>77</sup> Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 95.

conversion. This new sense has a new orientation toward God rather than the previous aversion to him. As Stephen Holmes explains, “There had been a long-running debate among the puritans (English and American) as to whether conversion began in the will or the understanding . . . which came first was the debate.” Edwards’ insistence that it affected the whole person simultaneously may derive from the philosophy he had gained from the writing of English philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704).<sup>78</sup> However, according to Holmes, in his *Religious Affections* (1746) Edwards suggests, “ongoing religion is largely (the qualification ‘in great part’ is important here) a matter of the will, and seeks to derive tests of true religion from that position.”<sup>79</sup> While conversion involved everything simultaneously according to Edwards, ongoing spirituality was largely a work that took place in the affections, which includes the will. The relationship of the affections and the will is addressed below.

The primary text for Edwards’ views about the affections is his *Religious Affections*, which takes as its biblical foundation 1 Peter 1:8: “Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”<sup>80</sup> Edwards points out that the two preceding verses of 1 Peter speak to “the trial of their faith, and of their being in heaviness through manifold

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<sup>78</sup> Paul Copan, “Jonathan Edwards’s Philosophical Influences: Lockean or Malebranchean?” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (March 2001): 107. There is some argument that Edwards was not as influenced by Locke as some suppose. However, others argue that Edwards embraced and expanded Locke’s empiricism. For a discussion on this matter see chap. 4 in Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden, The Netherlands/Boston, MA: Brill, 2012). John Smith sees many other influences behind Edwards’ views. (See Smith’s Editor’s Introduction in Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 52–72.)

<sup>79</sup> Stephen Holmes, “Religious Affections by Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758),” in *The Devoted Life: An Invitation to the Puritan Classics*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 291.

<sup>80</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 93. 1 Pet 1:8 (KJV) serves as Edwards’ thesis statement for the entire treatise. His exegesis in the first three pages of *Affections* (93–95) lays the foundation for his entire treatise of over 400 pages.

temptations.”<sup>81</sup> Edwards believed these trials benefit true religion in three ways: (1) the truth of it is manifested; (2) its genuine beauty and amiableness is made to appear; and (3) it is purified and increased. As a result, this demonstration of true religion through trial is made manifest especially in two affections: (1) love to Christ; and (2) joy in Christ.<sup>82</sup> In Edwards’ words: true religious affections are grounded in love for one whom they have not seen and the joy that arises by such faith (“the evidence of things not seen”), which is unspeakable in its nature and full of glory. The believer’s experience of the unseen Christ (Edwards calls this “true religion”) “filled their minds with the light of God’s glory, and made ‘em themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.”<sup>83</sup> It is from these points that Edwards raises his proposition: “True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.”<sup>84</sup>

According to Edwards, “the affections are no other, than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.”<sup>85</sup> God has given the soul two faculties: one called the understanding which is merely perception; and the other, sometimes referred to as the inclination, produced by actions of the will and the heart.<sup>86</sup> The more vigorous of this latter faculty are called the affections, indicating that there are less vigorous “inclinations” that are not properly considered affections. There are two

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<sup>81</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 93.

<sup>82</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 94.

<sup>83</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 95.

<sup>84</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 95.

<sup>85</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 96.

<sup>86</sup> Edwards does not associate the “mind” with this first faculty of the soul—that of perception. He states that the “mind” with regard to the exercises of this second faculty is called the “heart.” Fuller seems to refer to “simple knowledge” as that which Edwards considers “the understanding” (see below). For both, this level of perception has not impacted the affections and could be true of the unconverted and even the demons that believe. For both, the work of conversion is a greater work than simple understanding of the mind.

sorts of affections: “those by which the soul is carried out to what is in view; cleaving to it, or seeking it; or those by which it is averse from it, and opposes it.”<sup>87</sup> “True religion consists, in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart.”<sup>88</sup> The seat of the affections is the heart (which has a “new sense” now), which is the inward power of godliness.<sup>89</sup>

### **Edwards’ Influence upon Andrew Fuller**

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) was born to Baptist parents at Wicken, a small agricultural village in Cambridgeshire. Fuller’s paternal grandmother had become a Baptist after many years in the Congregationalist church. His maternal grandmother was among the founding members of Soham Baptist Church where Fuller would later serve in his first pastorate from 1775 to 1782. Fuller then served as pastor of the Baptist church at Kettering in Northamptonshire for the remainder of his life. It was in the latter church that the vast majority of his writing to defend the gospel, and the work for the Baptist Missionary Society to advance it through his role in the founding of the Modern Missionary Movement, would be accomplished.

Previous to the call to Kettering, Fuller had served for twelve formative years at the Soham church, which he had joined after his baptism. It was during these years that his gifts for ministry had been recognized and he was first called to pastor, after John Eve (d. 1782) left the church in 1771 for another pastorate. Fuller preached in the church for a few years and then was formally invited to become pastor in 1775. He served the

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<sup>87</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 98.

<sup>88</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 99. Fuller speaks of “spiritual knowledge with approbation” to distinguish this category of true religion (see below).

<sup>89</sup> Edwards again here uses the terms “mind” and “heart” interchangeably indicating in another place that it is “the mind only, that is the proper seat of the affections” (98). This will make more sense as he develops his concept of “the new sense” in which the heart “sees” and “perceives” the reality of Christ and the gospel, and from which flows the power of sanctification and “holy practice” in response to spiritual illumination.

Soham church for seven years as their pastor and it was during this period of time that he came to decisively reject High Calvinism through a careful study of the Scriptures.<sup>90</sup> It was also during this time that he began a lifelong study of the works of Jonathan Edwards. Michael Haykin, in his introduction to the spirituality of Fuller, refers to Edwards as Fuller’s “chief theological mentor after the Scriptures.”<sup>91</sup> Though there was early and formative influence from the writings of the Puritan theologian John Owen (1616–1683)—as was also true of Edwards—Clint Sheehan argues that if Owen was “instrumental in the development of Fuller’s theological foundation, the writings of Jonathan Edwards were instrumental in the development of his theological maturity.”<sup>92</sup> He carried this influence into his pastorate at Kettering in Northamptonshire in 1782 where he served until his death in 1815.

Among several other defenses of the gospel while at Kettering, Fuller’s response to Sandemanianism in particular, provided him a ready opportunity to draw upon the work of Edwards’ *Religious Affections*.<sup>93</sup> The disputes between Fuller and the Sandemanians occurred over the course of five visits to Scotland during the late 1790s and the early 1800s. They involved primarily Archibald McLean (1733–1812), who had become acquainted with the works of John Glas (1696–1773) and Glas’ son-in-law, Robert Sandeman (1718–1771). While it derives its name from Sandeman, it is the

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<sup>90</sup> Michael Haykin writes, “Fuller was to describe this position as ‘strict Calvinism,’ differentiating it from High Calvinism which was ‘more Calvinistic than Calvin’ and sometimes ‘bordering on Antinomianism,’ and from moderate Calvinism which was essentially the theological perspective of the Puritan Richard Baxter (1615–1691) and which Fuller considered as ‘half Arminian.’ Strict Calvinism Fuller reckoned to be ‘the system of Calvin’” (Michael Haykin, *The Armies of the Lamb: The Spirituality of Andrew Fuller* [Dundas, ON: Joshua Press, 2001], 27).

<sup>91</sup> Haykin, *The Armies of the Lamb*, 27.

<sup>92</sup> Clint Sheehan, “Great and Sovereign Grace: Fuller’s Defence of the Gospel Against Arminianism,” in *At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word’: Andrew Fuller as an Apologist*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Carlisle, PA: Paternoster Press, 2004), 85.

<sup>93</sup> Fuller also quotes from and cites the influence of Edwards’ *Freedom of the Will* in the preface to the first edition of *A Gospel Worthy* (1785) (Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 32).

teaching of Glas that attracted Sandeman and informed the movement. While Glas avoided controversial issues, Sandeman thrived on controversial debates. Chris Chun explains,

In stressing what he saw as the Reformation principle of *sola fide*, Sandeman elaborated on Glas's concept of 'bare faith.' Sandeman argued that 'justification comes by bare faith.' He proclaimed that keeping 'the bare truth, and to live by it alone,' and to possess the saving faith in any other way other than mere mental assent to what Christ had accomplished was tantamount to human endeavor to merit salvation. Sandeman saw that faith was wholly passive (not active) on the part of the human mind's (not heart's) persuasion (not conviction). He therefore argued that the inclusion of the will and affection into faith comprise *sola fide*.<sup>94</sup>

Fuller and McLean exchanged letters on a number of theological issues, but it was on the discrepancy between their understandings of the nature of faith that McLean began to attack Fuller.<sup>95</sup> Fuller's responses to Mclean were made primarily in three documents, two of which were substantive responses. The second edition of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1801) included an "Appendix" not present in the first edition entitled, "On the Question Whether the Existence of a Holy Disposition of Heart be Necessary to Believing." This appendix was a formal reply to the teaching of McLean as he is mentioned by name in its opening paragraph.<sup>96</sup> In the course of the continuing debate,

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<sup>94</sup> Robert Sandeman was educated at the University of Edinburgh under John Glas. Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 111–12.

<sup>95</sup> Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 113. McLean was a strong supporter of the Baptist Missionary Society for which Fuller labored to raise funds. This fact alone affected the manner in which Fuller felt he could respond, not to mention their relationship as friends. For a scholarly examination of the nature of the debate over faith between Fuller and the Sandemanian view, see Thomas J. South, "The Response of Andrew Fuller to the Sandemanian View of Saving Faith" (Th.D. diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993).

<sup>96</sup> Fuller's first edition was published in 1785. Fuller explains in the first paragraph of the Appendix to his second edition (1801), "It is not from a fondness for controversy that I am induced to offer my sentiments on this subject. I feel myself called upon to do so on two accounts." The first was its implication to the "the leading principle" of his work in *The Gospel Worthy*. It cannot be a duty to respond to the gospel if there is no holy disposition of the heart involved in believing. Fuller concludes, "God requires nothing as a duty which is merely natural or intellectual, or in which the will has no concern." While this is an indirect address to McLean, his second account for writing has left no doubt as to his intended audience: "Secondly, Mr. McLean, of Edinburgh, in a second edition of his treatise on *The commission of Christ* . . . has charged me with very serious consequences; consequences which, if substantiated, will go to prove that I have subverted the great doctrine of justification by grace alone,

Fuller made his next reply in the gospel tract, “The Great Question Answered,”<sup>97</sup> a brief response that first appeared in *The Missionary Magazine* in two parts in 1803.<sup>98</sup>

However, there were some who thought Fuller had replied inadequately; so, he responded more robustly with *Strictures on Sandemanianism in Twelve Letters to a Friend* (1810).

Of this response British pastor David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) wrote, “It is generally agreed that Fuller more or less demolished Sandemanianism in those twelve letters.”<sup>99</sup> While Edward’s influence was more subtly evident in the earlier responses, Fuller drew most heavily from Edwards in this definitive reply. The sixth letter of *Strictures*, in particular, represents the lengthiest quote yet of Fuller’s increasing

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without the works of the law” (Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation, or the Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ, with Correction and Additions*, in *The Works of Andrew Fuller*, ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2007], 179).

<sup>97</sup> John Ryland (1753–1825) noted in his biography of his dear friend Andrew Fuller in the year after Fuller died: “As far as I can learn, this controversy, respecting what was then called the *Modern Question*—‘Whether it be the duty of all men to whom the gospel is published, to repent and believe in Christ’—first arose in Northamptonshire” (John Ryland, *The Life and Death of Andrew Fuller* [London: Button & Son, 1816], 6). Geoffrey Nuttall explains, “It arose directly out of the logic of High Calvinism. The belief that Christ died for the elect alone seemed to demand as a corollary that none but the elect have the power to repent and believe; and it not the power, then not the duty to do so. Yet, on the other hand, Scripture seemed to commend the practice of seeking to convert the unbeliever by preaching the Gospel, and experience to indicate that at times such preaching achieved its end; and this in turn, demanded the power in the unconverted to believe, and if the power, then the duty” (Geoffrey F. Nuttall, “Northamptonshire and *The Modern Question*: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, pt. 1 [April 1965]: 102). Fuller, upon examining the work of Abraham Taylor in *The Modern Question... Examined*, was persuaded, not so much by Taylor’s argument, but by the Scriptures he employed. It was ultimately Scripture that caused him to question the High Calvinism he had been taught by his pastor John Eve and eventually write his most famous treatise, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1785). This monumental shift in theology from High Calvinism to Evangelical Calvinism (which came to be referred to as “Fullerism”) was paradigmatic of his use of the gospel and the word of God that is also evidenced in his work on Sandemanianism and the affections. For further study, see D. Ian Hughes, “‘No Principle at Second-Hand’: Influences Upon the Thought of Andrew Fuller in ‘The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation’” (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2012), and Chris Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*.

<sup>98</sup> See Nathan A. Finn, “Answering my Question about ‘The Great Question Answered,’” *Historia ecclesiastica*, February 19, 2014, accessed September 30, 2014, <http://www.andrewfullercenter.org/blog/2014/02/answering-my-great-question-about-the-great-question-answered>.

<sup>99</sup> D. M. Lloyd-Jones, “Sandemanianism” in his *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors: Addresses Delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conference, 1959–1978* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 173.

dependence upon his reading of Edwards' *Religious Affections* to attack Sandemanianism.<sup>100</sup> The effort was successful, as there appears to have been no further attempts from McLean to respond to the matter.<sup>101</sup>

### “Fuller’s Religious Affections”

While there is no such titled work by Fuller, his dependence upon Edwards’ volume has left a Baptist perspective on the nature of the religious affections.<sup>102</sup> The thorough refutation of McLean’s view that faith be exclusively intellectual and nothing more, led Fuller to advocate with Edwards that the inner transformation of salvation’s work brought a “new sense of the heart” and mind.<sup>103</sup> Edwards’ explanation was that the “gracious leading of the Spirit” consisted of two things: “partly in *instructing* a person in

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<sup>100</sup> Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 120–21. Earlier, Fuller was greatly influenced by Edwards’ *Freedom of the Will* in Fuller’s work in *A Gospel Worthy*. Fuller wrote in its first edition, “It is abundantly, improved for this purpose by President Edwards, in his *Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*. A book which has been justly said to go further toward settling the main points in controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians, than any thing than has been wrote” (Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation: or the Obligations of Men Fully to Credit, and Cordially to Approve, Whatever God Makes Known. Where in is Considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of Those Where the Gospel Comes in that Matter* [Northampton: T. Dicey, 1785], accessed October 24, 2014, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, <http://www.galenet.galegroup.com>, 192). Chun asserts, “Edward’s Sermon on *Justification by Faith Alone*, and his two treatises *Freedom of the Will* and *Religious Affections* were Fuller’s main theological weapons [in the “Appendix” and in *Strictures*]” (*Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 114).

<sup>101</sup> See Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 120.

<sup>102</sup> Chun asserts, “Fuller’s main contribution was to expand, implicate and apply Edwardsean ideas in his own historical setting. Fuller fully absorbed Edwardsean concepts and made them his own, later applying them in his polemical debates” (*Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 123).

<sup>103</sup> Edwards’ concept of the *new sense* was established in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), which is the first of the three treatises by Edwards intended to interpret and defend the Spirit’s work in New England’s Great Awakening. *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741) and *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (1742) were the other two. John E. Smith explains in his Introduction to *Affections*, “The *Narrative* anticipates the doctrine of the *Affections* in one most basic point: the idea of the *new sense* or the new conviction about the truth of the gospel attained by those who received the gift of the Spirit. People said they had heard the gospel before and that they had even ‘allowed’ (i.e. assented to) its truth but that with the new sense they could ‘see’ its truth. The experience of ‘seeing’ or of direct apprehension formed, in the language of the empirical philosophy Edwards embraced, the *original* of his idea of ‘the sense of the heart.’ The doctrine of conviction which interprets the meaning of this new sense is the major idea of the *Affections*” (Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 5; emphasis Smith’s).

his duty by the Spirit [mind], and partly in powerfully *inducing* him to comply with that instruction [heart].”<sup>104</sup> Chun explains, “Fuller therefore contended that belief includes more than mere intellectual consent, that true spiritual knowledge of the gospel contains both mind and heart.”<sup>105</sup> While McLean advocated simple knowledge of the gospel, Fuller emphasized the Edwardsean concept that “spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or *relish* of the amiableness and beauty.”<sup>106</sup> Fuller insisted that spiritual knowledge was more than doctrinal mastery, but a type of knowledge that relishes what is known. Fuller argued that in regeneration that leads to faith (referred to as “seeing the Son”), the Holy Spirit “causes the mind, while carnal, to discern and believe spiritual things, and thereby renders it spiritual.” In doing so the Spirit likewise “imparts a holy susceptibility and relish for the truth, in consequence of which we discern its glory and embrace it.” This is accomplished not by allowing the natural man to receive spiritual things, but by “remov[ing] the obstructing film by imparting a spiritual relish for those things. Thus it is that ‘spiritual things are *spiritually* discerned.’”<sup>107</sup> This “divine influence” is “with great propriety compared to the power that at first ‘commanded the light to shine out of darkness.’”<sup>108</sup>

Fuller used 2 Corinthians 4:4 to describe this change in the heart by the Holy Spirit: “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, *hath shined in our*

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<sup>104</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 281; emphasis Edwards’.

<sup>105</sup> Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 114, “In Mclean’s view of faith, the heart or will of a believer is considered as ‘belonging to *effects* of faith, rather than to faith itself,’ whereas Fuller renders the heart and the will are very much part of faith, since ‘spiritual knowledge included approbation in its very nature, and not merely in its effect’ (emphasis Chun’s). First quotation from “Appendix,” 2:393; second quotation from *Strictures*, 2:602. Chun traces Edwards influence on Fuller’s pneumatological epistemology as found in the “sense of the heart.”

<sup>106</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 281. Argued in the Appendix to the Second Edition of “The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation” (1801) (Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy*, 188).

<sup>107</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 187; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>108</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 187.

hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

As Fuller explained,

This *revelation* from above communicates no new truths, but imparts a holy susceptibility of spirit, *a spirit which is of God*, (and which stands opposed to the *spirit of the world*,) by which those truths were *hid* from us by our pride and hardness of heart, become manifest. Thus faith is the gift of God. Believing itself, I should think, cannot with any propriety be termed a gift; but he gives us that from which it immediately follows; namely, “a heart to know him, a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear,” Jer. XXIV.7; Deut. XXIX. 4.<sup>109</sup>

This inner transformation is a permanent change of disposition, sensibility, and inclination. What remains after this work of regeneration is a new sense of the heart that sees and desires God. The first sensation of this new sense is that of conversion, but the transforming effects of this faith remain as the work of salvation continues through sanctification. Fuller argues, “All I contend for is *that it is not by means of a spiritual perception, or belief of the gospel, that the heart is for the first time effectually influenced towards God*; for spiritual perception and belief are represented as the *effects*, and not the *causes*, of such influence.” These effects of spiritual perception and belief remain for ongoing transformation, which occurs by the same means—beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ. “It is by this ‘unction from the Holy One’ that we perceive the glory of the Divine character, the evil of sin, and the lovely fitness of the Saviour; neither of which can be properly known by mere intellect, any more than the sweetness of honey or the bitterness of wormwood can be ascertained by the sight of the eye.”<sup>110</sup> The believer’s

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<sup>109</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 188; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>110</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 188; emphasis Fuller’s. Fuller seems to borrow from Edwards’ illustration in *Religious Affections* here. In a footnote he cites Edwards’ distinguishing between “speculative knowledge” and “sensible perception.” The former he says is that by which a man “knows what a triangle is and what a square it.” The latter is that by which “he that hath perceived the sweet taste of honey knows much more about it than he who has only looked upon and felt it.” In describing his own conversion Fuller writes in a letter, “My heart felt one with Christ, and dead to every other object around me. I had *thought* I had found the joys of salvation heretofore; but now I *knew* I had found them, and was conscious that I had passed from death unto life. Yet even now my mind was not so engaged in reflecting upon my own feelings, as upon the objects which occasioned them” (Ryland, *Andrew Fuller*, 31).

new state is that of having been united to Christ and this active relationship is ongoing and effective. “The Scriptures constantly represent *union with Christ* as the foundation of our interest in the blessing of justification.”<sup>111</sup> Elsewhere Fuller warranted,

Hence it is manifest that the character described by the apostle is not that of an enemy, but a friend of God; and that it is not merely applicable to a Christian at the first moment of his believing, but through the whole of life. We have to deal with Christ for pardon and justification more than once; and must always go to him as “working not, but believing on him that justifieth the ungodly.”<sup>112</sup>

This is the new state of the heart that is oriented towards Christ and his sanctifying work through the Spirit so as to make the believer holy.

In Letter VI of *Strictures of Sandemanianism in Twelve Letters to a Friend*, Fuller discusses the connection between knowledge and disposition. The Sandemanian system considered “knowledge as the one thing needful, and disposition as its natural and proper effect.” Fuller sought to distinguish between “simple knowledge, which barely renders men inexcusable, and knowledge *inclusive of approbation*, which has the promise of eternal life.”<sup>113</sup> In doing so, he points out numerous places in Scripture where knowledge is referenced that does not produce love (i.e., simple knowledge). In fact, in place of love this knowledge actually produces enmity, thus rendering the sinner less excusable.<sup>114</sup> In contrast, he explains that there is a more common reference in Scripture

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<sup>111</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 183; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>112</sup> Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy* (1801), 184; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>113</sup> Andrew Fuller, “Strictures on Sandemanianism, in Twelve Letters to a Friend” (1801), in *The Works of Andrew Fuller*, ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2007), 272; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>114</sup> Fuller writes, “In this sense the term *knowledge*, and others related to it, are used in the following passages:—“The servant who *knew* the lord’s will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”—“When they *knew* God, they glorified him not as God.”—“If we *know* these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”—“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.”—“If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both *seen and hated* both me and my Father” (Fuller, “Strictures,” 272; emphasis Fuller’s).

to a knowledge that includes approbation.<sup>115</sup> This type of knowledge “produces holy affections.” Citing 2 Corinthians 3:18 Fuller argued, “It is in itself holy, and contains the principle of universal holiness. It is that by which we discern the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which glory being beheld assimilates us into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.”<sup>116</sup> This knowledge, which is far from what he terms *simple* knowledge, is ultimately a knowledge seated in the affections. “When such phrases as *a heart of stone, a heart of flesh, a hard and impenitent heart, a tender heart, a heart to know the Lord, &c.* occur, though they *suppose* the intellectual faculty, yet there can be no doubt, I should think, of their expressing the state of the will and affections, rather than of the understandings.”<sup>117</sup>

Fuller drives his point home by completing this letter with the lengthiest quote from Edwards in any of his writing to describe fully the nature of spiritual knowledge.<sup>118</sup>

That it consists in a sense of the heart of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of Divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things or religion that depends upon and flows from such a sense. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensible of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it; and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty carries, in the very nature of it, the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject

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<sup>115</sup> David Hume (1711–1776), a Scottish Philosopher of the eighteenth century describes “approbation” as “a peculiar delight” and a “particular kind of pleasure.” “It feels different from other pleasures. He variously characterizes approbation as a feeling of approval, liking, or affection. A beautiful object or action strikes us as amiable, agreeable, and desirable” (Ted Gracyk, “Hume’s Aesthetics,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Winter 2011 ed.], ed. Edward N. Zalta, last modified September 22, 2011, accessed October 16, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/hume-aesthetics>).

<sup>116</sup> Fuller, “Strictures,” 273.

<sup>117</sup> Fuller, “Strictures,” 273; emphasis Fuller’s. Here Fuller quotes John Owen’s *Discourses on the Holy Spirit*, Book III, Chap. III for clarity: “it generally denotes the whole soul of man, and all the faculties of it.”

<sup>118</sup> Chris Chun explains: “The excerpt from part 3, section 4 of *Religious Affections* occupies six pages from the Yale edition, see *RA*, 2:270–275” (Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 120). In this section Edwards also cites 2 Cor 3:18–4:6 which may have influenced, if not informed, Fuller’s use of the same text in *A Gospel Worthy* and *Strictures*.

of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination, and will.<sup>119</sup>

This is what Fuller intends by his use of the phrase, “knowledge with approbation.” It is a knowledge that both discerns and delights in the moral beauty of divine things by reorienting the believer to the world of divine glory, and results in a compelling desire to pursue the same. In the words of Edwards, “Spiritual understanding *primarily* consists in this *sense, or taste, of the moral beauty of Divine things . . .* But, *secondarily*, it includes *all that discerning and knowledge of things or religion which depends upon and flows from such a sense.*”<sup>120</sup> Fuller then allows Edwards to continue to unpack his explanation in a manner that is truly Edwardsean:

When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness, or true moral good, that is in Divine things, is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its view. This shows the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the Divine Being; for, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God’s moral perfections. This shows the glory of all God’s works, both of creation and providence; for it is the special glory of them that God’s holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness are so manifest in them; and without these moral perfections there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God’s moral perfections is the special end of all the works of God’s hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of Divine things is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfections of Christ that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellence of his person, so as to know anything more of it than the devils do: and it is only by the knowledge of the excellence of Christ’s person that any know his sufficiency as a Mediator; for the latter depends upon and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellence of Christ’s person that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of the moral beauty of Divine things is seen the beauty of the way of salvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation from beginning to end. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way; for this wholly consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God’s moral perfections. And, in the ways being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellence of the word of God: take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty,

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<sup>119</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 272, quoted in Fuller, “Strictures,” 275; emphasis Fuller’s.

<sup>120</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 273, quoted in Fuller, “Strictures,” 275; emphasis Fuller’s.

the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honoured, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves that are required of us.<sup>121</sup>

In citing this long section from the *Religious Affections*, Fuller has allowed Edwards to demonstrate not only how spiritual understanding differs from the mere intellectual understanding of the Sandemanians, but how the religious affections function in the new sense of the heart “in every step of this method of salvation from beginning to end.” The manner in which they awaken the full-orbed nature of the soul to its new spiritual world is the same way that they function in desire for and attainment to the moral perfections of Christ through sanctification. The one whom these affections hold in view as desirable is the one in whom they are formed.

This is how true worship works, however. Just as in the work of conversion, the Holy Spirit operates on and from the religious affections, directing them toward the ultimate object of their delight—that of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Here they not only find ultimate moral beauty and holiness, but a conforming power to the same image. The longer they gaze upon the beauty of Christ in worship, the more they are transformed into the same nature. As has been cited by both Fuller and Edwards, Paul illustrates this in 2 Corinthians 3:18–4:6. The new sense of the heart has been awakened by spiritual light that has shown into darkness. Having had the veil (e.g., “film”) removed by this light shining in believers’ hearts, they now have “the light of the [spiritual] knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (4:6). Now operating from this new sense of delight in the beauty of the divine object of Christ, believers may “behold the glory of the Lord” and in so doing “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” This work of transformation “comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (3:18). Authentic worship in spirit and truth requires both the agent of the Spirit working from the affections, and the source of truth

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<sup>121</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 273–274, quoted in Fuller, “Strictures,” 275.

where these affections find satisfaction in the face of Christ. The Spirit has promised to work through the words of Christ and this requires the intentional and appropriate use of the Word of God.

### **The Word of God and the Regulative Principle**

The Reformation was fundamentally about reclaiming the authority of the Word of God, including its authority in worship. In the English Reformers' view, the "imagination and devices of men" (e.g., tradition and mysticism in the liturgical forms of worship) had obscured the gospel and therefore blurred the worshipers' view of the gospel and the glory of God. This historical conviction has often been represented by the Westminster Divines' (1643–1649) written conviction in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647): "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will."<sup>122</sup> As will be demonstrated below, this was no less a concern for the Baptists and in some ways, their concern was greater. Only the word of God could fix the liturgical confusion represented by the Roman Catholic and Anglican practices of the seventeenth century. In their quest to recover the worship of the primitive church (e.g., New Testament church), the Puritans looked to Calvin.

In John Calvin's opening discussion of the Word of God in the *Institutio*, Calvin compares the Bible to spectacles: "Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly show us the true

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<sup>122</sup> "Westminster Confession of Faith," in *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds*, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. D. S. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 646.

God.”<sup>123</sup> Commenting on this section Matthew Boulton writes, “Thus Calvin casts Christian Scripture as a clarifying instrument that ‘clearly shows us the true God.’”<sup>124</sup> It is from the school of Scripture (e.g., special revelation) that believers learn to see God in the school of creation (e.g., general revelation). Boulton explains, “To characterize the ‘special gift’ of Scripture, Calvin uses terms strikingly reminiscent of his portrait of creation. He calls Scripture,

“The very school of God’s children,” for example, and “a mirror in which [God’s] living likeness glows” (1.6.4; 1.14.1). That is, describing the Bible, Calvin recapitulates key terms he uses to describe the universe: “school,” “mirror,” “living likeness” of God, and so on. In this way, Calvin portrays Scripture as a school within a school, a likeness within a likeness, a reflection within a reflection.<sup>125</sup>

Due to Scripture’s function as “spectacles” to see God in everything, its role in the liturgy of worship is critical to worship’s function in the liturgy of life. In his *Commentaries on Genesis*, Calvin asserts that Scripture for worshipers functions as a “herald who excites [their] attention, in order that [they] may perceive [themselves] to be placed in this scene” both “for the purpose of beholding the glory of God” and “to enjoy all the riches which are here exhibited.”<sup>126</sup> Boulton highlights Calvin’s intention here:

It is as if a sanctuary functions as a kind of studio and stage in the midst of creation,

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<sup>123</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.14.1.

<sup>124</sup> Matthew Myer Boulton, *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 96. Boulton continues with a section regarding Calvin’s view of the necessity of the Spirit in coordination with the Word in this effort. “Merely reading the Bible will not do. The Spirit must be present with and in the reader, ‘sealing’ Scripture with an ‘inward testimony’ so that ‘it seriously affects us’ (1.7.5).” And later, “Thus in Calvin’s view, the Holy Spirit is both the ‘Author’ of Scripture and the necessary companion in our interpretation of it, illuminating our minds and persuading our hearts ‘both to read and to hearken’ to biblical texts ‘as if there the living words of God were heard’ (1.9.2; 1.7.1)” (98). Finally, “Indeed, for Calvin, Scripture and Spirit are so intimately joined ‘by a kind of mutual bond’ that they are, from the human point of view, inseparably linked: ‘the Word is the instrument by which the Lord dispenses the illumination of his Spirit to believers’ (1.9.3). Accordingly, if the Bible is God’s ‘special gift’ to the church for dispersing human dullness and oblivion, the paideutic program Calvin has in mind here is as pneumatological as it is biblical (1.6.1)” (99).

<sup>125</sup> Boulton, *Life in God*, 100.

<sup>126</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 62.

a place where what should be audible anywhere (“all the voices of God”) is amplified, and what should be happening everywhere (humanity’s praise of God) is manifest, by the Spirit’s gift. Again, Calvin’s case conjures up the image of a microcosm within a macrocosm, this time a temple within a temple: God’s voice perpetually fills the temple of creation but goes unrecognized and therefore unheeded by human beings; but in the microcosmic temples of the church, God’s Word is amplified and clarified. That is, in the smaller sanctuaries God’s voice may be discerned more clearly in the “school” and “mirror” of Scripture, the sermons of well-trained preachers, the psalm singing of the whole congregation, and so on. But the smaller sanctuary should by no means eclipse the cosmic one; rather, it should point toward it, disclose it, and train disciples so that their whole lives may be lived out as liturgies writ large.<sup>127</sup>

This is *why* Scripture’s use in worship is so important to Calvin.<sup>128</sup> The question remains as to *how* this importance should be demonstrated in worship. There are two aspects to this question. One regards Scripture as worship’s content, which shall be saved for later. The other is Scripture as worship’s regulator.

### **Calvin and the Puritan Regulative Principle**

Baptists inherited this emphasis on the regulative principle in the Puritans who in turn inherited from Calvin. In *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* Calvin wrote,

Moreover, the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have him to approve our worship, this rule, which he everywhere enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed. For

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<sup>127</sup> Boulton, *Life in God*, 101–2. “The Bible must always serve as the privileged text at the center of Christian *paideia* (1.6.1). But that formative program itself is geared toward making disciples who can contemplate not only God’s word in Scripture but also God’s work and life in the world. For Calvin, the Bible is not merely the church’s spectacle, a special sacred site set off from ordinary things; it is also and crucially the church’s “spectacles,” a clarifying instrument for seeing ordinary things more clearly, and thereby living into the world more deeply, wisely, and realistically” (110).

<sup>128</sup> Calvin prescribed a rigorous regimen of Scripture for the saints in Geneva. Boulton summarizes, “Twice-weekly corporate worship attendance was mandatory in Geneva, preaching services occurred daily, and more intensive lectures on Scripture were often held in the afternoons. Reformed sermons were lengthy expositions of biblical texts, but Calvin’s prayers, too, including the daily prayer cycle and Day of Prayer service on Wednesdays, were drenched in scriptural language and images. Likewise, morning and evening domestic worship properly included passages of Scripture read aloud, and psalm singing dominated Reformed devotion both at home and at church—to say nothing of the songs laborers may have sung or hummed ‘in the houses and in the fields,’ as Calvin hoped. Thus in the *Institutio*, Calvin can write in passing, ‘And in our daily reading of Scripture . . . (3.2.4)’” (Boulton, *Life in God*, 110–11).

there is a twofold reason why the Lord, in condemning and prohibiting all fictitious worship, requires us to give obedience only to his own voice. First, it tends greatly to establish his authority that we do not follow our own pleasure, but depend entirely on his sovereignty; and, secondly, such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions. Justly, therefore, does the Lord, in order to assert his full right of dominion, strictly enjoin what he wishes us to do, and at once reject all human devices which are at variance with his command. Justly, too, does he, in express terms, define our limits, that we may not, by fabricating perverse modes of worship, provoke his anger against us.<sup>129</sup>

This manner of regulating worship by only permitting what Scripture allows for worship (e.g., the regulative principle) is by many set against Martin Luther's (1483–1546) view that while the Bible contained the “articles of belief necessary for salvation,” in matters of worship and church government “the Bible is not to be treated as a new Leviticus.”<sup>130</sup>

This led to the view ascribed to Luther by which only that which was forbidden by Scripture should be excluded from worship (e.g., the normative principle). The Anglican Church essentially agreed with Luther in the matter while the Puritans embraced Calvin. Horton Davies writes, “The Puritan said that if the Bible is binding on one issue, it is binding on all issues.”<sup>131</sup> While many Puritans attempted to reform worship and church government from within the Church of England, others eventually separated from the established church in an attempt to establish “a more biblical way of worship in their

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<sup>129</sup> John Calvin, “The Necessity of Reforming the Church,” in *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, vol. 1, tr. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans, 1958), 128. Elsewhere Calvin states quite clearly the priority of worship's regulation by seemingly giving it equal priority with the source of salvation—“If it be inquired, then, by what things the Christian religion has a standing existence among us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity: that is, a knowledge, *first*, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and *secondly*, of the source form which salvation is obtained (126; emphasis Calvin's). See also his *Reply to Cardinal Sadoletto's Letter* (in Vol. I), and *The Adultero-German Interim Declaration of Religion with Calvin's Refutation (The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and of Reforming the Church)* (in vol. III).

<sup>130</sup> Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 3.

<sup>131</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 3.

secret conventicles,” (e.g., Separatists).<sup>132</sup> The basis of both groups was reformation according to the Word of God and according to Davies, “Both parties asserted positively that only such ordinances as were warrantable by the Word of God should be tolerated in public worship.”<sup>133</sup>

A subsequent generation of Puritans eventually codified their forefathers’ view through the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1649) in their adoption of the *Directory of Public Worship* (1645), *Larger Catechism* (1647), and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647). Thus, according to Davies, “The Puritan tradition . . . originated from the practice of the Church at Geneva under John Calvin.”<sup>134</sup> In their *Confession of Faith*, the Westminster Divines expressed their version of Calvin’s regulative principle in the section entitled “Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day” (21:1):

The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 10.

<sup>133</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 77.

<sup>134</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 111. Davies highlights the prominent role of John Knox (1514–1572) a Scottish clergyman and “Calvin’s most fervent disciple” in his adaptation of the work of Calvin to the Reformation through Puritan worship, specifically through Knox’s Liturgy (e.g., *The Book of Common Order* (1564)). (26, see also 30, 36, 111, and 116–18) For an additional perspective see R. J. Gore, Jr., who argues, “The Puritan regulative principle of worship was an exaggeration of, and departure from, the worship practice of John Calvin” and “has been fraught with difficulties from the very beginning . . . . The Puritan regulative principle exceeded the bounds established in Scripture and imposed strictures on it adherents that were unduly narrow.” R. J. Gore, Jr. *Covenantal Worship: Reconsidering the Regulative Principle* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 163. See also, Ralph Jackson Gore, Jr., “The Pursuit of Plainness: Rethinking the Puritan Regulative Principle of Worship” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1988).

<sup>135</sup> “Westminster Confession of Faith,” in *The Creeds of Christendom*, 646. London Baptists had expressed a similar conviction prior to this in their 1644 Confession (William Lumpkin, *Baptist*

More than forty years later, the London Baptist Confession of 1689, chap. 22, section 1, repeats this text from the Westminster Confession in almost verbatim fashion:

The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>136</sup>

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742) is an almost entire adoption of the Second London Confession (1689) with the addition of two articles: chap. 23 on Singing Praises and chap. 31 on The Laying on of Hands. Chap. 22 and the recitation of the Regulative Principle from the London Confession are included word for word in the Philadelphia Confession. The addition of chap. 23 is an important statement regarding worship:

We believe that (Acts 16:25, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16) singing the praises of God, is a holy ordinance of Christ, and not a part of natural religion, or a moral duty only; but that it is brought under divine institution, it being enjoined on the churches of Christ to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and that the whole church in their public assemblies, as well as private Christians, ought to (Heb. 2:12, Jam. 5:13) sing God's praises according to the best light they have received. Moreover, it was practiced in the great representative church, by (Matt.26:30, Matt. 14:26) our Lord Jesus Christ with His disciples, after He had instituted and celebrated the sacred ordinance of His Holy Supper, as commemorative token of redeeming love.<sup>137</sup>

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*Confessions of Faith* [Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1959], 144).

<sup>136</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 280. The first London Confession (1644) contained a briefer statement in chapter VII: “The Rule of this Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not man’s inventions, opinions, devices, lawes, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but onely the word of God contained in the Canonick Scriptures” (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 158). One of the signatories of the Second London Confession (1689) was Benjamin Keach (1640–1704); who was pastor at Horseleydown, Southwark, and whose son, Elias Keach (1666–1701) had pastored a Baptist Church near Philadelphia. Upon Elias’ return to London to pastor the Tallow Chandler’s Hall Church in London in 1692, he subsequently concurred with his father to write a series of articles that were essentially the Second London Confession with two additional articles regarding hymn singing and the laying on of hands. William Lumpkin writes, “The Keach Confession, which had only one edition in England, found its way to America, through Elias Keach’s influence, and became the body of the Philadelphia Confession, the dominant early Calvinistic Baptist Confession in the New World” (240).

<sup>137</sup> Timothy George and Denise George, eds., *Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms* (Nashville: B & H Publishers, 1996), 82.

Early Baptists in America clearly inherited and embraced some interpretation of Calvin’s regulative principle, as passed to them through the Puritanical Reform of England’s Baptists and their Second London Confession of 1689. How this was interpreted and applied specifically in the churches included in this study through subsequent centuries will be discussed in chap. 4 below. However, some general understanding of the historic interpretation of this principle is possible here. This is the understanding that Baptists would have carried with them into worship in the New World.

### **A Baptist Perspective on the Regulative Principle**

Steven R. Harmon writes, “In general, Baptists identify Scripture as the supreme earthly source of authority. Many early Baptist confessions lacked articles on the Scriptures, but they evidenced a radical Biblicism in their copious prooftexting of confessional statements with parenthetical and marginal biblical references.”<sup>138</sup> The fundamental understanding of the regulative principle is that “the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will.” Unlike the normative principle, which prescribes freedom to use anything in worship that is not forbidden in Scripture (often associated historically with the Lutheran and Anglican church), the regulative principle requires positive support from Scripture for the use of any element of worship.<sup>139</sup> It prohibits the use of elements “according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible

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<sup>138</sup> Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>139</sup> R. J. Gore, Jr. contends that there are at least five different approaches in the Western church today. The “pragmatic” approach, which argues “in practice if not in theory, whatever works is allowed” (which he associates with the “free church” worship of the United States in particular); The Roman Catholic “ecclesial” approach, which maintains “that whatever the church deems to be correct is allowed;” the normative principle associated with the Lutheran and Anglican churches; the Reformed or Covenantal approach, which says, “Whatever is consistent with covenant faithfulness is appropriate” (which he advocates); and the regulative principle (Gore, *Covenantal Worship*, 9–10).

representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.” William Cunningham (1804–1865) explains regarding the Reformers’ view: “There are sufficiently plain indications in Scripture itself, that it was Christ’s mind and will that nothing should be introduced into the government and worship of the Church, unless a positive warrant for it could be found in Scripture.”<sup>140</sup> Baptists likewise generally required a biblical precedent for everything done in worship, though they have not been as stringent with the application of the regulative principle in some places and in some cases have added the principle of accommodation.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> William Cunningham, “The Reformers and the Regulative Principle,” in *The Reformation of the Church*, ed. Iain Murray (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 38. Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646), an English Independent Anglican (e.g., Puritan) and Westminster Divine, wrote the treatise *Gospel Worship* as a definitive Puritan application of the Regulative Principle. His subtitle is “The Right Manner of Sanctifying the Name of God in General and Particularly these 3 Great Ordinances: (1) Hearing the Word, (2) Receiving the Lord’s Supper, (3) Prayer.” However, he does not ever question the practice of infant baptism. (See Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, ed. Don Kistler [Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1658, 1990].) Baptists leaned heavily upon the regulative principle to argue for baptism by immersion as “the plain testimony of Scripture.” (See Steve Weaver, “‘The Plain Testimony of Scripture’: How the Early English Baptists Employed the Regulative Principle to Argue for Believers Baptism,” *The Gospel Witness* [January 2012]: 13–15, accessed November 14, 2014, [http://www.academia.edu/4798872/The\\_Plain\\_Testimony\\_of\\_Scripture\\_How\\_the\\_Early\\_English\\_Baptists\\_Employed\\_the\\_Regulative\\_Principle\\_to\\_Argue\\_for\\_Believers\\_Baptism](http://www.academia.edu/4798872/The_Plain_Testimony_of_Scripture_How_the_Early_English_Baptists_Employed_the_Regulative_Principle_to_Argue_for_Believers_Baptism).)

<sup>141</sup> Tom Ascol defines this principle as “The willing restriction of the exercise of legitimate Christian liberties for the purpose of redeeming people and circumstances which are governed by the ignorance and misunderstanding which results from man’s fallen nature.” Ernest Reisinger and Matthew Allen explain, “The doctrine of accommodation is an extremely important doctrine for Southern Baptists and others seeking to minister in the twenty-first century.” It seeks to answer the question, “Is it ever permissible and morally legitimate for the Christian minister to forego insisting on change in certain areas until he can make an appeal for change on the basis of biblical instruction and teaching which he has provided?” It is largely an argument out of the principle of Christian Liberty and the teaching of Paul in Romans 14–15 and 1 Corinthians 8 (Ernest C. Reisinger and D. Matthew Allen, *Worship: The Regulative Principle and the Biblical Practice of Accommodation* [Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2001], 131–32). R. J. Gore, Jr. asserts that in order to understand Calvin’s approach to the regulative principle one must understand his interpretive method and the role of *adiaphora*, or “things neither commanded nor forbidden.” In doing so he “warns against binding the conscience, forcing it to believe or to observe that which is ‘indifferent.’” Gore, *Covenantal Worship*, 34. See also, chap. 5 “Worship, Genevan Style” for a clarification of worship as Calvin practiced (71–89). With regard to the Puritan “strict” application of the regulative principle, Gore explains that challenges need to be considered in “(1) understanding the nature of Puritan biblical interpretation, and (2) integrating the practices of Jesus concerning the worship of God into our understanding of the regulation of worship” (91–92). Essentially, Gore asserts that the Puritans, “when interpreting a text that had bearing on the regulative principle of worship, failed to take into account the larger context of the Scriptures” (97). Additionally, “The evidence concerning the worship practices of our Lord has significantly undermined the traditional Puritan formulation of the regulative principle of

Ernest C. Reisinger and D. Matthew Allen, both Baptists, explain, “Under the regulative principle, true worship is only that which is commanded. False worship is anything other than what is commanded.”<sup>142</sup> With that seemingly unequivocal statement, Reisinger and Allen proceed to suggest four qualifications to the regulative principle to avoid some of the more extreme applications of this principle:

1. The regulative principle applies only to church ordinances, church government, and acts of worship and not to the remainder of the Christian life.
2. Under the regulative principle, an explicit command from Scripture is not required to legitimize a worship practice.
3. The regulative principle applies to “things” or “elements” of worship but not to “circumstances” of worship.
4. The regulative principle does not apply to the “mode” of worship.<sup>143</sup>

There are a variety of approaches to the strictness of application of the regulative principle. Even the Second London Confession left some aspects of worship up to the local church. Chap. 1, section 6 reads, “There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.”<sup>144</sup>

Benjamin Keach was a signer of the Second London Confession, a proponent of the regulative principle, and yet a fierce advocate for hymn singing in worship for which the

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worship” (110).

<sup>142</sup> Reisinger and Allen, *The Regulative Principle*, 25–26. Extreme Presbyterian applications of the regulative principle would never have accepted hymn singing or the use of musical instruments as an accompaniment to psalm singing. Most of the Baptist disputes over the regulative principle were attempts to expand the use of music in worship (71–72).

<sup>143</sup> Reisinger and Allen, *The Regulative Principle*, 29–32. They cite one such extreme example that they reject: “All worship by unwarranted means, and all dishonest use of authorized means, would seem to be included in false worship, and may be designated devil worship, for all beast worship is devil worship.” (32)

<sup>144</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 250–51.

London Confession did not provide. He worked for six years slowly to introduce the practice of hymn singing. By 1691 his church had voted to have a hymn sung following the service each Sunday. This would have been the first Baptist church to do so.<sup>145</sup>

Considering the third and fourth qualifications above, some have attempted to clarify the differences between elements, circumstances, and modes (e.g., forms) of worship.<sup>146</sup> Elements are the essential features of worship and are the means by which the church worships. Chap. 22 of the 1689 Confession identifies the approved elements of worship as prayer, the reading of Scripture, preaching the word, singing, and practicing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.<sup>147</sup> Some also include taking an offering based upon Paul's request in 1 Corinthians 16:2 that the church at Corinth collect a gift on the first day of the week, though the confessions did not provide

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<sup>145</sup> Reisinger and Allen, *The Regulative Principle*, 72. Keach wrote *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ* (1691) to defend the practice of hymn singing. He cited Eph 5:19; Col 3:16 and Jas 5:13 in defense of hymn singing and the regulative principle. The Philadelphia Confession (1742) added a section regarding hymn singing largely due to Keach's direct influence (73).

<sup>146</sup> John Frame, an advocate of the regulative principle, disagrees with this distinction, as its application is not easy. He writes, "Is a song in worship an element, as John Murray taught, or is it a 'form' or 'circumstance,' a way of praying and teaching? Is instrumental music an element (as the covenanter tradition holds) or a circumstance (helping the congregation to sing in a decent and orderly way)? Is a marriage essentially a taking of vows and therefore a proper element of worship, or is it part of a broad group of activities that should be excluded from worship because it is not prescribed? All these questions have been disputed among those who have accepted the distinction between elements and circumstances" (John M. Frame, "A Fresh Look at the Regulative Principle: A Broader View," Frame & Poythress, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.frame-poythress.org/a-fresh-look-at-the-regulative-principle-a-broader-view/>).

<sup>147</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 281. Chapter 22, paragraph 3—"Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to his will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue." Chapter 22, paragraph 4—"Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death." Chapter 22, paragraph 5—"The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner."

specifically for that element in their prescriptions for worship.

By contrast, circumstances for worship have to do with the conditions most conducive to worship. These aspects of worship such as the time to meet, whether or not to use pews or chairs, what kind of building should be used for worship, etc. do not fall under the restrictions of the regulative principle because the Bible does not expressly mandate the circumstances of worship. In light of this, the Second London Confession explains that the circumstances of worship should be “ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word.”<sup>148</sup>

The modes or forms of worship have to do with the content and structure by which an element is expressed. Reisinger and Allen explain, “Although Scripture prescribes the elements of worship, it does not always detail how those elements are to be carried out.”<sup>149</sup> How long a sermon should be or how many there should be is not determined by Scripture. Whether or not a prayer should be fixed, such as the Lord’s Prayer, or free, such as a spontaneous prayer, is also not prescribed by Scripture. Obviously, there should be congruence between mode and the element expressed. In general, the regulative principle requires a positive warrant from Scripture for a particular element or expression of worship to be included in corporate worship; there is some freedom regarding the forms or modes of worship; and simple common sense regarding its circumstances should prevail. The ultimate concern is that Scripture be the guide in all matters related to worship and life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Chap. 1, paragraph 6 of the Philadelphia Confession reads (as did the same section of the Second London Confession),

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the

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<sup>148</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 250–51. See chapter 1, paragraph 6.

<sup>149</sup> Reisinger and Allen, *The Regulative Principle*, 31.

Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.<sup>150</sup>

### **The Reformers and *Sola Scriptura***

John Frame writes of the reformers, “The Protestant Reformers, particularly Calvin and his followers, emphasize *sola Scriptura* as the chief rule of worship. What we do in worship must be warranted by Scripture.”<sup>151</sup> Horton Davies explains, “The basic doctrines held in common by the Reformers [Calvin and Luther] were three: the Bible as God’s Revelation, Justification by Faith, and Christ as the sole Mediator between God and men. The last two doctrines, of course, were derived from the first all-inclusive doctrine of the Scriptures.”<sup>152</sup> Davies later writes, “First and foremost, the Puritans were the champions of the authority of the ‘pure Word of God’ as the criterion not only for church doctrine, but also for church worship and church government.”<sup>153</sup> Their goal was to return the church to the purity and simplicity of the apostolic church. They believed that the worship of the church was to be characterized by six ordinances: (1) Prayer; (2) Praise; (3) the proclamation of the Word; (4) the administration of the Sacraments of

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<sup>150</sup> George and George, *Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms*, 58.

<sup>151</sup> John Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997), 16.

<sup>152</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 15.

<sup>153</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 49. While Calvin admitted a principle of accommodation to inessential matters, the early Puritans did not. This was most likely in their haste to purify the church from its Anglican and Catholic impurities. William Bradshaw (1571–1618) writes in 1605, “IMPRIMIS they should hould and maintaine that the word of God contained in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, is of absolute perfection, given by Christ the Head of the Church, to bee unto the same, the sole Canon and rule of all matters of Religion, and the worship and service of God whatsoever. And that whatsoever done in the same service and worship cannot bee justified by the said word, is unlawfull” (William Bradshaw, *English Puritanism* [1641; repr., Shropshire: Quinta Press, 2011], 5, quoted in Davies, *English Puritans*, 50).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper; (5) catechizing; and (6) the exercise of Discipline. Their source for these elements was Acts 2:41–42 and “other places in the New Testament.”<sup>154</sup>

Unlike the Puritans who remained in the state church in hopes of reforming it, “The Separatists, on the other had, desired ‘Reformation without tarrying for any.’”<sup>155</sup> While generally both Puritans and Separatists were agreed liturgically and pled for a three-fold reformation—gospel-doctrine, gospel-government, and gospel-discipline—there were some distinctive emphases that the Separatists were able to implement immediately while the Puritans could only theorize. There are three groups of Separatists that have varying degrees of influence upon the Baptists of North America—Barrowists, Anabaptists, and Particular Baptists. The Barrowists were the first of these persecuted groups to organize, many of whose leaders died for their faith.<sup>156</sup> Their services were held in secret locations that moved each week and would meet as early as five o'clock and stay until sundown so as not to travel by daylight. Their worship elements consisted largely of “expound[ing] out of the Bible so long as they are assembled” and a form of prayer that was “not liturgical, but extempore in character. They would not even repeat the Lord's Prayer, which they regarded as the perfect model of prayer.” Barrowists believed that “all liturgical forms, the Lord's Prayer included, were a hindrance to the operation of the Spirit of God.”<sup>157</sup> They still held to baptizing children by washing their

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<sup>154</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 51.

<sup>155</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 77.

<sup>156</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 80. Followers of the basic teachings of Henry Barrow(e) (c. 1550–1593) and John Greenwood (c. 1554–1593). These were two of the earliest leaders of the Separatist movement.

<sup>157</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 80–81. This type of praying demonstrated their view of what it was to worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Anabaptists would go even farther in this effort to have the Holy Spirit's witness to that truth through extemporaneous praying and prophesying/preaching in corporate worship. John Smyth advocated this type of worship as truly “spirituall worship.” See also, Thomas R. McKibbens, Jr., “Our Baptist Heritage in Worship,” *Review and Expositor* 80, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 53–69.

faces, just not in the churches of the establishment. They used 1 Corinthians 11 to practice the Lord's Supper in a manner that was rather simple, but true to the New Testament. The Barrowists also practiced excommunication. Davies emphasizes, "All Barrowists' sermons were expository, and it appears they were delivered in a homely, if not a rough, manner." "The exercise of 'Prophecie' was recognized by Puritans and Separatists alike as "a valuable means of inculcating doctrine. Various speakers would preach and expound the same passage of Scripture *seriatim*, allowing members of the congregation to state their difficulties, which the Church officers would attempt to resolve."<sup>158</sup>

A second early group of dissenters are the Anabaptists—generally associated with John Smyth (died ca. 1612) and Thomas Helwys (1575–1616). There are two important differences between the Barrowists and the Anabaptists.<sup>159</sup> While their worship services of the latter shared many common characteristics, the Anabaptists' mode of administering baptism was for believers, not children.<sup>160</sup> The Anabaptists also were adamantly opposed to set forms in their worship. Davies writes, "They were logical enough in their attempt at attaining a pneumatic worship to put away the Bible early in their service, as a form of words. John Smyth describes this view toward worship in *The*

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<sup>158</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 85–86.

<sup>159</sup> Davies distinguishes between Anabaptists and Baptists in his text. The earliest congregations that were opposed to infant Baptism and only baptized professing adult believers are Anabaptists. Then there are the Baptists who were divided into General Baptists and Particular Baptists. However, in the index, he groups them all under the subject index of "Baptists" and under the subject heading of "Anabaptists" he lists "v. Baptists." Davies, *English Puritans*, 297. According to Davies, the Anabaptists appear to have had no organization in England before 1612. "The first Baptist (e.g., Anabaptist) congregation to be settled in England was that over which Thomas Helwys (c. 1550–c. 1616) presided with Thomas [John] Murton (1585–1626?). This withdrew from John Smyth's (c. 1554–1612) congregation in Amsterdam and returned to England about 1612 (Davies, *English Puritans*, 88–89).

<sup>160</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 89. Davies later explains, "Whilst Helwys did not insist that the mode of administration should be either sprinkling or dipping, immersion appears to have been insisted upon by the London Baptists in 1633. This church, under the leadership of [Henry] Jessey [(1603–1663)] and [Richard] Blunt, used immersion as the only legitimate method of administration" (91).

*Differences of the Churches of the Separation:*

Wee hould that the worship of the new testament properly so called is spirituall proceeding originally from the hart: & that reading out of a booke (though a lawfull ecclesiastical action) is no part of spirituall worship, but rather the invention of the man of synne it being substituted for a part of spirituall worship. Wee hould that seeing prophesing is a parte of spirituall worship; therefore in time of prophesing it is vnlawfull to have the booke as a helpe before the eye wee hould that seeing singeing [sic] a psalme is a parte of spirituall worship therefore it is vnlawfull to have the booke before the eye in time of singing a psalme.<sup>161</sup>

Davies summarizes, “The rejection of forms of worship was so complete that one stage further would have led to Quakerism. This ‘spiritual worship’ while it does not altogether do away with the use of books, regards the part of the service in which they are used as a mere preparation of the pure worship, which proceeds without them.”<sup>162</sup> The English Baptists led by Helwys and Morton advocated the same practice:

They as partes or meanes of worship read Chapters, Textes to preache on & Psalmes out of translacion, we alreddy as in praying, so in prophesiinge & singinge Psalmes laye aside the translacion, & we suppose yt will prove the truth, that All books even the originalles themselves must be layed aside in the tyme of spirituall worshipping, yet still retayninge the reading & interpretinge of the Scriptures in the Church for the preparinge to worship, Iudginge of doctrine, decidinge of Controversies as the grounde of o<sup>r</sup> faithe & of o<sup>r</sup> whole profession.<sup>163</sup>

While singing in unison was not a feature of early Anabaptist worship,<sup>164</sup> another group of baptizers or “dippers” arose, many of who would embrace congregational singing as part of their worship.

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<sup>161</sup>John Smyth, “The Differences of the Churches of the Separation,” in *The Works of John Smyth*, vol. 1, ed. W.T. Whitley (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), 81.

<sup>162</sup>Davies, *English Puritans*, 90.

<sup>163</sup>Thomas Helwys, “Letter of Sept. 20, 1608,” quoted in Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in Light of Recent Research (1550–1641)*, vol. 2 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1912), 166.

<sup>164</sup>Specific individuals gifted in “bringing the Psalm” (1 Cor 14:26) were allowed to do so. “To singe Psalmes in the Gospel is a speciall gift given to some particular member in the church, whereby he doth blesse, praise, or magnifie the Lord through the mighty operation of the spirit. Ep. 5, 18.19 which is to be performed I say, by one alone, at one time to the edification one of another and therefore it is an ordinance flowing from a cheerfull heart” (Edward Draper, *Gospel-Glory Proclaimed Before the Sonnes of Men* (ed. 1649), quoted in Davies, *English Puritans*, 91).

The third group of Separatists in view here is the Particular Baptists. They are the most influential of the three for this study and must be considered in more detail. The First London Confession of 1644 was the confessional agreement of seven like-minded baptizing churches in London—believed to be the first of the Particular Baptists. As other Separatists, they left the established church in an effort to form true gospel churches. It appears that the 1644 confession was an effort to unify in cooperation as well as distinguish themselves from (continental) Anabaptists, Anarchists, or Arminians.<sup>165</sup> These churches came out of the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church, named for the first three pastors of this congregation of the 1630s.<sup>166</sup> This church went through a series of secessions in 1633–1638 as separate-leaning members began leaving this non-separatist church. One group joined with John Spilsbury (1593–1668) as pastor and is generally considered the first Particular Baptist Church (1638) by their adoption of the practice of immersion. Several others formed in the ensuing years until seven churches sent representatives to meet in 1644. The confession was drafted under the guidance of Spilsbury with the help of Samuel Richardson (*fl.* 1646) and William Kiffin (1616–1701). Another secession from the JLJ church in 1644 called Hanserd Knollys (1599–1691) as pastor and that church joined the group in 1646. Kiffin and Knollys are instrumental in discipling Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), who had been a General Baptist. Keach became a prominent figure in the next associational gathering of Particular Baptists in

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<sup>165</sup> See Matthew Ward, *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishers, 2014). Ward focuses on the English Particular Baptists in his study and offers the following thesis: “I will argue that everything we find distinctive about this group, including their hermeneutic, their ecclesiology, and their soteriology, was driven by their fundamental desire to worship God purely” (xii). This monograph argues that worship was their “central distinctive” (2), though Malcolm Yarnell’s *Forward* acknowledges, “His doctoral examiners were not as yet ready to embrace entirely the proposal” (x). Ward believes that by penning the 1644 Confession they “vehemently denied being (continental) Anabaptists, Anarchists, or Arminians” (47). William Lumpkin writes similarly: “In order to distinguish themselves from both the General Baptists and the Anabaptists, the Calvinistic Baptists of London determined to prepare and publish a statement of their views” (referring to the 1644 Confession) (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 145).

<sup>166</sup> Henry Jacob (1563–1624), John Lathrop (1584–1653), and Henry Jessey (1603–1663).

London and the Second London Confession of 1689, as well as the dialogue and development of Baptist worship.

Many of the early Particular Baptists refused to sing corporately in worship, though some allowed solo singing. The concern was regarding “conjoined” or “promiscuous” singing (the joining of unbelievers with believers) in worship. At the 1689 assembly led by Kiffin, Knollys, and Keach, Keach sought to raise the matter of congregational singing. Recognizing the volatility of the matter, the body declined to debate it and left the matter to be determined by each congregation. The debate was subsequently made by the exchange of pamphlets over the matter between Isaac Marlow (1649–1719) and Keach.<sup>167</sup> Eventually Benjamin Keach persuaded his Baptist congregation at Horsley-down to bring the matter to a vote in 1691. They had been singing one song together after the Lord’s Supper and on certain thanksgiving days since the mid-1670s, affording those who opposed it to depart early. The vote passed by a wide margin and congregational singing became a regular part of the church at Horsleydown, though the debate among Baptists continued for years to come.<sup>168</sup> David Music and Paul Richardson call Keach “the seminal figure in congregational singing among Baptists.”<sup>169</sup>

However, long expository sermons were the predominant elements of Baptist

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<sup>167</sup> David W. Music and Paul A. Richardson, “*I Will Sing the Wondrous Story*”: *A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 10–11. Isaac Marlow’s *A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing in the Publick Worship of God in the Gospel-Church* (1690) began the debate with Keach’s *The Breach Repair’d in God’s Worship: or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs Proved to Be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ* (1691) as the reply. By the end of 1692, fifteen publications had been exchanged in the debate.

<sup>168</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 189.

<sup>169</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 12. Keach was the first to establish the practice of singing hymns, as distinguished from psalms, in the regular worship of any English Church (Baptist or otherwise). His son, Elias Keach would carry this same influence to some of the first Baptist churches in the New World—in Philadelphia—as demonstrated by the addition of chapter 23 to the Philadelphia Confession (1742) regarding singing in worship as a holy ordinance.

worship from the beginning. Davies notes, “The sermons, we may surmise from the importance of the exercise of ‘prophesying’ in their worship, were long expositions of Scripture. These were of three quarters of an hour to an hour’s duration.”<sup>170</sup> Marlow referred to the Baptist worship gathering as a “lecture-meeting,” demonstrating both his anti-singing position and this emphasis on preaching.<sup>171</sup> Davies adds, “The peculiar contributions made by the Baptists to the worship of the English Separatists were three. They practiced believer’s baptism by immersion . . . In the second place, they went further than the other Separatists in their opposition to forms in worship . . . The third influence . . . was to become a regular feature of Puritan worship. This was the method of running exposition of interpolated comment during the public reading of the Scriptures.”<sup>172</sup> The priority of *sola Scriptura* is clear here. Not only should Scripture regulate worship in order to make it pure, but it should also inform the content of worship. While the mode of prayer and prophecy were to be free from set forms, and all books, including the Bible, were to be set aside during the time of pure worship, Baptists were confident that the Holy Spirit would confirm the truth of the word that was previously established from the reading of Scripture. This was their understanding of worship in spirit and truth and Jesus described it in John 4:24. The form and progress of worship would be shaped by the rule of the Holy Spirit through scripture-regulated elements of worship filled with scripture-informed content.

### Conclusion

Returning briefly to Fuller’s influence as a Baptist theologian and apologist, he

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<sup>170</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 91.

<sup>171</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 186.

<sup>172</sup> Davies, *English Puritans*, 95. Davies emphasizes that it was this second contribution of “radical opposition to any set forms in worship” that is “probably more than any other factor, which accounts for the Puritan departure from the liturgical customs of the Continental Reformed Churches” (97).

perhaps explains the Baptist conviction regarding the Bible's priority as good as any. In a covenant he made in 1780 with the Lord, he determined before God:

To take up no principle at second-hand; but to search for every thing at the pure fountain of thy word . . . One thing in particular I would pray for; namely that I may not only be kept from erroneous principles, but may so love the truth as never to keep it back.<sup>173</sup>

Paul Brewster writes of Fuller, "Though Fuller consciously desired to be faithful to the Calvinistic Baptist tradition, he sought to give pride of place to the Bible, not to his traditions. He understood the necessity of going to the Bible to verify the tradition, instead of using tradition to mute the voice of Scripture."<sup>174</sup> Brewster continues, "Theologically, this meant the Scriptures alone were the standard by which doctrine should be ultimately judged. Failure to take doctrines back to God's Word was to invite "wiggles" that would magnify themselves in the handing down from one generation to the next."<sup>175</sup>

The Baptist existence was conceived in the zeal for biblical truth and the effort of reform. Its continued existence is reliant upon the effort successfully to hand down that product of what has been successfully reformed, and continue the effort that gave it birth. This requires the prominent role of the Bible, and the priority of the biblical gospel, in worship. The regular return to Scripture for the regulation of worship and the constant infusion of Scripture's presence in the same is a mandatory approach to worship. Even Baptist worship can be fraught with what Brewster calls "wiggles" from the past. When Scripture and Scripture's gospel rule over worship, worship not only reflects its truth, it affords the power of the truth to set free and conform in its act. The shape of

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<sup>173</sup> Andrew Gunton Fuller, "Memoir," in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, vol. 1, ed. Joseph Belcher (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 20.

<sup>174</sup> Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 45.

<sup>175</sup> Brewster, *Andrew Fuller*, 46.

Scripture will become the shape of worship and the content of Scripture will become its dialogue. The primary byproduct will be that Christ will be formed in the worshipers.

Basil Manly Sr. (1742–1824), a prominent Baptist and one of the founding fathers of Southern Baptists, proclaims this conforming power of the truth in his sermon entitled, “Sanctification through the Truth.” In this sermon Manly defines sanctification as “that change by the Spirit of God upon us which imparts a holy tendency to our powers—gives spiritual affections—conforms us to the mind and image of God—and peculiarly sets us apart, consecrates, and devotes us to his service. He then distinguishes sanctification from justification on the one hand and regeneration on the other.” “This is a distinct grace,” notes Manly. “Although never found but in connection with justification, it is to be distinguished from it.”<sup>176</sup> Tom Nettles, writing of this particular sermon explains that Manly’s notes include the parenthetical direction to “(Show how).” Nettles, continues, “It is in the ‘show how’ for which Manly was so famous with his contemporaries who heard him preach that many of his most memorable passages were executed.”<sup>177</sup> He then quotes Samuel Henderson’s reflection upon this trait in his memorial sermon for Manly:

He has been observed occasionally to leave the most elaborately prepared notes . . . and abandon himself to a “side thought,” apparently picked up by the way—on which his conceptions were so vivid, so impassioned, so unctuous, as to enchain and thrill an audience with the richness and pathos of his utterances. It seems to have come up as with a pleased surprise from the great depths of his soul, like a fountain suddenly struck by the shaft of an artesian well. He has been known to devote perhaps half the time of an ordinary service to one of these unexpected “rills of thought.” When I say unexpected, I do not mean to affirm that it was altogether, on his part, unpremeditated—for in such instances he had at least familiarized himself with the main thought,—but I mean to say that in the expansion of that thought he left himself an indefinite margin in the pulpit. This peculiarity showed the rapidity

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<sup>176</sup> Basil Manly, “Sanctification through the Truth,” quoted in Tom J. Nettles, “Basil Manly, Fire from Light” (paper presented at the Founder’s Day Convocation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, January 31, 1995).

<sup>177</sup> Tom Nettles, “Basil Manly, Fire from Light,” 23. This is akin to the early English Anabaptist practice of setting aside the text to allow the Spirit to speak through the preacher.

with which his mind acted in grasping and happily expressing the most profound truths both in doctrinal and practical Christianity, and it may serve to show the importance of every minister's cultivating the habit of extemporary speaking.<sup>178</sup>

Nettles follows the quote by summarizing Manly's point: "We are sanctified in Christ as our covenant head who is not only the pattern but the principle of sanctification."<sup>179</sup> Here in Manly, the overall picture of Baptist worship is brought together. The Holy Spirit operates upon the affections of the worshiper through the proclamation (both prepared and extemporaneous) of the truth of God's word. The result of the gospel's effect is to sanctify the worshiper, thus making him into the image of the one in view—that of Jesus Christ who is both the pattern and provider of sanctification. This is the effect of the distinct grace of the gospel's sanctifying effect in worship. Its shape and content in a worship service habituates the worshiper to its application in a life of worship.

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<sup>178</sup> Samuel Henderson, *Christianity Exemplified: A Memorial Sermon of Rev. Basil Manly, Sr., D.D.* (Atlanta: Franklin Stream Printing House, 1870), 17–18.

<sup>179</sup> Nettles, "Basil Manly, Fire from Light," 24.

CHAPTER 3  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED MODEL FOR WORSHIP  
SERVICE FORM

**Introduction**

For two thousand years Christians have worshiped in light of the cross and from the power of an empty tomb. As old covenant promises were fulfilled by new covenant realities, a greater worship through a resurrected high priest revealed a greater glory with the power to transform worshipers. Jesus taught this new mode of worship to a Samaritan woman as that which is “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). It did not come with the mandatory locales or furnishings or prescribed rituals that the old covenant did. That was all fulfilled in Christ’s perfect work. Instead it came with an inherent freedom that was simply to be informed by Scripture’s truth and empowered by the Spirit of Christ, but that could take place anywhere and at any time. In fact, it came with the promise that wherever the people of God gathered for worship, Jesus would be there (Matt 18:20; 28:20; John 12:26; 1 Cor 5:4). Jesus said that this is the kind of worship, and the kind of worshiper, that the Father was seeking. This monumental change in worship from external cult to internal temple (1 Cor 6:19–20) has left a wide swath of potential for designing and ordering corporate worship services for the local church. As a result, the variations of worship order since this inauguration, including within the Baptist tradition, are too numerous to assess and catalog. However, a consistent shape of the worship encounter with Jesus has persisted through the centuries of true evangelical worship since the New Testament. It is the nature of this persistent shape that is in view here, as are the implications of this approach to worship design.

Across the centuries and around the globe, at times without awareness that the

pattern existed elsewhere, God's people have gathered to worship with a remarkably similar focus, contour, and content. This is especially intriguing when a church has not been constrained by a prescribed liturgy, such as Baptists. The common contours of Christian worship order reflect a similar experience with Christ and his gospel, as informed by Scripture's gospel truth and empowered by the Spirit of Christ. Authentic new covenant worship (e.g., in spirit and truth) has certain distinctive qualities related to the new covenant that make it recognizable anywhere and at any time. Christian corporate worship is often shaped to the believer's initial encounter with God (e.g., the gospel), and the gospel should continue to facilitate the gathered church's ongoing worship relationship with him. Where this has not been the case, it has often been due to the loss of the gospel as a whole. As a result, the principles of the new covenant should be rehearsed in worship in order to maintain awareness of the gospel among that church. The power of the gospel inspires and controls its structures because it is the way that God's people relate to him and therefore it should inform the way they worship him. The intent of this chapter is first to demonstrate that gospel-shaped worship by definition is transformative, and second to provide a viable pattern for this type of worship for churches in the Baptist tradition who maintain freedom in worship, but also want a more intentional pattern in worship.

One of the reasons that this contour of worship is so pervasive is because it is biblical and thus Spirit-led.<sup>1</sup> Scripture reveals this pattern again and again as God's people encounter his glory and presence. Sometimes it is overtly revealed and at other times simply reflected. Two examples will be discussed to demonstrate how the presence of God was manifested under both the old covenant and under the new covenant. This will serve to highlight the difference that the completed work of Christ makes in the

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus promises that one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to "teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

second event. These two worship events are Mt. Sinai in the Old Testament and the Mount of Transfiguration in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> They have been selected due to their connections with worship and their distinct roles with regard to the two covenants. There are also unique connections between the two that compel their joint discussion here. Each serves as a prototype for authentic worship relative to the covenant in which each is centered. Mt. Sinai is where the old covenant was established and its cultic practice of worship formally inaugurated. The Mount of Transfiguration is a unique event in the New Testament, as it reflects the type of worship encounter that Jesus explains in John 4. It prefigures the future glory that will be revealed to all believers. It also provides some parallels to Mt. Sinai with regard to the place of the encounter with God (e.g., a mountain, though not either of the mountains referenced in John 4 as prescribed locales of worship at the time);<sup>3</sup> the manifested presence of God's glory in the midst of his people (e.g., the "tabernacling" of his presence); and the transforming effects of that manifestation upon the people involved.<sup>4</sup> The main difference between the two is the

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<sup>2</sup> While the event of the Transfiguration occurred chronologically before the cross and resurrection, it is generally agreed by commentators that the event itself was a foreshadowing of the glory that will be revealed as a result of the new covenant (Rom 8:18, 2 Cor 4:17). Therefore, the disciples were permitted to briefly behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, which makes it a partial fulfillment of 2 Cor 3:18, which serves as the premise of this chapter. While the disciples' revelation in this event was still external (as it was for Moses in Exod 24 and 34), the full revelation taught in 2 Corinthians is an unveiling of the heart, affording the revelation of Christ in the internal temple of the heart, where the religious affections are at work. These revelations occur "from glory to glory" until the final day of full glorification, which will be both external and internal together. The Mount of Transfiguration serves as a helpful model for new covenant worship due to its similarities with Moses' encounter with God, but also its distinct differences due to the now centralized role of Christ.

<sup>3</sup> When the Samaritan woman asked her worship question regarding the appropriate locale for worship—Mt. Gerazim where the Samaritans worshiped or the temple mount where the Jews worshiped—Jesus explained, "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father . . . . The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:21–24).

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Stein writes of the parallels between these two events: "The imagery [of the Mount of Transfiguration] draws heavily from the OT, in particular from the theophany to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus. Some of the OT images that parallel Luke's account are a mountain on which revelation takes place (Exod 19:3), the alteration of Jesus' face (Exod 34:29), the glory of the Lord (Exod 24:16), a

presence of Christ in his incarnated form and the degree of effect. Therefore the differences between the two accounts can be considered to be due to the illuminating light and transforming power of the new covenant that Jesus came to ratify and that undergirds the experience.<sup>5</sup> It is a preview for the disciples of the glory of Christ (see 2 Pet 1:16) demonstrated in the resurrection, the ascension, and second coming, and is therefore reflective of new covenant worship in spirit and truth.

The conclusions of this discussion and its application for corporate worship will be founded upon Paul's discussion in 2 Corinthians 3:7–18, which serves as the main biblical text for this chapter. In this passage, Paul contrasts the two covenants and argues that the new covenant is greater because it alone has the power to unveil the glory of God in the face of Christ for believers and therefore the power to conform them to the image of Christ as a result. Based upon this text, it will be argued below that this will be the effect of worship when it is Christ-centered and gospel-shaped, which is the only way worship should be in light of the cross and in the power of the resurrection. This will lay

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cloud (Exod 24:16; 33:10) . . . and fear (Exod 34:30)" (*Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992], 282). Joel Green writes, "In Luke's model readers may well recognize his use of what have become stock expressions or conventional patterns borrowed from and based on the OT story of the Exodus (esp. Exod 24–34)—for example, the presence of companions, the setting on a mountain, the explicit mention of Moses, Jesus' change of countenance, reference to tents (or tabernacles), the cloud, the motif of fear, the clear allusion to Deut 18:15 ('Listen to him'), and the Lukan summary of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah having to do with his 'exodus'" (Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997], 377–78). Green later refers to the "profusion of echoes of the story of exodus in this co-text." "The term itself is used in the LXX and Hellenistic Jewish literature with reference to the exodus from bondage in Egypt" (ἐξοδος) (382).

<sup>5</sup> The overtones of the gospel in this encounter are not subtle. Specifically, the supernatural appearing of Moses and Elijah representing the fulfillment of the law and prophets in Christ, and their discussion of Christ's "departure" (e.g., *exodus*) are clear references to the gospel events which are central to this encounter and the new covenant. Joel B. Green writes, "Thus, by way of such motifs as the recognition of Jesus as God's Son, the presence of a heavenly voice, prayer, Jesus' glory, drowsy disciples, the importance of 'sight,' the clouds, the presence of 'two men,' and so on, one may recognize in the transfiguration account echoes of earlier and later scenes in the Gospel and Acts: the baptism of Jesus, his temptation in the wilderness, the confession of Peter, his agony in the garden, the resurrection, the ascension, and the anticipation of his parousia." In a related footnote Green explains, "These connections are also widely noted" and cites four other sources for support (Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 379). More regarding these allusions to the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ is demonstrated below.

the biblical foundations for the rationale behind the form of the worship service and the bulk of this chapter. Additionally, a theology of idolatry will be used to support the premise that man becomes what he worships. When he worships in this gospel-defined shape that points him to Christ, he is transformed into the image of the One whom he holds in attention and affection—that of Christ himself. Next, examples of this gospel-defined shape will be presented that are found in historic liturgies and biblically informed models. Finally, a simpler model is derived from these examples that is more conducive to worship in freer, non-liturgical traditions. This model is adapted from a number of sources, including two current practitioners of worship in Baptist churches today.<sup>6</sup> This model becomes the basis of evaluation of the presence or absence of gospel shape and content in the worship of the historic Baptist churches considered in chapters 4 and 5.

### **Biblical Foundations**

Mountains in Scripture are common sites for encounters with God’s presence (e.g., theophany). Consider Noah’s altar on Mt. Ararat after the flood (Noahic Covenant); Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah (Abrahamic Covenant reaffirmed); Elijah on Mt. Carmel (fire called down from heaven before the prophets of Baal), and on Mt. Horeb (e.g., “Sinai,” where Moses was called, and water came from the rock); and of course Moses with the two stone tablets later on the same mountain that has been called the “mountain of God” (Mosaic Covenant).<sup>7</sup> Jesus had significant experiences on

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<sup>6</sup> Greg Gilbert, pastor of Third Avenue Baptist Church and Mike Cospers, pastor of worship and arts of Sojourn Community Church, both of Louisville, Kentucky are referenced below, among several other sources for this model. The model proposed is also very similar to the cycles of the model used by John Calvin in his Genevan Liturgy. See Timothy J. Keller, “Reformed Worship in the Global City” in *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 217.

<sup>7</sup> Gen 8; Gen 22; 1 Kgs 18; Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:10–13; and Exod 19 and 34. There are several references in Scripture to the mountain of God, most to Mount Horeb/Sinai. This is the mountain where God first called Moses; where Aaron was told by God to go to meet Moses to prepare for deliverance; and then where God brought the people of Israel back from captivity to enact his covenant with them. It was the mountain where they met God. See Exod 3:1, 4:27, 18:5, 24:13, Ps 36:6, Ps 68:15

mountains as well. He often visited and taught on Mt. Zion (the Temple Mount); he taught and prayed on, as well as ascended from the Mount of Olives; his most famous sermon is the Sermon on the Mount; and he died on a mountain called Calvary (New Covenant).<sup>8</sup> There are interesting parallels between the old covenant events of Mt. Sinai in the Old Testament, and the events of the Mount of Transfiguration in the New Testament; parallels of which Paul would later write to the church at Corinth. First, comparing and contrasting these two events will serve to highlight the significant difference that the new covenant makes by affording worship in spirit and truth. Next, implications for new covenant worship derived from the transfiguration event will be considered.

## **Two Mountains of God**

### **Mount Sinai and the Old Covenant**

In some ways, the nature of worship—as well as the entire redemptive story—can be summarized in the two accounts of Mt. Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration. In Exodus 19, the people of Israel gathered at Mt. Sinai having recently been delivered from the bondage and oppression of Egypt in a stunning and miraculous manner. They had been delivered to worship and serve their God, but were shortly wandering in the desert, complaining and longing to return to captivity. God had initiated this deliverance through an exiled Israelite who had experienced his own encounter with the God of Israel in a profound way on the same mountain. Moses' extraordinary calling from God at the burning bush on Mt. Horeb (Exod 3) served as the impetus to return to Egypt as God's

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and Ezek 28:14. Peter would later refer to the site of the Mount of Transfiguration as the “holy mountain” where the deity of Jesus was revealed and they heard the voice of God (see 2 Pet 1:18).

<sup>8</sup> Heb 12:22; Luke 22:39–44; Luke 23:36 and John 19:17.

agent of deliverance for his people.<sup>9</sup> Under his leadership, Israel learned of God’s character and power through the devastating display of the ten plagues in Egypt (including the death of the firstborn son and the institution of the Passover). They also experienced the miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh’s army by the parting of the Red Sea; the miraculous provision of their physical needs in the wilderness with manna from heaven and water from the rock; and a stunning defeat of Amalek through the simple human means of Moses holding his hands up over the battle, with some assistance.<sup>10</sup> Through all of this, Moses came to be seen as the central figure and leader among the people of Israel and serve as a type of Christ in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> He was a prophet and priest for the nation. As they gather around Mt. Sinai, “the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.’”<sup>12</sup> Regarding this event John Durham declares,

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<sup>9</sup> John I. Durham writes of the two encounters at Sinai in Exod 3 and 19–40: “Theophany and call are brought together in the narrative dealing with Moses for the same reason they are brought together in the narrative dealing with Israel in Sinai. Theophany describes the advent of God’s presence; call describes the opportunity of response to that Presence. Theophany provides both stimulus and authority for response; response, despite choice, is virtually inevitable following theophany” (John I. Durham, *Exodus*, vol. 3, Word Biblical Commentary [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987], 29). Here is found the fundamental principle of worship order—that of revelation and response. Durham continues, “Indeed, the experience of Moses in 3:1–12 is an exact foreshadowing of the experience of Israel, first in Egypt, then in the deprivation of the wilderness, and finally at Sinai. In each of these narratives, the Presence-response pattern is fundamental. In the climactic narrative of the Book of Exodus (perhaps also the climactic narrative of the entire OT), chaps 19:1–20:20 and 24:1–11, this pattern is the shaping factor” (30).

<sup>10</sup> Exod 7:1–12:51; 14:1–31; 16:1–17:7; and 17:8–16.

<sup>11</sup> “Typology is the interpretation of earlier events, persons, and institutions in biblical history which become proleptic entities, or ‘types,’ anticipating later events, persons, and institutions, which are their antitypes” (Don McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002], 162–63). See also Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Daniels & Smith, 1852). Fairbairn writes, “The existence, then of such a relation [of type and antitype] pre-supposes and implies . . . that the things of the gospel, which constitute the antitypes, are the great objects on which the mind of God was from the first directed for the good of his church; and that, to prepare the way for the introduction of these grand and ultimate objects, he placed the church under a course of training, which included among other things instruction by types, or designed and fitting resemblance of what was to come (40).

<sup>12</sup> Exod 19:9. The authority of Moses as prophet and priest was confirmed by the voice of God in the hearing of his people. It was God’s intention that the people would listen to him. Similarly, the

“The Advent of Yahweh’s Presence at Sinai is the formative event of OT faith.”<sup>13</sup>

During the time at Sinai, God spoke to Moses “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”<sup>14</sup> Moses made two requests of God as this extraordinary time at Sinai came to an end: (1) “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here;” and (2) “Please show me your glory.”<sup>15</sup> God responded positively to both requests and when Moses finally returned to the people after forty days on the “mountain of God,” his face shone from having been in God’s presence. He had to put a veil over his face because the skin of his face shone and the people were afraid to come near him.<sup>16</sup> They had quickly turned to idolatry with a golden calf while Moses had been in God’s presence. With their sin unatoned for, there was room only for the fear of God. God allowed Moses to see the

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same voice affirmed the greater role of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration: “This is my Son, my Chosen One, listen to him!” Luke 9:35

<sup>13</sup> Durham, *Exodus*, 259. Durham explains, “The form of the entire Sinai narrative sequence has been determined by a single factor. That factor is also the reason for the attraction into and onto the Sinai narrative sequence of a variety of material having to do primarily with the requirements of the covenant and the media of worship, and secondarily, with the special role of Moses and those who extend Moses’ contribution. This factor is of course the gift of Yahweh of his Presence to Israel. From beginning to end, and in both its positive and its negative features, the Sinai narrative sequence, and indeed the Book of Exodus of which it is the important center, is linked to the Advent of Yahweh’s Presence to Israel at Sinai.” This event is “the supreme event of Exodus” (260).

<sup>14</sup> Exod 33:11. R. Alan Cole explains of this verse, “Numbers 12:8 explains the meaning of this phrase. God will speak to Moses ‘mouth to mouth,’ that is to say, not in dreams and visions, but clearly and directly . . . He thus stands at the beginning of a long process of God’s revelation, which will culminate in the ‘suffering servant’ of Isaiah 52, and which will find its fulfillment in Christ” (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, vol. 2, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. Donald J. Wiseman [Downers Gove, IL: IVP Academic, 1973], 235).

<sup>15</sup> Exod 33:15, 18. Of the request to see God’s glory R. Alan Cole writes, “Moses prayer is to see the *kābôd*, the manifested glory (literally ‘weight’) of YHWH. This is a prayer to see God as he is: but in these terms, it is impossible . . . For a full revelation of what God is like, man must wait until Jesus Christ (John 14:9)” (Cole, *Exodus*, 235).

<sup>16</sup> Scott Hafemann explains, “Moses’ mediation of God’s glory permits his presence to remain in Israel’s midst without destroying her. In this regard, Moses’ veiling himself is an act of mercy. At the same time, the very fact that Moses must veil his face is an act of judgment because of the hardness of Israel’s heart. This veil not only preserves Israel from being destroyed; it also keeps her from being transformed” (Scott Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 148).

“afterglow” of his glory, which had transformed his appearance and gave him faith to move forward with God’s presence. Its effect seemingly went no farther than this. Remarkably, God eventually allowed Moses to look upon the glory of God with an unveiled face in the Tent of Meeting—“Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out,”<sup>17</sup>—but he was the only one at this time to do so. A greater covenant and great high priest would be needed for worship in spirit and truth.

In summary, Moses led the people of Israel to Mt. Sinai to pray and wait on God. They had been delivered from certain destruction at the hands of their enemies and now were to begin a new journey as God’s chosen people. There they experienced the terrifying manifest presence of God and a new revelation of how God wanted His people to worship Him. Mt. Sinai inaugurated the old covenant that regulated the worship life of Israel; set forth the conditions upon which God’s people were required to live and worship; and revealed the fading glory of the old covenant. As dramatic as the events were, all that occurred there ultimately served to point to a greater day, a greater priest, a more numerous and diverse people, and a greater covenant—a greater worship.

### **The Mount of Transfiguration and the New Covenant**

When Jesus took his disciples up the Mount of Transfiguration, God also came in a thick cloud just as at Sinai. As God spoke to Moses so that the people could hear and believe him, God also spoke to Jesus so the disciples could hear and believe him. This was a greater affirmation for Jesus here than for Moses at Sinai. He demonstrated not only that he spoke with Jesus, but also that Jesus was his Son with whom he was pleased.

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<sup>17</sup> Exod 34:34. This experience must have been similar to what the disciples experienced externally on the Mount of Transfiguration, though the internal effects for the disciples would become the greater reality of the new covenant when the Holy Spirit was poured out to inhabit the hearts of men.

He directly commanded them to “listen to him.” The writer of Hebrews puts forth this comparison: whereas Moses served as the type and initial mediator of worship between God and his people, Jesus became the great High Priest and eternal mediator of worship. Moses was the type and Jesus was the fulfillment, even as Sinai was the old covenant shadow while the transfiguration reflected a new covenant reality.

The Mount of Transfiguration reveals the greater glory of the new covenant and its central figure.<sup>18</sup> Jesus took his disciples up a mountain to pray and they returned having experienced a far greater manifestation of the presence of God. While more clarity came later, they experienced a revelation of the experience God’s people would have in worship under the new covenant. They experienced far more than any before them. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the earthly priest (e.g., Moses as a type of Christ) supernaturally appeared, but then disappeared, because the greater priest had come.<sup>19</sup> Rather than a priestly representative who would enter God’s presence on behalf

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Stein explains regarding what actually happened here: “There are three main explanations. (1) The preexistent glory of the preincarnate Son temporarily broke through the limitations of his humanity (cf. Phil 2:6–9; John 1:14b). (2) A glimpse of the future glory of the risen Christ is given to the disciples. Even as the first passion prediction (Luke 9:22) does not end in an announcement of death but in the promise of resurrection, so the discussion of Jesus’ departure is followed by a glimpse of the glory awaiting him at the resurrection (24:26; cf. also Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 1:21). (3) A glimpse of the glory of the Son of Man at the time of the parousia is given to the disciples. In support of the last explanation is the fact that the glory of the Son of Man at his parousia has just been mentioned (Luke 9:26; cf. also 21:27, where Luke referred to ‘cloud,’ as in 9:34–35, rather than ‘clouds’ as found in Mark and Matthew). Also 2 Pet 1:16–18 clearly understands it in this manner. Although the last explanation is the primary understanding of the event for Luke, elements of the second may also be present” (Stein, *Luke*, 283). With regard to worship, this event is an unveiling of the glory of Christ, who is the full representation of God (Heb 1:3, Col 2:9, and 2 Cor 4:4, 6). Joel Green writes, “As Jesus promised (Luke 9:27), these apostles have now seen, if only for a moment, the consummation of the kingdom for they have seen the Son, the Chosen One, Jesus, in his glory” (Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 379). It demonstrates the past and future brilliance of this glory in a unique moment that breaks into the incarnated present; but also the critical role of the gospel and its reward for new covenant worshipers by revealing (e.g., “unveiling”) the glory of this Christ. This glorious Christ is the object of worship and it is by his incarnation that the way is opened. As Jesus said, “But the hour is coming and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:23).

<sup>19</sup> Robert Stein comments on the Jesus’ intent here. Luke twice mentions that Jesus went up onto the mountain to pray (Luke 9:28 and 9:29). “This second reference to Jesus’ praying adds even more emphasis to this theme” (Stein, *Luke*, 284). Joel Green endorses the same priority: “With Luke’s emphatic reference to Jesus at prayer, the backdrop is complete. The importance of this last note is difficult to

of the people, the disciples were worshipers who encountered the glory of God directly in the face of Christ. Additionally, while the effects of Moses' encounter with God's glory would have to be veiled and ultimately fade, the effects of the disciples' encounter with God's glory was with unveiled faces and would grow continually brighter until the day of their own glorification. The ultimate goal and fulfillment of the new covenant they glimpsed on the mountaintop that day was the work of internal transformation.<sup>20</sup>

To summarize, at Sinai there was a thick cloud that demonstrated God's presence; the evidence to God's people of the relationship between God and Moses; the promise that God would be with his people; and the revelation of the glory of God that resulted in the transfigured appearance of Moses to the degree that he had to veil his face. The result of the Mount of Transfiguration paralleled each of these elements: a thick cloud that demonstrated God's presence; the disciples witnessed the relationship between God as Father and Jesus as Son; the presence of God continues initially with his disciples in the person of Jesus and ultimately through the indwelling Holy Spirit to be with them always; and finally there was a revelation of the glory of God in Christ on that mountain that resulted not only in the transfigured appearance of Christ (as with Moses), but eventually in the transformation of his people. While Moses had to veil his face until the glory faded because the people were afraid, the disciples for a brief moment saw the veil pulled

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overstate. Not only is prayer mentioned twice, but this reference follows hard on the heels of the parallel reference in v. 18, where prayer is represented as the setting for divine disclosure. In fact, through the use of the participial form, Luke has it that *while Jesus was* praying he was transfigured (cf. 3:21–22). The reason for this ascent was to commune with God in prayer and worship, just as it was for Moses and Mt. Sinai. The role of prayer is heightened in this account (Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 379; emphasis Green's).

<sup>20</sup> Robert Stein here comments, "The transfiguration was not from the outside in but from the inside out. Jesus' 'person' was transfigured before his clothing. Both Matthew and Luke referred to Jesus' face shining 'like the sun' (Matt 17:2). It is difficult not to see in this some allusion to Exod 34:29–35 (cf. also 2 Cor 3:7–13). Moses' glory, however, came from the outside" (Stein, *Luke*, 284). Unlike Moses, the disciples did not return with glowing faces as occurred at Sinai. However, it is likely that their hearts "burned within" as a future experience with the glorified Christ would produce (Luke 24:32). The new covenant transformation of believers is patterned after Jesus' transfiguration—from the inside out.

back revealing the glory that the Israelites could not look upon. Moses experienced a fading glory on behalf of the people, but the disciples experienced an eternal glory that had previously been hidden from their understanding, but would ultimately become their eternal reward because of the gospel.<sup>21</sup> This reward would be shared with all those who embrace the gospel. The Israelites feared the glory they beheld but the disciples longed to look deeper and longer. The glory of God as displayed in Christ is both accessible because of the gospel, and it is captivating. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This external experience of the disciples at the transfiguration is a type of first fruits and preview of the gospel and the internal worship in spirit and truth that it allowed.<sup>22</sup> The events of the gospel are irrevocably connected to this experience. When they are rehearsed, their design by God is to “reveal the glory of Christ.”

### **Worship as a Pursuit of Glory**

R. Kent Hughes in his commentary on Mark states regarding the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration:

For a brief moment the veil of his [Jesus’] humanity was lifted, and his true essence was allowed to shine through. The glory which was always in the depths of his being rose to the surface for that one time in his earthly life. Or put another way, he

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Cor 13:12; 2 Cor 4:4, 6. John Piper writes regarding 2 Cor 4:4, 6, “This is one of the most remarkable descriptions of the gospel in the whole Bible. There is nothing else quite like it. It defines the gospel as ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’” (John Piper, *God Is the Gospel* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005], 59). He continues, “Let’s be clear that we are talking about the *gospel* in these verses. The fact that Paul does not mention the facts of Christ’s life and death and resurrection does not mean he has left them behind. They remain the historical core of the gospel . . . . When Paul speaks of ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ,’ he means that the events of the gospel are designed by God to reveal the glory of Christ. This is not incidental to the gospel—it’s essential. The gospel would not be good news if it did not reveal the glory of Christ for us to see and savor” (61–62).

<sup>22</sup> It is also a preview of the ultimate fulfillment of the work of the gospel and worship when worship once again becomes external. “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

slipped back into eternity, to his pre-human glory. It was a glance back and a look forward into his future glory.<sup>23</sup>

The glory revealed in this experience, and in the kind of worship that this experience foreshadowed, is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ, who is now the central figure of worship. He is not just the access for worship as its great high priest and mediator of the greater covenant, but he is also the object of the worshiper's eternal reward. The desire in worship should now be to enjoy the glory found in Christ. In John 17:3 Jesus states, "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." One day the veil of this life will be removed forever and God's people will know even as they are now fully known.<sup>24</sup> Until that day of the full knowledge of God,<sup>25</sup> worship allows glimpses into this ultimate reality, which has a profoundly transformative effect upon man. It rightly orders things for man because it operates upon the affections to restore the image he was created to have. This process continues "from one degree of glory to another" until we are "conformed into the same image."<sup>26</sup> This was the experience of man in the garden before being affected by sin.

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<sup>23</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 15.

<sup>24</sup> See 1 Cor 13:12. This knowledge is more than an intellectual understanding; it is a relational awareness and connection. It is a spiritual knowledge at the level of the religious affections that creates orientation, disposition, and pursuit of its end. Edwards explains, "There is a twofold understanding or knowledge of good, that God has made the mind of man capable of. The first, that which is merely speculative or notional . . . The other is that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the beauty, amiableness, or sweetness of a thing . . . Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. . . . When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension . . . which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that is excellent" (Jonathan Edwards, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," in *Sermons and Discourses 1730–1733*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 17, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959], 414).

<sup>25</sup> "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever" (Rev 22:3–5).

<sup>26</sup> See 2 Cor 3:18. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. writes, "In the deepest recesses of who they now are,

This is what God intended for man by creating the Garden and setting man in the midst of it to enjoy the glory of God unhindered. Before sin, Adam was able to live as he had been created with right disposition to God and a rightly ordered view of his life in joyful submission to God. He enjoyed unhindered access to the knowledge, glory, and presence of God. However, sin created the need for mediation and a veil was placed between man and this free access to God's presence. Sin cannot exist in the presence of God. Without mediation for sin, man would be left to grope in darkness attempting to fill that compulsive desire for the delight of worship in countless idolatrous and destructive ways, all the while never finding the fulfillment he was created to know in God as his image-bearer.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden after the Fall, cherubim guarded the entrance with a flaming sword.<sup>27</sup> A barrier had been placed between man and God's glorious presence because of man's sin. To symbolize this lost paradise and the goal to pursue what it represents, Israel's tabernacle, and later its temple, demonstrated architectural details and imagery purposefully designed to reflect the Garden's paradise. Man had been created to be in the Garden and worship was a pursuit of the restoration of that original relationship. Allen Ross, in *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, writes, "The way it was designed and decorated reminded people that they were drawing near to the sovereign God of creation." There were tall tree-like pillars and engravings of lilies and pomegranates. There was a sea held up by animals and "around

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at the core of their being—what Paul elsewhere and more frequently call the 'heart' (e.g., Rom. 1:24; 2:29; 8:28; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 3:2–3)—believers are no longer turned away from God's glory but are drawn toward it and even into it in a transforming way" (Richard B. Gaffin, "The Glory of God in Paul's Epistles," in *The Glory of God*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 149). This is the Spirit's work operating upon the religious affections creating the disposition and turning the orientation of the believer toward Christ in conversion and continuing in sanctification.

<sup>27</sup> Gen 3:24.

its rim were carved various arboreal designs. All these symbols suggested to the worshiper that this temple was like a new creation. Solomon's ten lampstands must have seemed like a garden of trees, giving light and life in the presence of the Lord."<sup>28</sup> Ross continues,

In Israel's tabernacle and the later temple, symbolic representations of cherubs were everywhere to indicate that immediate access to the presence of God was restricted. On the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, large cherubs were embroidered (1 Kings 6:23 – 38). On the ceiling and walls of the tent were embroidered the cherubs, as a reminder that God's holy presence was guarded—that the people could not wander into his presence without mediation (Exod. 26:31; 1 Kings 6:29). And on the ark itself two cherubs were fashioned out of gold to guard the throne of God (Exod. 25:18–22). Even in the biblical revelations of glory, we find the cherubs present protecting the throne of God (cf. Ezek. 1:4–28).<sup>29</sup>

By God's grace, a more perfect mediator was provided than Moses and the line of priests. It was another garden that was the site of the initial sufferings of that mediator whose work would restore the glory of the original garden. When Jesus was crucified for sin so that the way of access to the presence of God lost in the original Garden could be reopened, something extraordinary occurred in the symbolic garden of the temple. "At that moment the veil in the temple with the embroidered cherubs on it was rent from top to bottom, symbolizing that those angels could step aside so that the people of God could approach the throne of grace with confidence."<sup>30</sup> This is what the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration foreshadowed. It was a foretaste of the resurrection's triumph and a preview of what worship would be when Christ, who had come to serve as the one true mediator between God and man, destroyed the veil. Worship now reveals transforming glory as it had always been intended to do.

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<sup>28</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 246–47.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, *Recalling the Hope*, 115.

<sup>30</sup> Ross, *Recalling the Hope*, 116.

## The Gospel's Power to Unveil the Glory of God

The week before the events on the Mount of Transfiguration, the synoptic gospel writers all record the same three events in the same order leading into the extraordinary experience on the mountain. First, they record the confession of Peter in which the Father has revealed to Peter that Jesus is “the Christ, the son of the Living God.”<sup>31</sup> Second, they record the first specific declaration that Jesus made of the necessity of his death and resurrection for the New Covenant. He would continue to show his disciples from that time on that “he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”<sup>32</sup> Matthew and Mark both tell of Peter’s stern opposition to this plan and Jesus’ subsequent rebuke of the desire of Satan to avert God’s plan for Christ’s gospel purpose. Third, all three synoptic gospel writers record Jesus’ call to anyone who would follow him that he must “deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”<sup>33</sup> In these three passages that lead to the preview of the gospel’s reward on the Mount of Transfiguration, are found the basic tenets of the gospel:

1. The *revelation* of God in Christ—The Father reveals himself through Christ.
2. The *mediation* of the work of Christ on the cross—The centrality of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
3. The *exhortation* of God through Christ to follow in his steps—The need to take up a cross and follow him in the power of the Spirit.

These three elements form the gospel shape and its innate Christ-centeredness: revelation of Christ, mediation of Christ, and exhortation to follow Christ. It must be emphasized that while there is a distinctive Trinitarian perspective in the gospel (and in worship)—the Father plans and reigns over the work of the gospel and the Spirit

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<sup>31</sup> Matt 16:13–20, Mark 8:27–30, Luke 9:18–20.

<sup>32</sup> Matt 16: 21–23, Mark 8:31–33, Luke 9:21–22.

<sup>33</sup> Matt 16:24, Mark 9:35, Luke 9:23.

illuminates, empowers, and applies the work of the gospel—Christ is central to the gospel and as a result, central to gospel-shaped worship.<sup>34</sup> The issue at hand is that God has revealed himself through Christ and man has responded. This is worship—a pattern of revelation and response. This pattern is what happened to Moses at Sinai. It is what happened to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. It is what happens to the believer in worship. God reveals himself and man responds. The gospel provides the grid of response.

In his concise yet deliberate book, *What is the Gospel?*, Greg Gilbert summarizes the gospel in four questions that Scripture consistently sets forth with regard to the gospel. These four questions outline the shape of the gospel and its influence upon worship:

1. Who made us, and to whom are we accountable?
2. What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why?
3. What is God’s solution to that problem? How has he acted to save us from it?
4. How do I—myself, right here, right now—how do I come to be included in that salvation? What makes this good news for me and not just for someone else?

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<sup>34</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to explain or defend Trinitarian worship, only to affirm it. Steven R. Harmon writes, “In general, Baptists ascribe ultimate authority to the Triune God. Although Baptists in both England and North America have experienced occasional outbreaks of Unitarianism in the past, and although Baptist confessions have sometimes preferred the biblical language of Father, Son, and Spirit to explicitly Trinitarian language, in the main Baptists are Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Trinitarians, even when they are not conscious of the historical origins of their Trinitarian faith. With few exceptions, early Baptist Confessions issued in the Netherlands and England begin not with statements about the authority of the Bible (and frequently lacked such statements) but rather with articles on the nature and attributes of the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Later he explains, “Even if these documents [Confessions] emphasize Scripture as the means by which God is known, those who have adopted and affirmed these confessions would agree that any legitimate source of religious authority derives from the God who is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ to whom the Spirit bears witness” (Steven R. Harmon, *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision* [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2006], 27–28). For a more intentional volume on Christ-centered worship in the context of Trinitarian theology, see James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996).

Gilbert summarizes these points in four words: “God. Man. Christ. Response.”<sup>35</sup> The starting point of the gospel is the revelation of God as Creator and Authority, which reveals the problem in man. God is holy and man has failed to meet God’s holy standard. God then provides the solution in the person and work of Christ, which then necessitates a response from man—“What must I do to be saved?” There is a revelation and response element to each point. In Gilbert’s model, God’s authority is revealed to man in the first question and the response solicited by the second question is the result of an understanding of man’s responsibility to God in light of the revelation that God is his Creator and Ruler (e.g., Question 1). Even though Gilbert does not label the second question as a response, the only way it could occur is in light of the first question (Revelation of God), which makes it a response of man. The light of the reality of God’s existence and dominion shines upon a man’s life (e.g., heart) by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 4:4). This light shines upon a dark and sinful heart and reveals the crooked depravity of man’s heart. Had this light not been shown, man would have never ceased to walk in darkness and rebellion.<sup>36</sup> Thus Question 2 is a response only made possible by the reality of the first question. The fourth question —“How do I become saved?”—is instinctively a response to the third question (Christ) as Gilbert labels it.<sup>37</sup>

The dialogical nature of the gospel, and worship, can already be seen in these

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<sup>35</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 31–32. Mike Cospers does something very similar in his book with his version of four elements of the gospel: “God is holy. We are sinners. Jesus saves us. Jesus sends us” (Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013], 121). Both Gilbert and Cospers are currently pastors in charge of worship for their respective Baptist churches in Louisville, Kentucky.

<sup>36</sup> John 12:40, 2 Cor 4:4, and 1 John 2:11 all use the language of “blindness” to describe man’s “pre-converted” state.

<sup>37</sup> Mike Cospers’s model shown above has the same revelation and response quality. “God is holy” reveals “we are sinners.” “Jesus saves us” and we respond by being sent out (e.g., “Jesus sends us.”) Cospers explains that the gospel is remembered by the following corresponding movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation. The interrelatedness of these movements is evident (Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace*, 123).

four questions as each provision of God has a response from man. God is revealed as Creator and Ruler (Question 1), which necessitates the response of man's acknowledgement of sin (Question 2). God provides Christ as the solution to man's sin (Question 3), which necessitates the response of man's calling upon Christ to be saved (Question 4). Gilbert could have continued the scriptural pattern by adding Question 5 as a commission to "walk in Him." After man responds to the work of the Gospel in Christ, there is a call to discipleship by God in which man is commissioned to walk in the pattern of this new life to which man again responds. This could necessitate adding Question 6 to Gilbert's model had he chosen to carry the model that far in which man dedicates himself to obey and serve God. This is essentially the shape of one's salvation experience when he or she comes to Christ and again forms the shape of the gospel. This shape could be summarized as (1) revelation and response, (2) mediation and response, and (3) exhortation and response.<sup>38</sup> Man responds to each act of God. God is always the initiator and man is always the responder. Christ is at the blazing center of this process. Though the work of Christ is not fully revealed in the Old Testament encounters with God it is always foreshadowed. In the New Testament however, it is clear that this entire experience of salvation is Christ-centered and that as a result New Testament worship by definition must also be Christ-centered as it is made possible only by the work of Christ. In the most specific definition of the gospel in Scripture, Paul reminds the Corinthians "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also

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<sup>38</sup> Timothy Keller points out that John Calvin's liturgy utilized three general movements. Seeking to have a gospel-formed church, Calvin's liturgy followed three deepening cycles of repentance. (1) An Isaianic cycle (based on Isaiah 6: God reveals himself as holy and we respond as sinners in need of mercy), (2) A Mosaic cycle (the word is read and taught with the goal of seeing God's glory," and (3) An Emmaus cycle (the church gathers around the table to see Jesus and responds in eating). Keller uses a similar liturgy drawn from this that includes an adoration cycle, a renewal cycle, and a commitment cycle, which is very similar to the model proposed here. See Timothy J. Keller, "Reformed Worship in the Global City," in *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 217, 226–35. Also referenced in Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace*, 123.

received: . . . Christ” (1 Cor 15:3). The centrality of Christ in both the gospel and in worship is poignantly demonstrated in the Mount of Transfiguration event.

### **The Centrality of Christ**

While Peter, James, and John were asleep, Jesus prayed to the Father as he often did. What the disciples awoke to see was what the Gospel writers described reflectively as seeing “the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,” “the kingdom of God com[ing] with power,” and simply “the kingdom of God” (2 Pet 1:16).<sup>39</sup> Peter would later describe his participation in the experience as having been “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet 1:16). John would also reflect, “We have seen his glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This was a Christ-centered worship encounter for which they had no parallel in history. Robert E. Webber writes, “The Transfiguration seems to be a preview of the Resurrection, and a verification of Jesus’ identity as the Messiah.”<sup>40</sup> Kent Hughes explains, “This is not only a declaration about Christ, but a prophecy of what was to come.”<sup>41</sup> Just as Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4, worship was changing. It was changing because the Messiah had come.

As with Moses on Mt. Sinai, Jesus’ face began to shine. In addition, his clothes became brilliantly white as he was transfigured, or more literally,

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<sup>39</sup> Matt 16:28, Mark 9:1, Luke 9:27. Craig Blomberg believes this verse is “best taken as . . . a reference to Jesus’ transfiguration—the very next event described” (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992], 261). Robert Stein also suggests this as the most logical understanding (Stein, *Luke*, 280). Both assert this verse having been preceded by a verse regarding the Second Coming of Christ in glory by both Matthew and Luke, make it clear that the Transfiguration is a preview of the Second Coming, thus linking the concepts of the “coming of the kingdom of God” with the glorification of the son. One cannot occur without the other. They are the same event.

<sup>40</sup> Robert E. Webber, *The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship*, vol. 1, *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 199.

<sup>41</sup> Hughes, *Mark*, 17.

“metamorphosed”<sup>42</sup> before the disciples. The veil was being briefly, but remarkably, pulled back—allowing a glimpse into the eternal reality of the nature of Christ. The glory of God in Christ was being unveiled in a small yet overwhelming way. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. The Scripture does not indicate how the disciples knew who they were, but somehow it was very clear to them. Both had had previous conversations with God on mountaintops—Moses on Mt. Sinai and Elijah on Mt. Horeb where the Lord told Elijah to go “stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord” who appeared as a “gentle whisper.”<sup>43</sup> Both had been shown God’s glory and both had famous departures from earth. Their presence has a multitude of meanings, but none more compelling than what Jesus later revealed to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection when he taught them the gospel: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”<sup>44</sup>

Robert Webber comments,

The presence of Moses and Elijah is of special importance, for they were the two major symbolic figures of Israel’s prophetic faith. As the last two verses of the Hebrew prophetic canon make clear (Mal. 4:4 – 5), together they framed the history of the covenant given at Mt. Sinai; it was through Moses that the covenant was established, and Elijah was to restore the covenant bonds lest the curse of its violation take effect. Their appearance with Jesus in his transfigured glory is an affirmation that the gospel of Jesus Christ, however much it may have seemed anathema to the established Judaism of the first century, arose out of the very heart

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<sup>42</sup> μεταμορφόμῃ is a rare Greek verb that occurs only four times in the N.T.: Matthew’s account of the Transfiguration (Matt 17:2); Mark’s account of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2); Paul’s explanation of the transformation that occurs in believers by beholding Jesus (2 Cor 3:18); and his account of spiritual worship’s ability to transform believers by the renewing of their mind (Rom 12:2). Simon S. Lee explains, “Outside the NT, the verb occurs in Philo’s description of Moses’ transformation” (Simon S. Lee, *Jesus’ Transfiguration and the Believer’s Transformation: Studies of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009], 81).

<sup>43</sup> 1 Kgs 19:11–12.

<sup>44</sup> Luke 24:27. Robert Stein writes, “The presence of these men represent the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah)—cf. Luke 16:29,31; 24:27 . . . The reference to these ‘two men’ ties together the transfiguration, resurrection (24:4), and ascension (Acts 1:10). The presence of Moses and Elijah refutes the incorrect guesses about Jesus’ identity given in Luke 9:8, 19” (Stein, *Luke*, 284). This also affirmed Peter’s confession that Jesus indeed was “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” who had come to fulfill all of the law and the prophets through the gospel.

and essence of the covenant faith of Israel.<sup>45</sup>

Moses as the great lawgiver and Elijah as the great prophet represented the totality of the old covenant. Their submission to the Lord was symbolic of the resignation of the old covenant and submission to the covenant that Jesus would secure. The new covenant both fulfilled and replaced the old covenant that Moses and Elijah represented and that fulfillment was portrayed in this profound revelation of their conversation with the glorified Christ. Luke explains that the subject of their conversation was the manner of the fulfillment—the cross (i.e., the gospel)! “And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”<sup>46</sup> Hughes writes,

They were talking about the Cross and Jesus’ death! The tense indicates that this was an extended conversation. They, the chief representatives of the Law and the Prophets, were carrying on a conversation with Jesus, who himself said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17).<sup>47</sup>

Worship in spirit and truth will of necessity include the central reality that Christ revealed to the Samaritan woman. She said she knew Messiah was coming. Worship now must include the reality that he has not only come, but that in worship, “I who speak to you am he” (John 4:27).

### **Worship: They Saw His Glory**

Peter’s comments at this point are potentially misunderstood. While the gospel

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<sup>45</sup> Webber, *Biblical Foundations of Worship*, 199.

<sup>46</sup> Luke 9:30–31. The term “departure” is *exodus*, which seems to refer to his death (“which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem”), his resurrection (which is supported by the passion prediction in Luke 9:22), and ascension (which Luke 9:51 seems to support—“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”). Stein writes, “Moses and Elijah did not ‘inform’ Jesus of the details of his ‘exodus,’ for by 9:22 he already knew them. They were present rather to illustrate Jesus’ fulfillment of the divine plan in the OT, i.e., he fulfilled the law and the prophets. This verse prepares the reader for 9:51ff” (Stein, *Luke*, 285). The correlation to Moses and the Old Testament “exodus” are evident.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, *Mark*, 16.

writers all indicate that he made these comments “not knowing what he said,” that does not mean that there was not any value to what he said. In some ways, what Peter said brings insight as to how he perceived the event as an ultimate worship event. The first part of his comment was that the experience was profoundly good. “Master, it is good that we are here” (Luke 9:33). Being in the presence of the glorified Christ in worship is a wonderful place to be. It caused them to lose all concern for the “demon-possessed valley” that they had left below and would have to return to. In the presence of such “grace and truth” as John described it, the “image of God” in man finds the greatest satisfaction and fulfillment that he was created to know. It is the pleasure of the garden recaptured and the hope of glory renewed. Luke explains quite simply in Luke 9:32, “Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory.” It was at this point of the experience that Peter declared their delight to be there.

The second part of Peter’s comment explains why he did not know what he was saying and that he would later, with greater understanding, be grateful that Jesus did not grant his request. “Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”<sup>48</sup> Peter did not yet understand the necessity of future events that must take place for gospel fulfillment of restoration of worship for the church, but he well understood the depravity and deficiency suffered from past events of rebellion and alienation by Israel. The glory had departed from the temple and Israel’s worship life held no court in the presence of God. It had become empty ritual and practice even where there was an honest attempt to follow the old covenant practices. But with the life that God’s presence gave, and with the hope of glory apparently now restored, Peter

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<sup>48</sup> Luke 9:33. Part of the problem here is “that Peter erred in equating Jesus with Moses and Elijah. In contrast to Moses and Elijah, who were God’s servants, Jesus is God’s Son, the Chosen One” (Stein, *Luke*, 284).

seemed to think, just as Moses and the Israelites set up the tabernacle to house the glory of God in the wilderness, “that it is good that all of the participants can preserve this moment for some length of time.”<sup>49</sup> While not realizing this would prevent the fulfillment of the greater covenant, he seemed to see it as a greater fulfillment of the old covenant. It was seemingly a good desire in his glory-saturated stupor, but a shortsighted and misinformed one. Accommodating his request would prevent the fulfillment of the gospel plan of redemption, which is apparently why Jesus remained silent. What Peter was still realizing, but had not yet fully grasped was that in Jesus the presence of God had “tabernacled” among them. Again, referring to John’s description, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). But this was just a step in the process of God’s more wonderful plan for worship restoration and the exaltation of Christ. Honoring Peter’s request would prolong, if not prevent, the fulfillment of the cross and the resurrection’s greater glory. Mediation of the new covenant was still required so that the gospel could be “good news” to a much wider world through the exaltation of Christ.<sup>50</sup> Until the ratification of the new covenant, worshipers could only hope to gaze upon a fading glory from a distance rather than become a part of it and transformed by it. The new covenant had to be secured and the Holy Spirit had to be poured out upon Abraham’s sons and daughters.<sup>51</sup>

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the people of God would become the temple of God (1 Cor 6:19). Peter would later come to understand and teach this great

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<sup>49</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 264.

<sup>50</sup> Phil 2:8–9 proclaims the necessary progression: “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.”

<sup>51</sup> Even the disciples’ experience on the Mount of Transfiguration is more like Moses’ that worshipers today. They gazed upon the glory of God in the incarnate Christ, which was unique. But they did so with human eyes rather than a transformed heart. It was an external experience that foreshadowed the internal reality.

truth to God's people. "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Worship would no longer be a matter of time and place, but of "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Peter's comments provide insight into how the disciple perceived and valued what was happening as it was happening—it was a worship event unlike any other—one that he wanted to savor. Nevertheless, God's ways are higher and he directly intervened in the moment to direct Peter's attention away from the magnitude of the event to the person of Jesus.

At this point in the narrative a most inexplicable thing occurred. A cloud overshadowed them.<sup>52</sup> The disciples clearly realized that this was not a meteorological event and they became terrified. The first appearance of this particular cloud was almost 1,500 years before on Mt. Sinai. It was the same cloud that passed by Moses when he asked God to allow him to "see his glory" and he was allowed to see its afterglow. However, he was not allowed to enter it. It was the same cloud that surrounded Mt. Sinai so that no one could approach the mountain; that later filled the tabernacle to such a degree that Moses could not enter it; and that years after that filled Solomon's temple on dedication day so that the priests could not enter it. And it was this same cloud that Ezekiel saw rise from the Cherubim and move to the threshold of the temple because of Israel's apostasy, then slowly move over the east gate of the temple to disappear over the Mount of Olives and had not been seen again for 600 years. There had been no recorded sight of it since Ezekiel's day but at this moment, with no advance warning, it came upon

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Stein explains, "The divine presence comes upon the scene in the form of a cloud, a common symbol of the presence of God (Exod 16:10; 19:9; 24:15–18; 33:9–11; 40:34; 2 Sam 22:12; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Ezek 10:3–4; Ps 18:11). Clouds are also a means of taking people up to heaven (Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 11:12) and are associated with the parousia (Mark 13:26; Matt 24:30). In Luke 21:27 Luke used the singular 'cloud' rather than the plural found in Mark 13:26 and Matt 24:30, tying the parousia more closely to the transfiguration. He also used the singular 'cloud' in Acts 1:9" (Stein, *Luke*, 286).

these three disciples and enshrouded them. It was the *shekinah* glory<sup>53</sup> of God and the view from below must have looked similar to the scene 1,500 years before on Mt. Sinai as the top of this mountain became capped with the glory of God. Only one other person in history had been inside that cloud before. Moses was allowed to enter it to receive the old covenant tablets and to commune with God. The priests were not allowed to enter it. The people were not allowed to come near it. Since the veil was placed in the Holy of Holies to cut off the intimate presence once known in the Garden of Eden, it had been hidden completely or fearfully viewed from a distance. Now the disciples were in the cloud!

What was the difference now? Why could the people not come near the cloud on Sinai but Peter, James, and John could stand in the midst of it on the top of this mountain? Why were the priests, even after all of their preparations of ritualistic cleansing, unable to enter the temple on Dedication Day when the cloud descended, but these three disciples were not struck dead as it engulfed them? And why could Moses (the “friend of God”) not enter the Tent of Meeting when this presence filled it, but these men who would soon flee at Jesus’ arrest and in at least one case deny him publicly three times, became the first people on earth to ever behold the manifestation of the glory of God in the person of Christ? It was because of the presence of the one who brought them into the cloud. It was a gift of the mediator to share this with them in worship and a brief taste of what he was going to accomplish on their behalf (and that of all new covenant worshipers). A voice came out of the cloud, proclaiming, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” (Luke 9:35). Matthew expresses the message of the voice a little differently, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt 17:5). Both

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<sup>53</sup> The *shekinah* glory is a reference to the visible glory of God. See Richard R. Melick, Jr. “The Glory of God in the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, and the General Epistles,” in *The Glory of God*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 103.

phrases—“Chosen One” and “in whom I am well pleased,” indicate favor bestowed upon Christ that no other has ever possessed. It is not the disciples who are pleasing to God. In fact, it is more likely that when they heard the command to “listen to him” in the manifest presence of a holy God, every instance of not listening to him likely flooded their minds and grieved their hearts. This may be the explanation of the terror that came next. The compulsive human response to the holiness of God is well described by Isaiah’s experience of the exalted Lord in Isaiah 6: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (Isa 6:5). While Peter indicated that it was good for them to be there at the beginning of this episode, this quickly changed. When the cloud overshadowed them and the voice spoke from the cloud, Matthew explains, “they fell on their faces and were terrified” (Matt 17:6). It no longer seemed good to be there and there was no more desire to build tabernacles. Now the problem of worship became real.

The centrality of Jesus’ role as mediator in this experience and indeed in all of worship is poignantly portrayed in the next verse: “But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’ And when they lifted their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”<sup>54</sup> Moses and Elijah had disappeared and there only remained Christ, who is the central figure. This singular focus upon Christ in this narrative serves in an allegorical fashion to demonstrate a theological imperative. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). Bob Kauflin undergirds this point in his book *Worship Matters*, “Worship itself cannot lead us into God’s presence. *Only Jesus himself* can bring us into God’s presence, and he has done it through a single sacrifice that will never be repeated—only joyfully recounted

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<sup>54</sup> Matt 17:6–7. Commenting on this verse Blomberg explains, “‘They saw no one except Jesus’ reads more literally, *They did not see anyone but Jesus only*. The word *only* (*monos*) comes at the end of the sentence for emphasis. The disciples must focus on Christ alone. He will prove sufficient for their needs” (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 264).

and trusted in.”<sup>55</sup>

### **The Transforming Power of Worship**

When the disciples made their way back down the mountain, Jesus was able to explain things to them that they had not previously understood. There had been questions about who Jesus was and when Elijah would come and Jesus’ proclamation of the necessity of his death and resurrection. While their comprehension was not perfect, Matthew writes that after this experience “the disciples understood.”<sup>56</sup> When Peter wrote of this event later in his second letter, he revealed some of this comprehension Jesus gave them:

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain (2 Pet 1:16–18).

The experience of the revelation of the glory of Christ had opened their eyes to new understanding, encouraged their faith in the face of opposition, and permanently changed the course of their lives. Peter, James and John were not perfect, but they went on to be instrumental to the advance of the kingdom of God that they have just seen revealed. Their preaching of the gospel expanded the kingdom into new areas of the world and helped many become worshipers. More than anything else, they became followers of Christ. This experience and many others like it would transform them into his image and empower them to be like him as they became a part of his body. Webber

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<sup>55</sup> Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 74; emphasis Kauflin’s.

<sup>56</sup> Matt 17:13. Though Jesus told the disciples to keep silent about these events until after his departure, their reference to “what they had seen” in Luke 9:37 expresses the impact of the event. Stein writes of this phrase, “The verb is an intensive perfect, which indicates that this scene produced lasting effects on the disciples” (Stein, *Luke*, 287).

concludes,

The transfiguration of Christ, together with his resurrection, embodies the promise of a corresponding transformation for those who are his. The same Greek word used for Jesus' transfiguration is used by Paul for the transformation of the life of the believer (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18) and John promises that "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).<sup>57</sup>

It is not the experience alone that causes such transformation; at least not on the surface. An experience without meaning has little value, but an experience with meaning and significance is a transforming event. This is not the first time that they have encountered the information that Jesus was God's Son. In fact, Peter had already confessed this belief the previous week. However, this is the first time that they have seen the evidence of his deity in such a profound manner linked to their understanding. The miracles were amazing, but many saw the miracles and turned away later. Jesus taught as one having authority, but many could not understand the teaching or came to conclude that the teaching required a change of life for which they did not possess the faith to implement. While the miracles and the teaching were necessary components of Jesus' ministry, what changed on that mountain was the degree of faith in the disciples as they beheld the manifestation of the teaching. The miracles and the teaching were signs and words to point back to the person of Christ. The disciples experienced the person of Christ in a manner that changed them. It could be said that this was the incarnation of Christ in their worship experience. Christ being glorified before their eyes served to codify his deity and Lordship in their lives. This produces the glorious byproduct of worship—it infuses faith and transforms its participants, as "Word becomes flesh"! It is in this manner that religious affections are at work in worship. The Spirit operates upon the affections to reveal the person of Christ to the unveiled heart of the worshiper. The gospel is required for this to take place.

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<sup>57</sup> Webber, *Biblical Foundations of Worship*, 200.

In contrasting the experience of Moses on Mt. Sinai with the experience of the Mount of Transfiguration, the gospel shape of worship becomes more evident. While both were experiences of the manifested presence of God, only one was tethered to the new covenant and its fulfillment of the old covenant. While Mount Sinai foreshadowed a more glorious access to God's presence, the Mount of Transfiguration demonstrated that a time is coming and now is!

### **Beholding the Glory of the Lord—2 Corinthians 3:7–18**

There is however a very significant difference between the two events that Paul highlights in his second letter to Corinth. It is this passage that lies at the scriptural foundation for this study's understanding of transforming worship. It arises from the profound difference between the old covenant, which was a weaker covenant, and the new covenant that Hebrews speaks of as the "better covenant" (Heb 7:22). That difference is the presence of Christ's role in the new covenant and that is why New Testament worship is also Christ-centered worship. At Mt. Sinai a Passover and an Exodus made the experience possible. In the Gospels, however, the fulfillment of these "types" is now present. Sinclair Ferguson points out in his commentary, "[Jesus'] death would be the new Passover; the salvation of his people would be the new Exodus."<sup>58</sup> Jesus' role precipitated a new worship. In *Created for Worship*, Noel Due states, "In a very real sense this is the goal of the process of redemption, just as it was in the Old Testament exodus. God brought Israel out from the bondage of Egypt that they might serve/worship him. God's mercies have brought this new humanity out from the bondage of its idolatry, legalism, guilt, fear, and the judgment of God's wrath, to serve him in a

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<sup>58</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Let's Study Mark* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 136.

new and living way.”<sup>59</sup> The typology of Sinai and the Old Testament is instructive and inspiring, but the difference Jesus makes is extraordinary. Jesus’ perfect work on the cross ratified a new covenant and a new access to the presence of God—“But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed” (2 Cor 3:16).

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul contrasts the two covenants. The old covenant he calls “the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone” which came with such a glory that “the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of it” (2 Cor 3:7). He then asks the question, “Will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? (2 Cor 3:8). He continues to elaborate on this comparison between “the ministry of condemnation” and “the ministry of righteousness.” If the former had glory, then the latter has exceeding glory. In fact, in comparison it makes the former really seem to have “no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it” and “much more will what is permanent have glory” (2 Cor 3:9–11). The degree of the glory is one difference in the two covenants and is demonstrated by the presence or absence of the veil. Moses had to put a veil over his face and as a result, the Israelites could not gaze upon the glory of God. Even then, it was a fading glory. It was a fading glory because apart from Christ they could barely glimpse the “afterglow” that Moses had seen in the cleft of the Rock. Even in that, they were fearful and could not approach that glory, just as they could not approach or enter the cloud. Even to this day, “whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their heart. But when one turns to the Lord (the rock Moses had been hidden in), the veil is removed.” Those who are hidden in Christ have the veil lifted. Which leads to Paul’s conclusion: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord

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<sup>59</sup> Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 185.

who is the Spirit.”<sup>60</sup>

Those who are in Christ can look upon the glory of God because of Christ. And not only can they enter the cloud of God’s glory, but when they gaze upon the glory of the Lord in the face of Christ, they are transformed (or transfigured) into that same glory. They are conformed to the image of Christ who is the exact representation of the invisible God (Heb 1:3). In worship, when God’s glory is revealed in Christ, worshipers are transformed into this same image. Christ-centered worship is transforming worship. One cannot look upon the glory of God and remain the same. John Piper states, “The primary way to become more and more like Christ is to lift the veil and fix your gaze on his glory and hold him in view . . . . In other words we are transformed into his image by looking at his glory. You become like what you constantly behold.”<sup>61</sup> Philip E. Hughes, in his commentary on 2 Corinthians, draws the connection between 2 Corinthians 3 and the Mount of Transfiguration:

Further light is thrown on this passage when we consider what took place on the occasion of the transfiguration of Christ. On that mountain height Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ, but it was *Christ alone* who was transfigured with heavenly radiance before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. It was *His* face that shone as the sun and *His* garments that became white and dazzling. It was of *Him alone* that the voice from the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” And thereafter the disciples saw no one, *save Jesus only*. It is He who abides. The glory in which Moses and Elijah appeared was not their own but Christ’s glory—the glory which He had had with the Father before the world was (Jn. 17:5). Just as in the wilderness the glory which shown from Moses’ face was the reflected glory of Yahweh, so too on the mount of transfiguration the glory with

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<sup>60</sup> 2 Cor 3:15–18. John MacArthur explains, “The veil of a hardened heart made them think they could save themselves. Causing them, therefore, to miss the meaning of both covenants . . . It is only when ‘a person turns to the Lord’ (cf. Isa. 45:22) that ‘the veil is taken away’ . . . Paul borrowed the image of salvation as a ‘veil’ being ‘taken away’ from Moses’ unveiling himself in God’s presence: “Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out” (Ex. 34:34). Moses removed his veil because he wanted a direct vision of God’s glory. So it is with sinners who turn to God through Jesus Christ. ‘The veil is taken away’ and they have a clear vision of the glory of God reflected in the face of Jesus Christ” (John MacArthur, *2 Corinthians*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003], 112).

<sup>61</sup> John Piper, “Summer is for Seeing and Showing Christ,” *Desiring God*, June 11, 1995, accessed 29 November, 2011, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/summer-is-for-seeing-and-showing-christ>.

which he was surrounded was the glory of the same Yahweh. Christ's alone is the full, the abiding, the evangelical glory. To turn to Him is to turn to the Light of the world. To follow Him is not to walk in darkness, but to have the light of life (Jn. 8:12).<sup>62</sup>

Simon S. Lee in his work, *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believer's Transformation*, also shows similarities between the transfiguration accounts and 2 Corinthians 3.

Specifically, "both draw on Moses Transformation account in Exod 34."<sup>63</sup> There appears to be a triangulation of these three passages (Sinai, Transfiguration and 2 Cor 3) with the new covenant interpretation given by Paul in this passage. Whereas, Moses is the only one who experiences transformation in Exodus 34; and Jesus is the only one transformed at the transfiguration; "For Paul, however, the transformation experience is not limited to a special few . . . but instead becomes the normal experience for believers as a result of their exposure to the glory of Christ."<sup>64</sup> Lee continues,

It is also interested to notice the strong δόξα motif in 2 Corinthians 3–4 and in the transfiguration story, which is clearly from the Mosaic transformation. While this particular use of the word δόξα is not paralleled elsewhere in Paul, it is one of the most important themes of the transfiguration story. Paul insists on the far greater glory which accompanies his New Covenant ministry and as a result of his unveiling of the Gospel of the Lord of glory, "we all" are enabled to see the glory. This revelatory experience of the glory, according to Paul, comes from God's new creation activity of spreading "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" finds its narrative parallel especially in Luke's version of the transfiguration story. Luke refers to Jesus' altered face in 9:29 and associates it with the δόξα in 9:31; And the three disciples are said to witness the δόξα in 9:32.<sup>65</sup>

John Calvin noted the role of the image of God in man when exposed to the glory of God. "Observe, that the design of the gospel is this—that the image of God, which had been effaced by sin, may be stamped anew upon us, and that the advancement

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<sup>62</sup> Philip E. Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 112–13; emphasis Hughes'.

<sup>63</sup> Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believer's*, 80.

<sup>64</sup> Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believer's*, 81.

<sup>65</sup> Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believer's*, 82. For a collection of essays on the theological concept of the δόξα (e.g., glory of God) as part of the Theology in Communities series, see Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *The Glory of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

of this restoration may be continually going forward in us during our whole life, because God makes his glory shine forth in us by little and little.”<sup>66</sup> This is the effect of the greater covenant. Finally, R. Kent Hughes explains,

Moses’ temporary exposure to the glory of the Lord worked a mighty transformation in and upon him. But the new-covenant ministry of Paul is even more transforming because our exposure is constant and continuous (there is no veil). And more, it works in the reverse order of Moses’ experience, first by effecting a *moral* transformation into God’s image . . . The change is progressive, so that willing exposure to the sunlight of God’s presence will burn his image ever deeper into our character and will. And ultimately, at Christ’s appearance, we will undergo a *physical* transformation in glory. This is what Paul’s ministry offered, and this is the grand and great difference between his and Moses’ ministry.<sup>67</sup>

G. K. Beale in *We Become What We Worship* writes, “People resemble what they revere, either for ruin or restoration. God has made all people to reflect, to be imaging beings. People will always reflect something, whether it be God’s character or some feature of the world.”<sup>68</sup> Reflecting on several New Testament passages Beale applies his thesis to sanctification: “Thus to be ‘transformed [*metamorphoō*] by the renewing of your mind’ in Romans 12:2 is the virtual equivalent to “becoming conformed [*symmorphos*] to the image of [God’s] son” in Romans 8:29. Such an equivalence is pointed to further from observing the combination of renewal and image in Colossians 3:10: “you have put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge *according to the image* of the One who created him . . . (also Eph 4:22–24). Similarly, 2 Corinthians 3:18 affirms that those who want to be near the Lord will take on his likeness.”<sup>69</sup> This idea of transformation (e.g., “metamorphosis”) that results from beholding divine glory in

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<sup>66</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 187.

<sup>67</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 80. See also Isa 25:7, “And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.”

<sup>68</sup> G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 284.

<sup>69</sup> Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 218; emphasis Beale’s.

worship events such as those described in the transfiguration and in 2 Corinthians 3, is also used in relation to a lifestyle of unceasing worship described in Romans 12:1–2.<sup>70</sup> The connections between the two are once again quite clear as what takes place in the event is inextricably linked to what takes place in life. In this way, the event becomes a source of empowered lifestyle worship.

### **Worship as a Lifestyle**

Reflecting upon the quote above from John Piper,<sup>71</sup> it is important in this age of over-emphasis on the worship event, briefly to clarify the nature of biblical worship as a lifestyle. While the instances discussed thus far are essentially those of worship events, they are in the context of those who live a lifestyle of worship and teach as much about a lifestyle of worship as a worship event. John Witvliet writes, “It is the cumulative power of transformation that needs special attention for many Christians today.”<sup>72</sup> He continues, “Worship both reflects and shapes a worldview and way of life. And much of this formative power happens very quietly.”<sup>73</sup> The modern effect in our worship is to expect and even pursue the dramatic in the event of worship. That does occur at times. Sometimes this is purely emotional and sometimes it is truly a powerful work of the Spirit. However, when worshipers do not feel powerfully moved by a sermon or a song,

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<sup>70</sup> John MacArthur explains, “The phrase ‘are being transformed’ translates a present passive participle of the verb *metamorphoō* and refers to believers’ progressive sanctification. The Christian life is a continual process of growing into the ‘image’ of the Lord Jesus Christ, ascending ‘from’ one level of ‘glory’ to another” (MacArthur, *2 Corinthians*, 116). Other similar passages that do not reference this specific word but indicate the same process are Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 15:49, 51–53, Phil 3:13–14, 21, Col 3:10, and 1 John 3:2.

<sup>71</sup> “The primary way to become more and more like Christ is to lift the veil and fix your gaze on his glory and hold him in view . . . . In other words we are transformed into his image by looking at his glory. You become like what you constantly behold.”

<sup>72</sup> John Witvliet, “The Cumulative Power of Transformation in Public Worship” in *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation*, ed. Alexis D. Abernathy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 42.

<sup>73</sup> Witvliet, “Cumulative Power of Transformation,” 51.

they are often not likely to say, “The Holy Spirit showed up today.” Witvliet continues, “This can leave us unaware—and thus ungrateful for—the work of the Spirit over time to hone, sharpen, and form us into the image of Christ.”<sup>74</sup> “Liturgical participation quietly but powerfully sculpts our souls.”<sup>75</sup> Paul describes the long-term nature of lifestyle worship in Romans 12:1–2:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>76</sup>

This passage offers as close a statement as any Pauline passage for a working New Testament description of worship, but its context is not that of a worship event, at least not initially. Tom Schreiner writes of these verses, “It is . . . clear that the exhortation here flows from and is grounded on 1:18–11:36. Moreover, these verses summarize the admonitions that follow in 12:3–15:13.”<sup>77</sup> This worship description is a summary of the quality of devotion of one’s entire life. The word used here for “worship” is the Greek word *λατρείαν*,<sup>78</sup> which is often rendered “service.” This may be contrasted with a similar usage of the word earlier in the letter in which Paul warns against idolatry, which is also a form of lifestyle worship. Paul writes in chapter 1, “They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped [ἐσεβάσθησαν]<sup>79</sup> and served [ἐλάτρευσαν] the creature

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<sup>74</sup> Witvliet, “Cumulative Power of Transformation,” 43.

<sup>75</sup> Witvliet, “Cumulative Power of Transformation,” 52.

<sup>76</sup> Rom 12:1–2.

<sup>77</sup> Tom Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ. A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic, 2001), 252.

<sup>78</sup> Johannes P. Louw, and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “λατρεύω, λατρεία, αςf” (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 53.14. “To perform religious rites as a part of worship—to perform religious rites, to worship, to venerate, worship.”

<sup>79</sup> Louw-Nida, s.v. “σέβομαι, σεβάζομαι, εὐσεβέω,” 53.53. “To express in attitude and ritual

rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”<sup>80</sup> Schreiner writes, “Surrendering one’s life to God is true worship, and the glory and thanks previously given to idols are now given to God . . . True worship is not confined to cultic acts, nor do cultic acts receive much emphasis in Paul. Worship involved honoring God by submitting to his sovereignty in every sphere of life.”<sup>81</sup> In contrast to his earlier warning against idolatry in Romans 1, Paul uses the language of sacrifice in Romans 12 to express the totality of devotion of one’s life to God as an expression of worship.

Paul’s admonition to believers in using Old Testament sacrificial imagery is to portray New Testament life sacrifice. As animals were brought into worship to be killed in the Old Testament cultic sacrificial system, clearly it was a complete and total offering. The bulls and goats offered at the temple were not afforded the opportunity to deny the purpose for which they were devoted. They were dead—given fully in worship. In the same manner, those in Christ are called to present their own bodies as living sacrifices—dead to the old life and its idols—wholly devoted to the Lord to the same degree that the animal was in an Old Testament sacrifice. It is out of the devotion of a life lived this way that authentic worship events may take place.<sup>82</sup> It is also out of the regular participation

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one’s allegiance to and regard for deity—‘to worship, to venerate.’ This is the only word used in conjunction with another word for worship in Pauline writing.”

<sup>80</sup> Rom 1:25.

<sup>81</sup> Schreiner, *Paul*, 253.

<sup>82</sup> In Rom 12, Paul moves seamlessly from *lifestyle* worship in vv. 1–2 to the *worship gathering* in verses 3–20. In 1 Corinthians, Paul ends chap. 10 with lifestyle phrases such as “do all to the glory of God” (v. 31) and “be imitators” of Christ (11:1), to very specific instruction on worship gatherings (Chap. 11–14) beginning with head coverings and the Lord’s Supper in chap. 11. And in Ephesians, he begins chap. 4 calling them to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” (v. 1) and by v. 11 he is describing gifts and actions that occur in corporate worship. James D. G. Dunn writes of the Pauline perspective on worship gatherings, “the body of Christ comes to visible expression pre-eminently in and through worship: it is most clearly in worship that the diversity of functions (=charismata) demonstrate their mutual interdependence and unifying force (hence the discussion of charismata in I Cor. 12–14 centres on the assembly at worship)” (James D. G. Gunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry in the Character of Earliest Christianity* [London: SCM Press, 2006], 140).

in transforming worship gatherings that a lifestyle of living sacrifice is nurtured. David Peterson is helpful in considering these bookend passages found in the first twelve chapters of doctrinal treatise found in Romans. He writes, “Foundational to the apostle’s theology of worship is the teaching about mankind’s refusal to glorify and serve God acceptably (1:18–3:20).”<sup>83</sup> He continues, “Glorifying God means not exchanging ‘the glory of the immortal God’ for the lie of idolatry (Rom 1:21–23).”<sup>84</sup> While this is the negative approach to lifestyle worship, the positive approach of the same begins with embracing the truth about God, which leads to a very different manner of life. This is where the transformation associated with worship occurs. Knowledge of God in this sense precipitates a lifestyle that is pleasing to God.<sup>85</sup> Again Peterson writes, “Paul later links the renewing of the mind with the notion of right worship being restored through the work of Christ (12:1–2).”<sup>86</sup> This is contrasted with another parallel from Romans 1 in which Paul states, “What is suppressed is specifically ‘the truth about God’ (Rom. 1:25, RSV) . . . The essence of sin is the holding back of a true knowledge of God and its implications, and therefore a failure to worship him acceptably.”<sup>87</sup> If Paul believes the essence of sin is the holding back of a true knowledge of God, then his perspective of the essence of true worship must involve the revelation of, and then response to, true knowledge of God. This truth must include God’s redemptive nature through Christ as will be demonstrated below. From this can be derived a description of lifestyle worship: a life lived as wholly offered to God, exemplified by the transformation of a renewed

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<sup>83</sup> David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), 169.

<sup>84</sup> Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 170.

<sup>85</sup> In John 17:3 (Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer) Jesus characterizes the very substance of eternal life as “that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

<sup>86</sup> Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 170.

<sup>87</sup> Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 169.

mind as the result of the continuous acknowledgment of and response to the truth about God and his gospel.

Out of the overflow of a lifestyle of worship comes enthusiastic and authentic worship events and out of a consistent pattern of participating in worship events, a lifestyle of worship flourishes. The writer of Hebrews writes of this interplay, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”<sup>88</sup> Witvliet concludes, “Our responsiveness to dramatic Spirit-led intervention and to quiet Spirit-led habits is so intertwined that neither is conceivable without the other.”<sup>89</sup> This emphasizes the priority of the church worship gatherings, as well as the lifestyle of worship that they facilitate. It is there in the gatherings that acknowledge the truth about God (e.g., “in my name”) that Christ has promised that he would manifest his presence in a special way.

### **The Manifest Presence of Christ**

Having acknowledged the tendency of those in this age to over emphasize corporate worship experiences with little concern for lifestyle (even to the point of a hypocritical juxtaposition of a life that is incongruent with words spoken and sung in worship), there is also a danger in going to the other extreme. Worship gatherings should occur regularly. They should flow from the converging devotion of those who view their lives as living sacrifices of worship and are called to associate in covenantal church membership with one another. The convergence of these private streams of devotion in corporate gatherings creates a rushing river of praise unto the glory of God. It is in the gathering that worshipers rehearse the gospel that is transforming them to live lives of

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<sup>88</sup> Heb 10:24–25.

<sup>89</sup> Witvliet, “Cumulative Power of Transformation,” 58.

worship outside of the assembly. They gather for many reasons—prayer, praise, teaching, encouragement, fellowship, etc.—but the result should be empowered lives that are overcoming sin. This transformation is made possible because of the promise that Jesus made to attend their worship gatherings in a special empowering way.

It is not simply because individual worshipers have gathered corporately that worship becomes powerful. It is not a pep rally that feeds on emotional energy, or a political rally that is attempting to persuade the one in power to act, by virtue of mass numbers. It is a spiritual gathering that feeds on spiritual power; and the size of the gathering is of no concern. Jesus promised, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”<sup>90</sup> Craig Blomberg writes, “God is of course omnipresent, but he is uniquely present in every Christian gathering as his Spirit indwells believers.”<sup>91</sup> After the ascension, the Holy Spirit was poured out in a manner that manifests the presence of Christ to those who are in Christ. Those who belong to Christ now possess the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9). When a group of those who are part of the body of Christ assemble in his name, the result is a unique reality of his presence. Paul expressed this reality when he addressed the worship gathering in this manner: “When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus . . . the power of our Lord Jesus Christ” is also present.<sup>92</sup> In another place he writes of the relationship between Christ and his church in this manner: “[Christ] is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.”<sup>93</sup> This power is present for transforming purposes. It is not simply to cause one to marvel that Jesus is alive, but in this marvel that the bride of Christ is being changed into the same image. John MacArthur writes of this particular verse, “It was [Christ’s] mighty power working in

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<sup>90</sup> Matt 18:20. See also Acts 4:30, 31; Matt 28:20; John 12:26; 20:20, 26.

<sup>91</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 281.

<sup>92</sup> 1 Cor 5:4.

<sup>93</sup> 2 Cor 13:3.

them that both redeemed and was sanctifying them.”<sup>94</sup>

This has been the reality of New Testament worship since the ascension. Ralph P. Martin writes of the early church, “The hall-mark which stamped the assembling together of Christians (Heb. 10:25) as something for which no other religion can provide a parallel, was the presence of the living Lord in the midst of His own (Mt. 18:20; 28:20).”<sup>95</sup> Larry Hurtado similarly explains, “They [NT Christians] experienced their assemblies as not merely human events but as having a transcendent dimension. They sensed God as directly and really present in their meetings through his Spirit.”<sup>96</sup> This should likewise transform the perception of the worship event today. It is not just a religious exercise where intellectual facts are rehearsed, inspiring songs are sung, and creeds are memorized. It should be seen as an occasion for “the manifestation and experience of divine powers.” With this greater reality in mind, expectations should be high that “in the worship setting God [will] be encountered in demonstrative fashion.”<sup>97</sup> The truths of God’s word is not just invoked, it is experienced.

Christopher Ellis explains the worship gathering in this way: “Worship is the *central* activity of the Church because it is here that what it believes is most clearly expressed and it is here that it regularly encounters God and is confronted with what God has done in the past and what God has promised for the future.”<sup>98</sup> Worshipers can anticipate such lofty expectations because God is the one who has set them. He is the one who has promised his divine presence to be there when the church gathers. Ellis

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<sup>94</sup> MacArthur, *2 Corinthians*, 455.

<sup>95</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1964), 130.

<sup>96</sup> Larry Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 50.

<sup>97</sup> Hurtado, *Origins of Christian Worship*, 56–57.

<sup>98</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 4; emphasis Ellis’.

continues, “This is not quite as daring as it might seem, so long as we see the gathering as a gathering *by God* of worshippers who truly seek to worship.” He has promised this for those who gather in the name of Jesus.<sup>99</sup> “To gather ‘in the name of Jesus’ means the worshippers aligning with the will of Jesus revealed in Scripture [the truth about God]; it means that the proceedings and the relationships should somehow carry Christ-like characteristics. To gather in this way will inevitably result in some kind of change, as worshippers pattern themselves after the Jesus in whose name they gather.”<sup>100</sup> This is done by the work of the Spirit of Christ who is given to believers upon conversion and who is manifesting the real presence of Christ in their gathered worship. Nowhere has this been more emphasized and debated in church doctrine and history than at the communion table. What is true of the table is true of the gathering as a whole, but it is most true at the table. Sinclair Ferguson explains his view regarding the real presence of Christ at the Lord’s Supper:

It should be clear now why the role of the Spirit is so vital in the Supper. Only by understanding his work can we avoid falling into the mistakes which have dogged both Catholic (*ex opera operato*) and evangelical (memorialist) misunderstandings of the Supper. It is not by the church’s administration, or merely by the activity of our memories, but through the Spirit that we enjoy communion with Christ, crucified, risen, and now exalted. For Christ is not localized in the bread and wine (the Catholic view), nor is he absent from the Supper as though our highest activity were remembering him (the memorialist view). Rather, he is known through the elements, *by the Spirit*. Just as in the preaching of the Word he is present not in the Bible (locally), or by believing, but by the ministry of the Spirit. The body and blood of Christ are not enclosed in the elements, since he is at the right hand of the Father (Acts 3:21); but by the power of the Spirit we are brought into his presence and he stands among us.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matt 18:20); “When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus” (1 Cor 5:4).

<sup>100</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 6; emphasis Ellis’.

<sup>101</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 1996), 200–01; emphasis Ferguson’s. Ferguson spends a great portion of this chapter considering John Calvin’s “Reformed” view of the Table. However, his biblical explanation of the Spirit’s role here is John 16:13–14: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He

Anne Dutton (1692–1765), an eighteenth-century English Baptist, also represents this real spiritual presence view of the table. In her *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, Dutton writes with apparent allusions to the Song of Solomon:

It is our King, as our Bridegroom, that commands us to *do this*: And as he hereby calls us into his Presence-Chamber, so to honour and delight us there, the *King* is pleas'd to *sit* with us, *at this Table*: To call us to *eat* as his *Friends*, of his Royal Dainties, and to *drink abundantly* as his *Beloved*, of the Wine which he hath mingled, while he here sheds abroad the Love of God in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost. Which excites and increaseth all our Graces, whereby he prepares us for, and gives us a Foretaste of Glory.<sup>102</sup>

She later explains, “We are call'd to the immediate Exercise of Faith on Christ, as spiritually present in his own Appointment; to sit with the King at his Table, and to draw near obediently, reverently, and joyfully, with a View to him, a Look of Faith cast upon him as our great *Redeemer*.” She continues in amazement that it is at the Table that “he admits us into the nearest Approach to his glorious Self, that we can make in an Ordinance-Way on the Earth, on this Side the Presence of his Glory in Heaven . . . And as such, cast our wondering Eyes upon the infinite Greatness of his Person, as *Emanuel, God with us!*”<sup>103</sup>

John Jefferson Davis in *Worship and the Reality of God* presents what he

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will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” In doing so he is affirming the Spirit's role in both the Table and in preaching (204). This is also Calvin's view, which is regarded as the “real spiritual presence” view. Writing in the *Institutes*, Calvin asserts “Even though it seems unbelievable that Christ's flesh, separated from us by such great distance, penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food, let us remember how far the secret power of the Holy Spirit towers above all our senses, and how foolish it is to measure his immeasurableness by our measure. What, then, our mind does not comprehend, let faith conceive: that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space. Now, that sacred partaking of his flesh and blood, by which Christ pours his life into us, as if it penetrated into our bones and marrow, he also testifies and seals in the Supper—not by presenting a vain and empty sign, but by manifesting there the effectiveness of his Spirit to fulfill what he promises. And truly he offers and shows the reality there signified to all who sit at that spiritual banquet, who accept such great generosity with true faith and gratefulness of heart” (John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill, tr. F. L. Battles [London: SCM Press, 1961], 4.17.10, and commented on in Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 201).

<sup>102</sup> Anne Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper, Relating to the Nature, Subjects, and right Partaking of this Solemn Ordinance* (London: J. Hart, 1748), 21; emphasis Dutton's.

<sup>103</sup> Dutton, *Thoughts on Lord's Supper*, 25; emphasis Dutton's.

considers “An Evangelical Theology of Real Presence.” His concern is that the “Reformation’s reaction against the Roman Catholic understanding of real presence as transubstantiation had the unintended effect of producing a sense of the ‘real absence’ of God in Protestant worship services.” He believes this was the result of Zwinglian symbolism and bare memorialism.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, “The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century presented, and still presents, a massive challenge to the biblical and premodern religious sensibility. Reality is no longer imaged as hierarchical, and certainly not with the triune God at the top of a metaphysical hierarchy, but as naturalistic, nongeocentric and de-centered. Heaven above and hell below are discarded as pre-scientific mythological notions, together with their disembodied inhabitants.”<sup>105</sup> Davis summarizes the historic context of this study:

The revival tradition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, so formative for the evangelical Protestant heritage, did not escape the flattening impact of the Enlightenment on worship practices and sensibilities. In the drama and excitement of personal conversion experiences in the revival meeting setting, the momentum of the religious meeting typically reached its climax in the sermon and the invitation to a decision for Christ, not in an invitation to an encounter with the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> John Jefferson Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God: An Evangelical Theology of Real Presence* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 35.

<sup>105</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 82.

<sup>106</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 84–85. Davis adds, “This frontier style of worship pushed American evangelicalism in the direction of simpler, more casual, less liturgical and more seeker-oriented styles of worship—a trajectory that can be traced from Whitefield to Finney to Billy Graham to Bill Hybels and Willow Creek at the present. In its weakest and crassest expressions, the frontier model of worship could focus the consciousness of its participants on the magnetic personality of the revival speaker rather than on the glory of the risen Christ, invisibly but truly present in the assembly in the power of the Spirit. The frontier model of worship had the unintended consequence of shifting the attention of the audience from the name of Jesus (heavenly *Kyrios*, “Lord,” Acts 2), invisible in heaven, to the big-name speaker, visibly on the earthly stage” (85). See also James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 160–61, for a description of the “Frontier Tradition” of worship. Also, Gordon W. Lathrop, “New Pentecost or Joseph’s Britches? Reflections on the History and Meaning of the Worship Ordo in the Megachurches,” *Worship* 76, no. 6 (2001): 521–38 for a discussion of Lathrop’s view that the antecedents of today’s seeker-driven megachurch worship services were found in Finney’s pragmatically driven approach to revivalism. Davis’ argument is that “contemporary evangelical Christians have lost their awareness of the *presence of the living and holy God* as the central reality of all true worship. And contemporary evangelicals, reflecting the influence of modern and postmodern culture, have

Davis urges the worshiper to view the worship gathering as an encounter with the “awesome presence of God.” He asserts, “It is God who has ‘called the meeting’ at this own initiative, not the people.” True worship then must be seen to be, “a believing and obedient response to God’s prior word of revelation in the context of the covenant established by God: *I will be your God, and you will be my people, and I will dwell with you.*” God is the central actor in biblical worship. It is not the people who take center stage in worship’s drama, but God. “The people assemble at God’s command, and they respond to his actions and directive words.”<sup>107</sup> Worship in spirit and truth should be seen as an encounter with the risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. This type of worship is not simply reflective, but active and relational. It is not just an earthly ritual, but also an engagement with heaven. It is not primarily a moment in time, but a connection with kingdom time. “By the believing assembly’s mystical and covenantal personal bond with the Lord through word, sacrament and Spirit, the assembly experiences sacred ‘time travel,’ re-experiencing with the Lord and his people the power of the saving events of the past, as well as tasting the reality of the future new creation in the ‘down payment’ of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>108</sup> It is also not just a gathering in an ordinary place but on holy ground—not because of a sacred building or furnishings, but because of

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shifted their focus in worship from the *objective* to the *subjective*, from the invisible God who is at the center of the event, to the visible preachers and praise leaders who are leading the events on stage, and to their own subjective feelings and desires” (Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 100; emphasis Davis’).

<sup>107</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 98; emphasis Davis’. Davis argues that modern evangelical’s collapse of the fourfold pattern of worship (gathering, word, table, sending) to a three-fold pattern that eliminates the Table and focuses on preaching as the climactic event, had the “unintentional result” of “shift[ing] the focus of the assembly’s attention from the unseen God to the very visible revival speaker, and to the musicians who were to ‘warm up’ the people for the speaker’s message.” (98–99)

<sup>108</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 92. See also, Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999) and Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God’s Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008). Webber explains in *Ancient-Future Worship*, “Here is what biblical worship does: It remembers God’s work in the past, anticipates God’s rule over all creation, and actualized both past and future in the present to transform persons, communities, and the world” (Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship*, 43).

a sacred presence. “When the assembly gathers in the name of Jesus and the Lord is present in the power of the Spirit (worshiping ‘in Spirit,’ Jn 4:24) then that location is a special location not in virtue of the building or room per se, but because the Lord himself is actually present.”<sup>109</sup> These are the true realities of worship and because they are true, the results are transformative.

In the Spirit, the believing local church on earth, resting under the Shekinah Glory (Isa 4:5–6) is being transformed, like Moses on Mount Sinai, by beholding the glory of God in the face of the risen, glorified Christ (2 Cor 3:18), with whom they are seated in the heavenlies. The standpoints of John (Rev 1:10; 4–5; 19), the writer of Hebrews (Heb 6:5; 12:22–24), and of Paul (1 Cor 5:4; 11:10; Eph 2:6), should not be viewed as extraordinary, but as the normal experience of the church in worship; its self-consciousness during worship can rightly be termed heavenly and pneumatic (“in spirit and in truth,” John 4:24).<sup>110</sup>

It is regarding this reality of the Lord’s real presence in corporate worship that Paul explains the wide range of its effect: even when “outsiders or unbelievers enter” they will be “convicted,” “called to account,” “have the secrets of his heart disclosed” and so “falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that *God is really among you*.”<sup>111</sup> It is also by this active real presence of Christ in worship that the people of God are “transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

### **Gospel-Shaped Worship**

The gospel is how man relates to God. It is how he came to relationship with

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<sup>109</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 95.

<sup>110</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 94.

<sup>111</sup> 1 Cor 14:23–25, emphasis mine.

God through Christ and it is how he accesses God's presence in worship through the mediator, Jesus Christ. Bryan Chapell writes,

Because it was the eternal intention of God to use Jesus to deliver his people (Eph. 1:4,5; Rev. 13:8), Christ cannot be rightly considered apart from his redemptive purpose. And since he is the most complete revelation of the glory of God, we learn that God's glory—while including power, holiness, wisdom—also necessarily includes the qualities of redemption: mercy, grace, love.<sup>112</sup>

God not only intends to shine his glory through Jesus via the gospel work (e.g., see him), but by the same manner he intends to share it with believers (e.g., become like him).

Peter writes, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature."<sup>113</sup> Paul writes to the Thessalonians that it is by the gospel that believers "obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>114</sup> Chapell later concludes, "Since the glory of God is inextricable from his work of redemption, the message of the preacher necessarily includes a redemptive focus."<sup>115</sup> This is not just true of the preacher's sermon, but it must be true also of the entire liturgy of worship. In other words, in order to see the glory of God in Christ and be transformed by it, one must look no farther, and nowhere else, than through the lens of the gospel.

### **The Gospel Defined**

Perhaps the most clear and definitive statement in Scripture regarding the gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you

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<sup>112</sup> Bryan Chapell, "A Pastoral Theology of the Glory of God," in *The Glory of God*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 192.

<sup>113</sup> 2 Pet 1:3–4.

<sup>114</sup> 2 Thess 2:14.

<sup>115</sup> Chapell, "Pastoral Theology," 197.

received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.<sup>116</sup>

Many hear the gospel preceding their conversion and then believe they are to move on to other things now that they have been saved. The gospel is not just evangelistic methodology; it is relational methodology between God and man. In other words, it is not just the front door to the Christian life; it is the entire house within which we dwell with the Lord!<sup>117</sup> As Paul writes above, the believer receives the gospel at salvation, stands upon the gospel in life, and is being saved (σώζεσθε; present passive indicative in the Greek) by the gospel throughout the work of sanctification until the day of glorification when salvation has completed its work and the full weight of his glory is revealed.

Jared Wilson seeks to awaken a better understanding of the gospel among God's people by capturing the gospel's many facets in the phrase "gospel wakefulness," which he describes as "treasuring Christ more greatly and savoring his power more sweetly." This sounds like a rich description of worship—treasuring and savoring Christ. He goes on to explain what he hopes people will have in worship:

An experience of such power—of such awakening—that it persists and endures, settling deep into the heart and the conscience of a believer that is carried through all emotional highs and lows. And yet, again, this is not a second conversion experience, as it were, but rather a deeper and fuller appreciation of the first and

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<sup>116</sup> 1 Cor 15:1–4.

<sup>117</sup> In *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, Jonathan Edwards refers to the gospel as "the true saint's superstructure." In contrast he refers to the gospel as having been merely "the hypocrite's foundation." While the hypocrite loves to hear of "the wonderful things of the gospel, of God's great love in sending His Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, and the great things Christ has purchased, and promised to the saints . . . if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as theirs, all this exalts them." Edwards' conclusion is that their joy "is really a joy in themselves, and not in God."<sup>117</sup> While the true saints find similar joy in the gospel's truth, and in hearing "the wonderful things of the gospel," their "first spring of joy" is that they delight in God (Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, ed. John E. Smith [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959], 251).

only necessary conversion, a greater vision of what we perhaps only barely and minimally perceived upon salvation (comparatively speaking).<sup>118</sup>

In Wilson's chapter entitled "Wakened Worship" he confesses that his original description of gospel wakefulness of "treasuring Christ more greatly and savoring his power more sweetly" really is just a "long way of writing *worship*."<sup>119</sup> To experience the gospel is to treasure Christ, which is to worship.

### **Shaping the Worship Event to the Gospel**

Constance Cherry writes, "The Christ Event now drives worship, for the object of our worship is Jesus Christ, the content of our worship is the story of Jesus Christ, the word proclaimed in Christian worship is the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the sacramental 'ratification' of our worship is our active participation at the Lord's Table, a celebration of the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>120</sup> Cherry demonstrates that the centrality of Christ's work should naturally be maintained in worship design and practice. The work of Christ is both the provision and the blueprint for worship. It also should inspire worship as the worshipers reflect on the gospel's work and their benefits as a result. Since it is the gospel that brought the worshipers *to* worship; it should therefore also be the gospel that will bring them *through* worship. In other words, if the gospel inspires worship, then the gospel should inform worship as well. As Bruce Leafblad writes,

An evangelical church celebrates and enacts the Evangel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—in its worship. Worship centers in Christ. The good news of redemption in Christ brings rejoicing, thanksgiving, and celebration in the "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" of worship. Sermons declare the manifold blessings and glories of

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<sup>118</sup> Jared C. Wilson, *Gospel Wakefulness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 24–25.

<sup>119</sup> Wilson, *Gospel Wakefulness*, 77; emphasis Wilson's. This is similar to Edward's description of the gospel's effect (see n136 above). See also Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 8.

salvation. The Lord's Table reenacts and proclaims the heart of the good news.<sup>121</sup> Gospel-shaped worship is gospel-informed worship. The gospel provides worship content, but it also should provide worship contour.<sup>122</sup> Marcus Felde, a missionary to Papua New Guinea, saw the organic shape of the gospel emerge in worship among new believers. In his article, "Truly Vernacular Worship for the Sake of the Gospel," he explains that while "not all worship is liturgical . . . all of it is patterned. The specific patterns we use are the products of more or less thoughtful, more or less conscious, decision-making by Christians obeying God's call to worship."<sup>123</sup> Therefore, it really is not a matter of whether or not corporate worship is in a pattern or shape, but rather what pattern or shape it is in.

Historically, the same shape has persisted throughout generations of new covenant worship in the church—including the Baptists. Though the New Testament does not give a prescribed order for worship, the earliest indications of worship are built around the same pattern. When liturgy has been based upon the word of God, it has filled out the shape of the gospel. Bryan Chapell writes, "Seeing how the gospel controls the structures that communicates it not only makes the continuity of church worship through the ages remarkable; such understanding also compels us to ask whether our worship structures truly reflect the gospel story in our time."<sup>124</sup> As Chapell evaluates five hundred years of documented worship liturgies his conclusion is that "the order of

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<sup>121</sup> Bruce Leafblad, "Evangelical Worship: A Biblical Model for the Twenty-First Century" in *Experience God in Worship*, ed. Michael D. Warden (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2000), 93.

<sup>122</sup> This process is referred to as "us[ing] the gospel as the liturgical hermeneutic" (Ward, *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 143.

<sup>123</sup> Marcus Felde, "Truly Vernacular Worship for the Sake of the Gospel," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 344 (1998): 39.

<sup>124</sup> Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 85.

worship in the Liturgy of the Word is actually a ‘re-presentation’ of the gospel.”<sup>125</sup> The Liturgy of the Upper Room (or Liturgy of the Table) obviously reinforces the gospel message again. The gospel is always present in faithful worship that is true to the word of God. His findings are represented in figure 1 (with his labels in parentheses).<sup>126</sup>

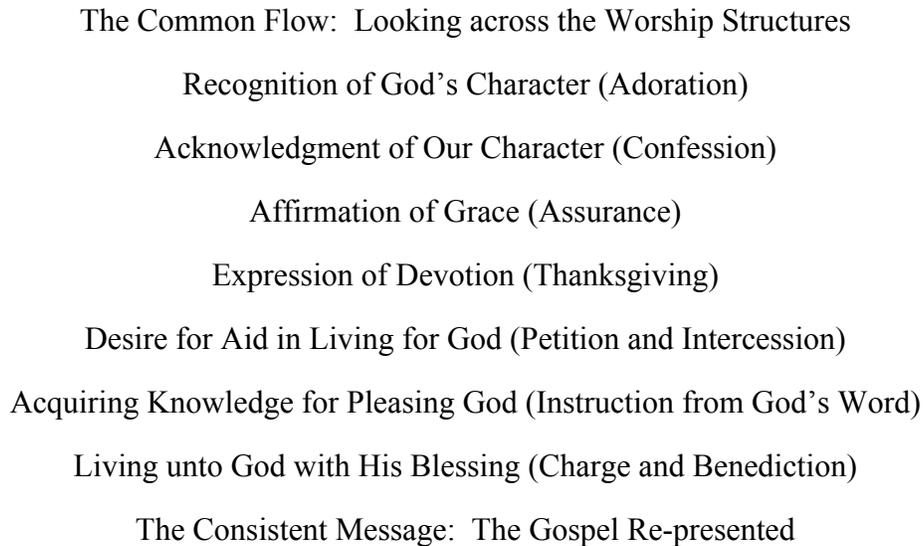


Figure 1. Bryan Chapell, Consistent Gospel Elements of Historic Liturgies

Chapell calls this the “gospel sequence” found in worship. “Worship that conforms to this redemptive pattern re-presents the gospel by moving worshipers down a path structured to parallel the progress of grace in the life of the believer.”<sup>127</sup> Cherry explains regarding the early church’s practice:

The story of the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus Christ constituted the substance of worship. This cannot be overstated. *Christ was (and must be) the content of worship.* When the narrative of the person and work of Jesus Christ permeates worship consistently, *worship itself becomes the message . . .*

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<sup>125</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 99.

<sup>126</sup> Figure 1 is from Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 100.

<sup>127</sup> Chapel, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 118.

every worship act in some way facilitates the narrative of who God is and what God has done for us in Christ.<sup>128</sup>

In following this pattern, worshipers are reminded of who God is; reminded of who they are; reminded of sin and forgiveness; and ultimately reminded of how transformation takes place. It is impossible to rely upon self-sufficiency when confronted with the need for grace to proceed (2 Cor 3:5). The shape of the gospel in a corporate worship event unveils the glory of God, which inspires adoration and praise. It also reminds of the need for grace and forgiveness, which compels surrender. Moving down this path in worship empowers believers for service and obedience. From start to finish, the unveiling of God's glory to the worshiper through the work of the gospel results in transforming the beholder to a follower of Christ, and therefore to the image of Christ himself. This pattern of the gospel should be traced over and over again every time the church gathers for worship. It is not a liturgy per se, so Baptists are not bound liturgically to a ritual. It is a pattern of relating to God through Christ. The gospel has countless facets to be explored from Scripture in public and private worship, and many different vantage points to it should be employed. Nevertheless, there is consistency in its pattern because it reflects the same central redemptive act. Bruce Leafblad points to Isaiah 6:1–11 for a biblical model for worship that outlines the *evangel*, or gospel re-presentation.

### **The Isaiah 6 Pattern of Worship**

A biblical model for evangelical churches drawn from Isaiah 6:1–11 and the New Testament (with Communion), is shown in figure 2.<sup>129</sup> In this model, Leafblad displays what he considers the dialogical nature of worship. He defines this as “the relational and conversational nature of true worship.”<sup>130</sup> Whereas, Chapell's model

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<sup>128</sup> Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 25; emphasis Cherry's.

<sup>129</sup> Figure 2 is from Leafblad, “Evangelical Worship,” 113.

<sup>130</sup> Leafblad, “Evangelical Worship,” 96.

demonstrates almost exclusively the “acts of the people” side of worship, Leafblad seeks to display both sides of the worship dialogue by identifying the acts of God in worship as well. Cherry called this the “pattern of revelation and response” in worship and

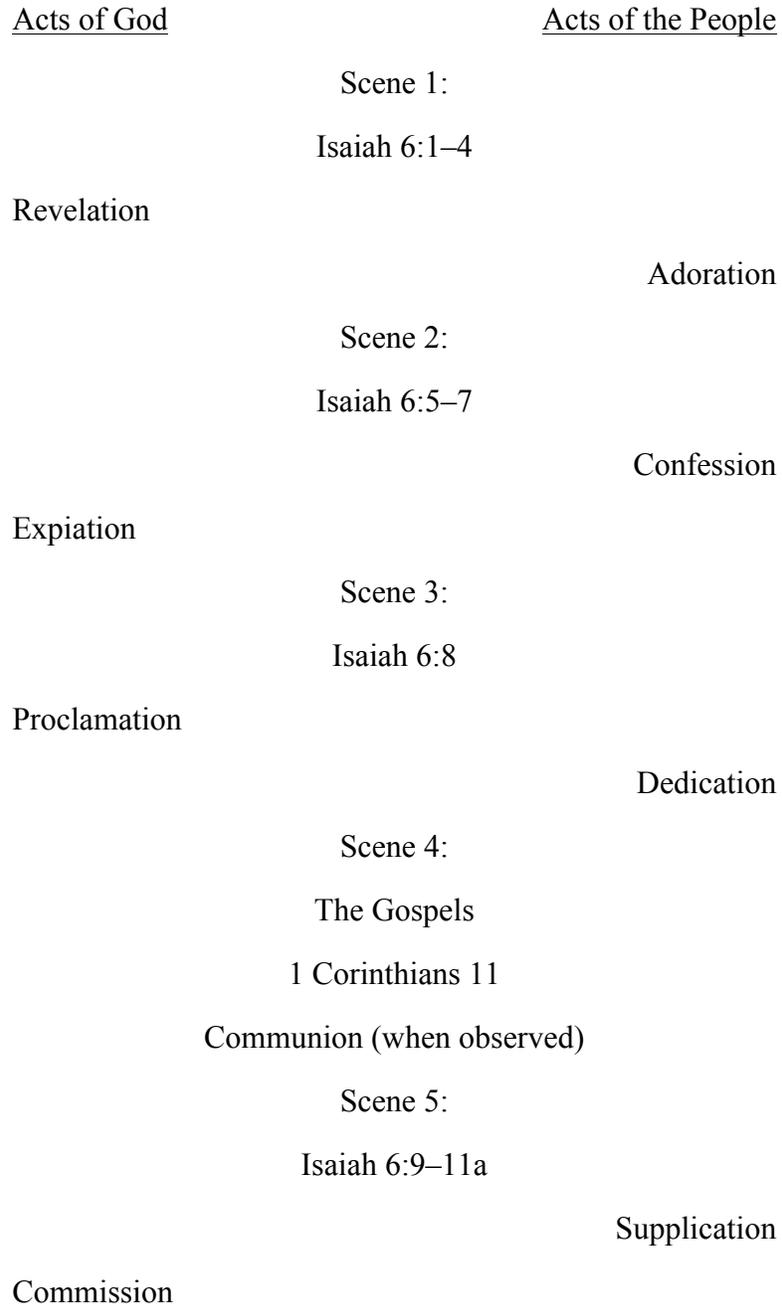


Figure 2. Bruce Leafblad, The Isaiah 6 Pattern of Worship

considered it one of the non-negotiable biblical themes of worship. She writes, “the sequence of God-human exchange found most prominently in the Scriptures is that of revelation and response.” She surmises, “This pattern of revelation/response is found in many episodes throughout the Scriptures when people encountered God.” Referencing the same Isaiah 6 passage she observes, “It was a revelation that inspired a response. One cannot experience a visitation of God and not respond.”<sup>131</sup>

Robert Webber considered worship “a dramatic enactment of the relationship that we have with God, a relationship that stems from historical events.” In his words,

In baptism, preaching, and the Eucharist we act out a story. The story has to do with what God has done for us and our response to God’s work. Therefore, when the worship is acted out in faith, the believer experiences again the refreshment of his or her relationship to God and he or she spontaneously experiences the joy of salvation.<sup>132</sup>

Webber and Cherry both (among many others) advocate worship’s structure as historically organized around four movements: the Gathering, Word, Sacrament, the Sending (based upon the encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13–35 and Acts 2:42).<sup>133</sup> The gathering aspect was to demonstrate that when God’s people worship, they do so by gathering in a local church around traditional Christian symbols and liturgy. This is true wherever the gospel has gone. The revelation and response aspects of their model are found in the Word and Sacraments portions of the four movements. The Word is a revelation of God’s character and work and the Table is man’s response to that revelation. The Sending is a reminder that believers are to go and

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<sup>131</sup> Cherry, *Worship Architect*, 8–9. Cherry lists six Biblical themes that translate into principles that should “anchor Christian worship and keep it profoundly true to God’s expectations. (1) Worship is Centered in God’s Acts of Salvation, (2) Worship is Patterned in Revelation and Response, (3) Worship is Covenantal in Nature, (4) Worship is Corporate in Nature, (5) Worship is Trinitarian in Nature, and (6) Worship is a Transformational Journey (7–17).

<sup>132</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 73.

<sup>133</sup> Clayton J. Schmit, *Sent and Gathered: A Worship Manual for the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 24.

live differently in the world because of what they have experienced in worship, demonstrating the transformation that should occur in worship. Webber shows the gospel shape by connecting the movements to the Plan of Salvation, as shown in figure 3.<sup>134</sup>

<u>Plan of Salvation</u>	<u>Parallels</u>	<u>Worship Order</u>
God acts first; God seeks us, call us; God desires to be in fellowship with humanity; God initiates an awakening through the power of the Holy Spirit; God comes to us.	←→	The Gathering
Because our relationship with God is fractured through the fall, he sends his Son to restore the relationship; Christ, the living Word, is freely given to the world through his life, death, and resurrection; Christ is God’s revealed truth.	←→	The Word
Such revelation demands a response; We are offered an invitation to repent and believe the gospel; we come to Christ in faith and respond to God’s plan of salvation by saying “yes;” we lay our sins on Jesus, accept his forgiveness, and resolve to take up our cross daily and follow him in true discipleship.	←→	The Table
Becoming followers involves being sent; God intends for his people to be active representatives in his world; the message of Christ is now our message.	←→	The Sending

Figure 3. Robert Webber, The Fourfold Pattern of Worship

This model has been embraced as the historical model of worship in the early church and has continued in many traditions until today.<sup>135</sup> The shape can be clearly seen

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<sup>134</sup> Cherry, *Worship Architect*, 49.

<sup>135</sup> See also Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: Continuum, 2005). Dix is often cited as the first to recognize and document this historic shape in worship’s liturgy. His classic

in the Catholic Mass with the Service of the Word (e.g., the synaxis) and the Service of the Table (e.g., the eucharist). The recent Liturgical Renewal has brought it to popularity once again and many Protestant churches have sought to employ the model for the first time since the Reformation. Much work has been done to establish it as a viable option for worship renewal among Protestant churches. However, the weakness of this pattern for the non-liturgical, Baptist tradition that has arisen in the last two centuries is at least twofold: (1) Many churches today do not celebrate the Table every week (even in the midst of a Liturgical Renewal movement in which more are doing so and encouraging others to do so), which leaves one to wonder where and how the worshipers' response should be in this model; (2) An increased emphasis on the worship elements that precede the Word seems to be weightier than simply gathering for worship. Is there not also a sense of dynamic and recurring revelation and response during this time that the fourfold model simply calls "gathering?"<sup>136</sup> Felde writes, "It has been suggested that Christian worship everywhere should look sufficiently the same so that even a foreign Christian would recognize it . . . the Gospel, the story of Jesus and the word of the apostles, must be the normative proclamation in every gathering, for 'my thoughts are not your thoughts, declares the Lord' (Isa 55:8)."<sup>137</sup> Since there are similarities in all of these models due to their adherence and intention to be shaped by the biblical gospel, perhaps there is a different pattern for the Baptist tradition to employ that still adheres to the

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scholarly work was first published in 1945 and is seen as the fundamental historical study of the church's *ordo*.

<sup>136</sup> Cherry addresses this sense by writing, "The movement of the gathering is from the general to the specific, from fragmented thoughts to focused thoughts that prepare us for the Word" (Cherry, *Worship Architect*, 56). However this minimizes what many of those in the free church tradition wish to accomplish during this time. Especially in light of the influence of the worship practices of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement, and many other non-charismatic movements that are modeling protracted singing/prayer worship times after their example.

<sup>137</sup> Felde, "Truly Vernacular Worship," 44–45.

gospel shape, while still leaving room for the variety and flexibility that is common to Baptist worship planning and practice.

### **A Proposed Model for Baptist Worship**

In each of the models presented above (Chapel, Leafblad, and the Fourfold Model represented by Webber/Cherry/Dix), the three aspects of the “gospel shape” introduced above in the Mount of Transfiguration pattern can easily be seen—Revelation, Mediation, and Exhortation. Admittedly, they are broad categories, and they represent God’s portion of the dialogue only. However, when man’s response in worship is added, a very similar structure emerges to that of these models. Due to the fact that worship is the expression of a relationship between God and his people, a pattern for worship should encompass both sides of this relationship (e.g., the “revelation and response” pattern). Gary A. Parrett writes, “Worship involves a rhythm of revelation and response: God graciously reveals himself to us and we faithfully respond—all the elements must help worshipers participate in this rhythm.”<sup>138</sup> By adding man’s responses to the pattern, the rhythm of revelation and response can be clearly seen, as shown in figure 4.<sup>139</sup> The response side should include those worship response elements suggested by Chapell and Leafblad above (e.g., Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Dedication, Supplication, etc.). Those are certainly the most natural responses to God’s actions in the gospel-shape of worship. However, it seems freer to allow room for the worshiper to

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<sup>138</sup> Gary A. Parrett, “9.5 Theses on Worship: A Disputation on the Role of Music,” *Christianity Today*, 49, no. 2 (February, 2005): 40.

<sup>139</sup> Timothy Keller wrote of Calvin’s view, “Calvin saw the entire service, not as a performance for God by the celebrants, but as a rhythm of receiving God’s word of grace and then responding in grateful praise . . . For Calvin, then, each service reenacted the reception of the gospel” (Keller, “Reformed Worship in the Global City,” 215). Calvin’s Genevan liturgy included three cycles: (1) “Isaianic” cycle which approximates Isaiah 6; (2) “Mosaic” cycle which seeks to experience the knowledge of his glory as Moses did at the burning bush; and (3) “Emmaus” cycle in which Jesus becomes known in the breaking of bread. Keller concludes, “The goal is entering the presence of God, in our amazement at God’s grace (cf. Exod 33:18)” (217).

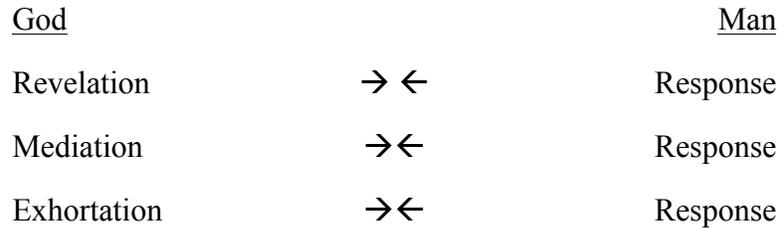


Figure 4. A proposed gospel-shaped model for Baptist worship

respond to God’s actions in worship as each is prompted to do. Worship is dynamic—one worshiper may be responding with adoration while another with confession to the same element of worship. Still another may be compelled to give thanks while yet another turns to supplication. By simply listing “response,” the pattern seems to better represent the dynamic element of worship and is less rigidly scripted for worship planning and design. This type of interchange is less linear than the visual graphic can portray. Worship encounters can have a hundred different exchanges going on individually. Corporately, however, the pattern should be somewhat uniform as the body of Christ is led through worship in a unified manner. The myriads of microscopic exchanges are just beneath the surface of a macroscopic dialogue that is taking place corporately between heaven and earth.

### **The Transforming Effect of Gospel-Shaped Worship**

Kendra G. Hotz and Matthew T. Mathews in their book *Shaping the Christian Life* write from “the conviction that how we worship both expresses and shapes who we are as people of faith.”<sup>140</sup> While the worshiper expresses from a heart affected by God in worship, the reciprocal effect is that the heart is again affected. Their use of the term “religious affections” is similar to that of Jonathan Edwards and Andrew Fuller who were

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<sup>140</sup> Kendra G. Hotz and Matthew T. Mathews, *Shaping the Christian Life: Worship and the Religious Affections* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), ix.

discussed in chapter 2. While there is some overlap with the general understanding of emotions in worship, emotions come and go and can be deceptive. “Religious affections endure whether or not we are experiencing a particular emotion. Emotions are about what we *feel*, but religious affections are about who we *are*. Religious affections come together to form our basic temperament.”<sup>141</sup> They conclude that there are “three experiences of the heart” that occur in worship and from these experiences flow the religious affections that change who we are. The three experiences of the heart that they have identified are awe, contrition, and gratitude.<sup>142</sup> Incorporating man’s responses and the accompanying heart experiences with the pattern above; a more comprehensive model can be assembled (while incorporated the Isaiah 6:1–9), as shown in figure 5.

### **Gospel-Shaped Worship Design**

There are several things worth noting about this pattern: God is always the initiator in worship. Based upon his gracious character, God initiates both the relationship with man through the gospel, and the worship encounters based upon the

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<sup>141</sup> Hotz and Mathews, *Shaping the Christian Life*, 8; emphasis Hotz and Mathews’. Hotz and Mathews identify twelve religious affections that they claim are all interconnected, but generally flow from the first three (experiences of the heart) and in this order of the twelve with “a sense of direction” begin the ultimate outcome of “awe”: awe, humility, gratitude, a sense of mutuality and interdependence, a sense of rightness, a sense of well-being, delight, a sense of obligation, self-sacrificial love, contrition, hope, and a sense of direction.

<sup>142</sup> Hotz and Mathews, *Shaping the Christian Life*, 14. Hotz and Mathews draw four theological themes regarding these heart experiences and how they work with religious affections. (1) Experiences of the heart are object-oriented—“God is ultimately the object of our affections, and this is what makes them *religious* affections” (17; emphasis Hotz and Mathews’); (2) Experiences of the heart take place within the context of the shared life of the communities of faith in which we are embedded—“Instead of thinking of ourselves first as individuals, who secondarily come into relationships, we ought to acknowledge that we are relational beings whose identities as individuals emerge only from within a community” (22); (3) Religious affections are ordered and interconnected due to their inherent function as the specifications of the worshipers’ dependence and desire—“Augustine points us to the fact that the deepest structures of our identities are shaped by what we want and what we depend upon; who we are, in short, has to do with *desire* and *dependence*” (26; emphasis Hotz and Mathews’); (4) The transformation of religious affections radiates out over and influences all our knowing and doing in the world—“The web of affections in the human heart colors and shapes the way we perceive, understand, and lean into our world, and serves as the spring that generates and shapes our motion, activity, and behavior in the world” (30).

gospel’s truths. Man is dependent upon God to reveal himself to him. Jesus told the woman at the well, “*The Father is seeking such people to worship him.*”<sup>143</sup>

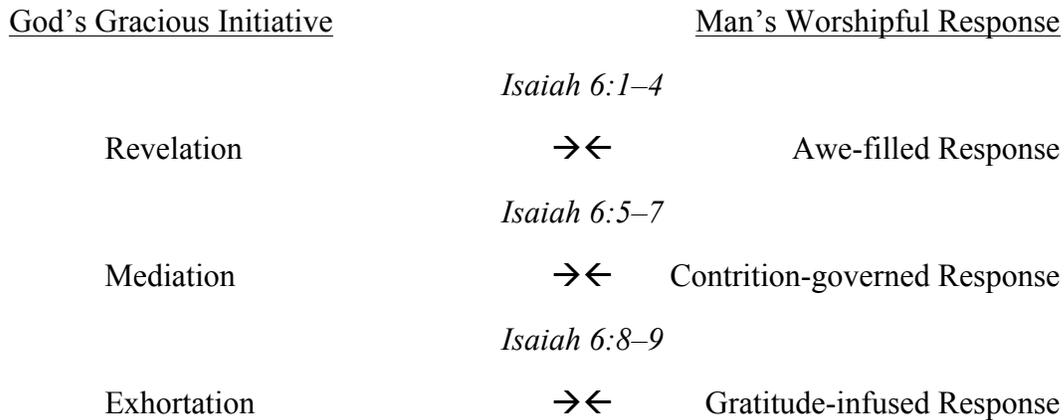


Figure 5. Complete gospel-shaped model for Baptist worship

Man’s responses are natural responses to God’s initiative. When God reveals himself in his glory and splendor, man cannot help but feel awestruck and overwhelmed. God’s glory is magnificent and exceeds anything man has the vocabulary to respond with. His heart is overwhelmed with awe and his only right response is worship. “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke” (Isa 6:1–4).

Mediation is a great theological term, but a poor one when it comes to connotations in today’s society. Mediation is more often understood today as a term of

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<sup>143</sup> John 4:23; emphasis mine.

negotiating on behalf of someone who wants something. As gospel mediator, Christ is the believers' propitiatory sacrifice and their source of imputed righteousness. By being both, he has opened the way to God's presence. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

Mediation and contrition represent the portion of the experience in which man understands his sinfulness in light of God's holiness, he confesses his sin, and forgiveness is affirmed (sometimes referred to as "absolution" in liturgical models). There is some overlap here with Revelation as it is the revealing of God's holiness that makes sin so obvious and in need of forgiveness. "And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!' Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for'" (Isa 6:5-7).

Exhortation and gratitude can seem to come in either order. A worshiper may gratefully surrender for service in any way God chooses and then sense God's specific direction; or he may hear the call to go and dedicate himself to obey as Isaiah did. However, the call to follow was originally initiated by God. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.' And he said, 'Go'" (Isa 6:8-9).

While this is a pattern for worship, the Holy Spirit may operate in any order he deems best. The purpose is to identify a biblical and gospel-shaped pattern that can serve as a guide for corporate worship to be evaluated and ordered. These are patterns and natural responses, but not necessarily mandatory steps in a process in order to generate a particular outcome. As Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone

who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Above it was observed from Hotz and Mathews that worship both “expresses and shapes” who the worshiper is before God. They explain, “Worship, with its power to shape and direct the religious affections, is thus organically related to the moral life. Worship is not an occasion for escape from the world, but is instead the occasion to renew our hearts in preparation for participating in God’s renewal of the world. Worship tunes our hearts by reorienting our religious affections and those affections are the hinge that joins the frame of knowledge to the door of action.”<sup>144</sup> The remainder of their book is an explanation of how worship planning and structure must be done well, given this priority of worship. In the same vein, John Witvliet distinguishes between worship that is “merely expressive” and worship that is primarily “formative.” Expressive worship is “worship that articulates what a congregation is already experiencing.” Formative worship is “worship which does acknowledge where a congregation is at, but is also eager for a congregation to grow beyond where it is into something deeper. The focus is on growth, discipleship, and sanctification.”<sup>145</sup> While it is hopeful that worship will include both aspects, most corporate worship neglects the latter.

Individuals within a congregation will be at various points on a continuum of sanctification with every worship experience impacting each participant differently. Worshipers may be impacted in different ways and measures. However, well-planned worship in view of the gospel (e.g., content and shape) should provide the best opportunity for individual transformation as well as the congregation to grow as a group. This requires those who lead worship to provide the best opportunities for authentic worship to occur in their church. Webber writes, “An examination of worship in both the

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<sup>144</sup> Hotz and Mathews, *Shaping the Christian Life*, 32.

<sup>145</sup> Ronald P. Byars, *What Language Shall I Borrow? The Bible and Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), xi–xii.

Old and New Testaments demonstrates that worship is not thrown together in a haphazard way. Instead, worship is carefully designed to bring the worshiper through a well-ordered experience. In this sense the organization of worship is simply the means through which the meeting between God and human beings takes place in a vital, dynamic, and living way.”<sup>146</sup>

### **Conclusion**

When worship design and leadership is approached this way, the transformative effect of its gospel shape can best be understood and engaged with by the worshipers. “The ‘knowledge’ imparted in worship is not simply cognitive—not the grasping of data by the intellect—but is material and corporeal; it is a knowledge that can be known only in the doing of it.”<sup>147</sup> Since human beings were created as worshipers, it is in the context of worship where growth and transformation occur. The experience of the veil over God’s glory being lifted and the life of that glory pouring forth into the redeemed gathered in corporate worship is one that conforms them to the image of the one they behold. In an imperfect but wonderful way, through worship they re-enter the garden of God’s presence and they become more like the One they worship. To quote Augustine, “Yet these humans, due part of your creation as they are, still do long to praise you. You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.”<sup>148</sup> It is just as Peter said on the Mount of Transfiguration, “It is good for us to be here!” It is what we were created and redeemed for.

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<sup>146</sup> Webber, *Biblical Foundations of Worship*, 73–74.

<sup>147</sup> Debra Dean Murphy, “Worship as Catechesis: Knowledge, Desire, and Christian Formation,” *Theology Today*, 58, no. 3 (Oct 2001): 325.

<sup>148</sup> Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans., Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 39, quoted in Murphy, “Worship as Catechesis,” 331–32.

Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646), an English Puritan and Congregationalist, was a predecessor to and partner with the Baptists on many theological issues.<sup>149</sup> He helpfully summarizes the truths set forth here in his work, *Gospel Worship*:

This is that which the happiness of the church is set out by in Revelation 22:4: “They shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads.” This is the privilege of the church. And that it is such a blessing to draw nigh to God you may see from Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

Through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto God the Father, and now, Paul says, “Ye that were strangers and foreigners are made fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” and verse 13: “but now by Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,” and you have access through Christ. So our coming nigh to God is such a privilege as cost the blood of Christ . . . . And by drawing nigh to God often, you will come to increase your graces abundantly. How will your graces act? The presence of God will draw forth the acts of grace as the presence of the fire draws forth out heat. So the presence of God will draw forth our graces. And by this means we come to live most holy lives.

We read that Moses was upon the mountain forty days with God, and when he came down his face so shone that the people were not able to bear it. What’s the reason? It was because he was so near to God. Would you have your faces shine in a holy conversation before men? Converse much with God, be often with God, be near to Him and that will make you shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We find it so with some who converse much with God: There is a shine upon their very countenances . . . . “You shall have many who love to be in God’s presence so that they think on it overnight and long for the time when it comes. I am never better than when I am with God. I think when I get into God’s presence, either in prayer or any duty of God’s worship, I find my heart warmed and quickened. They are ready to say with Peter, “Master, it is good being here.”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> As a Westminster Divine he was a primary contributor to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1644), which served as the blueprint and source for the London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689). He also was suspended for non-conformity and exiled to Holland for several years with other English Independents who had relocated there. He was an Anglican who thought the church and state should remain separate and that local congregations should remain independent from external control and government. Though a paedobaptist, his definitive treatment of the regulative principle (*Gospel Worship*) served as the source and citation for Thomas Crosby’s (1683–1751) argument in support of baptism by immersion in *The History of the English Baptists* in 1738. See Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (Lafayette, TN: Church History Research and Archives, 1738/1978): xi–xiii. See also Phillip L. Simpson, *A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011). Burroughs is quoted many times by William Kiffin (1616–1701) on the subject of worship. Kiffin was a pastor of one of the original seven London Particular Baptist Churches and signer of the 1644 London Confession. His influence on Baptist worship is noteworthy.

<sup>150</sup> Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, ed. Don Kistler (1648; repr., Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 44–46.

This summarizes the gospel foundation upon which the Baptists of England built their own practice of worship. Some of these Baptists left England for America. This is the employment of the gospel in worship that they brought to the New World with them to worship in newfound freedom.

## CHAPTER 4

### AN INQUIRY REGARDING THE EXISTENCE OF GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP FORM AND CONTENT IN PROMINENT BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA: FOUNDATIONS

#### **Introduction: English Beginnings**

Jeremiah Burroughs preached a series of sermons in the mid-1640s on the subject of worship. This was during the period in which the Westminster Assembly convened (1643–c. 1649) and the First Baptist London Confession (1644) had just been drafted and distributed. These sermons were published posthumously under the title *Gospel Worship*, going through multiple printings beginning in 1648. His work is significant because it represents both the ethos and the argument for the priority of authentic worship among the Congregationalists, and like-minded groups such as the Baptists. It was easy to be unified against the inventions of man found in Catholic and Anglican services for something as critical as worship. However, as will be discussed below, it was much more challenging for Congregationalists and Baptists to be unified regarding what corrections should be made in worship. Though not a Baptist, Burroughs represents the common viewpoint of the use of the regulative principle among Baptists: “In God’s worship, there must be nothing offered up to God but what he has commanded. Whatsoever we meddle with in the worship of God must be what we have a warrant for out of the Word of God.”<sup>1</sup>

William Kiffin (1616–1701) is one of fifteen signatories—representing the

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, ed. Don Kistler (1648; repr., Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 11.

first seven Particular Baptist Churches—of the London Confession of 1644. He was also a prolific debater and author in the dialogue that shaped the early days of Baptist church thought, especially regarding worship. Kiffin cited Burroughs often in his arguments and leaned heavily upon Burroughs in what Matthew Ward calls “one of the greatest Baptist treatises ever written about worship—*A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion*.” In this treatise Kiffin reflects a similar concern for worship as Burroughs:<sup>2</sup>

I have no other design, but the preserving of the Ordinances of Christ, in their purity and Order as they are left unto us in the holy *Scriptures* of Truth; and to warn the Churches *To keep close to the Rule*, lest they being found not to Worship the Lord according to his prescrib'd Order he make a *Breach* among them.<sup>3</sup>

This desire to get worship right was revealed initially in the debate between Kiffin and John Bunyan (1628–1688) over the connection between believer’s baptism and communion. If there was any ordinance that Baptists were determined to get right, it was this one. Bunyan had determined that baptism was an individual’s decision, rather than that of the church. In doing so, he advocated open-communion—those who had been baptized only as an infant were welcome at the table at Bedford and as a member of the church. This was highly controversial for Kiffin and most other Baptists who believed that this matter was foundational to pure worship<sup>4</sup> and gospel order. How could someone

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew Ward, *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 102.

<sup>3</sup> William Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion* (1681), loc 68, Kindle; emphasis Kiffin’s. This was a written response to John Bunyan (1628–1688) and his open-communion position of allowing those who had not been baptized by believer’s baptism to the table. In this response, Kiffin cites Burroughs’ *Gospel Worship* as he establishes “Gospel Order,” or the “rule of the Gospel” with regard to worship. Kiffin heard Burroughs preach in the 1630s and was convinced of nonconformist views regarding Anglican ceremonies as a result. Later, Kiffin sought out Burroughs and his friends in 1644 for counsel regarding the relationship between Baptists and Congregationalists, which served “to maintain communion between their churches.” See Philip L. Simpson, *A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 226.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Ward uses this term to describe the early English Baptists’ “fundamental desire to worship God purely.” He breaks his discussion into three main components: free worship (e.g., no formal liturgy and free to worship according to the Scriptures), true worship (e.g., the regulative principle), and gospel worship (e.g., gospel as a liturgical hermeneutic).

worship at the Lord’s Table if they had not followed him in this fundamental example of submitting to his lordship in obedience? Worship for Baptists was the “right and Orderly Administration of Ceremonies,” and by that Kiffin clearly is referring to the ordinances—the first of these in the matter of gospel order in worship was baptism.<sup>5</sup>

The proper application of the regulative principle was also demonstrated in the contentious debate over congregational singing that also involved Kiffin, but placed Benjamin Keach at the center of a debilitating controversy. Matthew Ward writes, “The hymn-singing controversy should be recognized as a key event defining the end of the early Particular Baptist vision and a valuable tool for understanding their opinions on complex theological matters.”<sup>6</sup> The key figures of the discourse were, William Kiffin, Isaac Marlow, and Benjamin Keach. While the Baptists had seen numerical growth during the persecution that followed the Act of Uniformity of 1662, not long after the Act of Toleration of 1689 they began to lament the state of their devotion in worship. In their self-evaluation recorded in the *Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly* (1689), they lamented a “want of holy Zeal for God.” They feared “the Power of Godliness being greatly decayed” and that “the Lord’s Day is no more religiously and carefully observed.”<sup>7</sup> Benjamin Keach served as secretary of the Assembly. As mentioned above, he desired to raise the issue of congregational singing as a potential solution to the current spiritual malaise in worship, but this was not allowed due to the contentious nature of the issue. However, his conviction of the necessity of singing in

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<sup>5</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, loc 664. The term “worship” at the time was used consistently to describe the church’s corporate actions. It should not be reduced to “singing” as is often the modern context. See Ward, *Pure Worship*, 186.

<sup>6</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 184.

<sup>7</sup> *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly Of divers Pastors, Messengers and Ministering-Brethren of the Baptized Churches, met together in London* (London, 1689), 4–5. The decline that began with the recognition of these observations did not seem to be truly corrected until the Second Great Awakening of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

worship explains the title of his famous treatise soon after the Assembly: *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship*.<sup>8</sup> It was his view that those who did not allow their congregations to sing were not worshipping God properly (e.g., according to Scripture).

Keach writes,

I am perswaded, for several reasons, since this is so clear an Ordinance in God's Word, that the Baptized Churches, who lie short of the Practice of singing Psalms, etc. will never thrive to such a degree as our Souls long to see them, to the Honour of the Holy God, and Credit of our sacred Profession, and Joy and Comfort of those who are truly spiritual among us: for tho many things, as the Causes of our sad witherings, have been inquired into; yet I fear this, and the neglect of the Ministry, are the two chief, which are both holy Ordinances of Jesus Christ; and yet our People, (that is, some of them) do not love to hear of either of them.<sup>9</sup>

Keach had led his church to vote in favor of regular congregational singing on January 1, 1691, after more than a decade of singing a hymn after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This treatise, published later the same year, seems to indicate that his church at Horsleydown was experiencing the benefits of congregational singing for which he was advocating.

Both the debate over open-communion, and the controversy regarding congregational singing, demonstrate the struggles that early Baptist worship encountered. The Second London Confession and Assembly of 1689 avoided both controversies and the issues were not resolved. Both sides of these debates argued from the regulative principle to their conclusion, and both felt the word of God positively supported their position against the other.<sup>10</sup> The true area of dispute was over the matter of what

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Keach, *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship* (London: Hancock, 1691). The title plays on the same word in Kiffin's quote above. It was a common expression of the time to refer to a violation or transgression of God's command, in this case related to worship.

<sup>9</sup> Keach, *The Breach Repaired*, 99. Also quoted in Ward, *Pure Worship*, 186.

<sup>10</sup> See Ward, *Pure Worship*, for a detailed analysis of these debates over the Baptist application of the regulative principle. Ward's premise is that the pursuit of "pure worship" was the defining distinctive of the Early English Particular Baptists and all other matters of significance were tied to this. His familiarity with the primary source material regarding worship during this time period is impressive, though his main argument has failed to persuade some.

constituted *adiaphora*, or the things indifferent in worship. There were hermeneutical issues at the heart of the disagreement. How should the Old Testament worship practices be considered in relation to their New Covenant fulfillment? What difference does the closing of the biblical canon make with regard to the role of the Spirit and his gifts in worship? What is the true nature of the primitive (Apostolic) church's practice and what should be emulated and what should be considered unique to the apostolic age? These were among the interpretive areas that led to disagreement and strife. Added to this were the disagreements over "conjoined" worship (e.g., believers and unbelievers singing together), the nature of what are truly Christ's ordinances for worship, and what constitutes a form of worship (e.g., ceremonialism) versus simple worship preparation (e.g., sermon notes, written hymns, etc.). Ward concludes, "The Bible did not answer every question in the form Englishmen asked. The hymn-singing controversy forced Keach to acknowledge that on behalf of all Baptists, and not all Baptists appreciated the revelation."<sup>11</sup>

### **The Gospel as Liturgical Hermeneutic**

According to Ward, "One of the most important contributions Baptists made to the overall understanding of worship was the relationship between worship and the gospel."<sup>12</sup> Their pursuit of gospel order and the regulative principle were rooted in the concern that Anglican ceremonialism had no biblical sanction and as a result, obscured the gospel. Baptists had a compelling desire that the gospel be clearly portrayed in worship, which required adhering to Scripture as closely as possible. Believer's baptism

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<sup>11</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 202.

<sup>12</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 204. Ward refers to this as utilizing the gospel as a liturgical hermeneutic. He writes, "On the one hand, a liturgical hermeneutic is the principle by which a worshiper understands and shapes worship; on the other hand, it is also a principle by which a worshiper interprets his or her own faith . . . To call the gospel a liturgical hermeneutic simply means that Baptists considered and intended their worship to communicate and embody the gospel of Jesus Christ" (145).

is a primary case in point, which was Kiffin's concern with Bunyan's view. Infant baptism did not accurately portray the gospel. Only the baptism of a professing individual could truly demonstrate the gospel power of an individual's faith in Christ. Believer's baptism was Christ's ordinance to show that the believer was "dead and buried with him" and "raised to walk in newness of life with him," and was now following him in this first step of obedience in a transformed life (Rom 6, Luke 9:23, etc.). This not only reinforced the faith of the individual being baptized, but it also accurately communicated the gospel to all present to observe the ordinance. Infant baptism could not do either of these things.<sup>13</sup> Kiffin felt similarly about close-communion and its requirement for baptism in his debate with Bunyan. While Bunyan saw both ordinances as teaching tools of the gospel, Kiffin saw in Bunyan's practice an unacceptable distortion of the same message.<sup>14</sup>

Early Baptists did not restrict the ordinances to these two, however. While they could not agree which ordinances could be celebrated in a mixed assembly (e.g., the practice of congregational singing), they saw all ordinances, including preaching, prayer, and reading God's Word, as the primary if not only means by which evangelism occurred. Hanserd Knollys wrote, "Jesus Christ hath instituted and ordained the Ministry of the Gospel, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13, and all Gospel-Ordinances for the salvation of sinners, to the Glory of God the Father."<sup>15</sup> However, the greater clarity in these ordinances was enjoyed by the believer—"The Ordinances of the Gospel give a more clear vision of

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<sup>13</sup> See John Spilsbury, *Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Subject of Baptisme* (London, 1643).

<sup>14</sup> Bunyan wrote regarding the ordinances of baptism and the table: "Both which are excellent to the Church, in this world; they being to us representations of the death, and resurrection of Christ, and are as God shall make them, helps to our faith therein" (*A Confession of My Faith, And a Reason of My Practice* [London, 1672], 65, quoted in Ward, *Pure Worship*, 149).

<sup>15</sup> Hanserd Knollys, *The World that Now is; and the World that is to Come: Or the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ* (London: Snowden, 1681), 10.

Christ, than those under the Law.”<sup>16</sup> Keach was adamant regarding this view, especially with his aforementioned conviction regarding congregational singing. He also advocated a Calvinistic view of Christ’s real presence at table rather than the Zwinglian (e.g., symbolic) view held by many of his Baptist brethren. Matthew Ward writes of him:

When Benjamin Keach stated that God appointed [the Ordinances of the Gospel] “for the begetting of Faith,” it was not by causing regeneration, but by putting one’s self in a place where God’s Spirit was known to work. Keach was not esoterically claiming that God’s Spirit moved where God’s people celebrated God’s ordinances to the potential spiritual benefit of non-Christians present; he was very strict about those who could receive the Lord’s Supper at Horseleydown. But God communicated saving truth through the ordinances. Even Baptism was more than a ceremony for the saved but a kind of wordless sermon (“analogical proposition”) that presented the facts of the gospel, acknowledging Christ as Messiah and trusting in Him for forgiveness of sin, for all to hear and see. The more elaborate the setting or ceremony, the more obscured this basic truth became. In their worship, the Baptists wanted to celebrate the purity of the gospel, and they were willing to reevaluate much about their churches in the process.<sup>17</sup>

For Baptists, the worship service needed to be a simple, interactive presentation of the gospel. They were concerned that formal liturgy and ceremonialism would take the place of worship in word and spirit. Therefore they rejected formal worship for a more flexible, if not spontaneous form. Hanserd Knollys similarly believed “pure worship could only be performed by the Word of God and the Gifts of the Spirit, and he desired pure worship far above respectable worship.”<sup>18</sup>

It is from this concern that some of the controversy over the practice of singing was generated. At what point were the preset forms of lyrics set to pre-arranged music—or even sermon notes for that matter—neglecting a proper reliance upon the Spirit?

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<sup>16</sup> Hanserd Knollys, *An Exposition of the whole Book of the Revelation* (London: Marshall, 1689), 190, quoted in Ward, *Pure Worship*, 149. Ward also points out that the First London Confession “declared preaching as the ordinary means of begetting faith” (149; see also *First London Confession* [1644], Article XXIV).

<sup>17</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 149–150. See also Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened: Or, The Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers* (London: William Marshall, 1694).

<sup>18</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 178. Ward references Keach, *Breach Repaired*, 136; John Tombes, *Jehovah Jireh: or, God’s Providence in Delivering the Godly* (London: Cotes, 1643), 5; and Hanserd Knollys, *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded* (London: Harris, 1674), 15.

While they had long ago rejected the Anabaptist practice of putting aside all books in worship, they were uncertain how far to go in preparing for worship. At what point might proper preparation for worship lead them to the slippery slope of liturgical forms that might usher them right back into Anglicanism? They did not want the gospel obscured by ceremonialism. Yet, they had confidence that the Holy Spirit would not only form the gospel in their midst, but point them to Christ and his glory through it. They only needed to discover and adhere to pure, gospel worship. Scripture's role here, and the regulative principle, was critical because God promised to use Scripture in the revelation of the gospel. This is why Ward claims that the London Particular Baptists "used the gospel as a liturgical hermeneutic even if they may not have been fully intentional about (or even aware of) such a practice. They took very seriously the form and presentation of the gospel in their worship services in more than just their preaching."<sup>19</sup> Their adherence to the word in worship was adherence for the sake of gospel clarity. This driving conviction, among others, led many to forsake England for the New World to find a place where they could worship according to their convictions about Scripture.

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<sup>19</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 143. Ward summarizes chap. 5, "Gospel Worship and a New Purpose of the Gathering" this way: "In summary, the commitment to gospel worship took London Particular Baptists in very different directions from other Protestants. They believed that worship was for Christ, to celebrate His salvation and His Lordship over them. The message of salvation, combined with their understanding of election, led to a very intentional and unique (if seemingly haphazard) worship service. Their commitment to the gospel led them to eliminate all ceremonies that detracted from Christ in any way, including infant baptism, sacraments that confused the nature of salvation, and all external forms that distracted the senses. They desired a simple and austere worship that hearkened to some types of Puritan worship, but they used the ordinances to communicate the message of salvation, which was why they believed Christ instituted them in the first place. The purpose of their gatherings was not a base mental edification; worship was for God who communicated spiritual blessings through the encounter. Preaching was not just to teach doctrine but also to stir emotion, to call for a response, and to invite outsiders to Christ. Though Baptists shared many principles with their Protestant brethren, outsiders found their worship services irregular and irreverent; by this they meant that Baptists did not follow a careful liturgy or employ strict ceremony. Baptists believed that the Spirit participated in pure worship, and He was not predictable any more than salvation was predictable" (182).

## Foundational Studies of the English Baptists

Christopher Ellis in *Gathering* presents an analysis of the theology and spirituality of worship among English Baptists.<sup>20</sup> His study seeks to identify the heart of Baptist worship from its inception until modern day. His conclusion is that the confession “Jesus is Lord” is the “presiding conviction” in Baptist worship. Of this he writes, “Christian prayers usually end with the formula, ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord’, or variations on it. This is not a magical incantation guaranteed to provide petitionary success, but a kerygmatic affirmation that Christian worship is through the mediatorial service of Jesus Christ and that the liturgical assembly is an assembly which bears his character.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, it has been the Baptist conviction in worship that it is by the gospel that sinners are called out of darkness to be joined to the body of Christ. It is therefore by the gospel that the church can gather for worship. This makes the worship gathering both a celebration and expression of the gospel. It is in the ordinances and elements of worship that the gospel is rehearsed and its effects of grace applied. This is the paradigm of worship that the Baptists brought to, and sought to practice in, America.

Matthew Ward studies a smaller cross-section of Ellis’ broader scope, but he does so in great depth and detail. He studies the earliest congregations of Baptists from which Ellis’ study builds, and from which the subjects of this study originate. He also sees the centrality of Christ and the gospel in English Baptist worship. He notes the critical emphasis of the word of God and the reliance upon the Spirit. In many ways, he performs a similar type of study to Ellis, but rather than looking at the worship services, he assimilates the primary source material behind the worship services by combing the writings of the worship leaders (e.g., pastors). He highlights as elements of worship

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<sup>20</sup> See Christopher Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 231.

those identified by the Second London Confession—prayer, reading Scripture, preaching and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, with the last two being the two ordinances.<sup>22</sup> His conclusions regarding the nature of Baptist worship are predictably very similar to those of Ellis.

Ellis, on the other hand, arrives at his conclusion by observing and evaluating examples of Baptist worship services. Based upon similar foundations related in chap. 2 of this study<sup>23</sup> he writes, “If worship embodies theology, then we have to recognize that it is particular, concrete examples of worship which need to be examined.”<sup>24</sup> However, because Baptist churches practice free worship, the nature of this task can become quite interesting. Ellis describes freedom in worship in this manner:

This freedom is the freedom of local congregations to order their own gathering for worship; it is the freedom of spontaneity which is open to the extempore guidance of the Holy Spirit; and it is the freedom of a particular worshipping community to respond to the reading and preaching of Scripture addressed to them as God’s living Word.<sup>25</sup>

Given this description, it is hard to imagine an example of historic worship that more aptly fits this model than that of Baptists, save maybe the Quakers who exalted the Spirit at the expense of Scripture. This requires an adjusted research approach from the model typically used for a similar study of the worship practices in a liturgical tradition. Ellis warns,

Using Baptist worship as a case study for doing liturgical theology in a Free Church context will enable us to see some of the difficulties of giving uncritical authority to

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<sup>22</sup> Ward, *Pure Worship*, 117. This is essentially a reprinting of the list from the Westminster Confession of Faith.

<sup>23</sup> Ellis cites the work of Alexander Schmemmann, Geoffrey Wainwright, Paul F. Bradshaw, and Kevin Irwin. He also provides the methodology based upon Schmemmann’s work that is utilized in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 27.

the theology embodied in worship. The free nature of that worship requires that there be norms and guidelines which will ensure that the worship indeed expresses what the Christian community believes.<sup>26</sup>

In some ways, Ward's study provides some of those "norms and guidelines" that Ellis sought for the first chronological cross-section of his study. Additionally, given that their findings agree, their conclusions are helpful as a proper foundation for this study. It is from their English Baptist foundation that Baptist worship in North America is derived. The priority of the word of God, the active presence of the Holy Spirit, and worship in Jesus' name (through the gospel) are key distinctives of Baptist worship. Towards that end, the approved elements for worship are prayer, reading Scripture, preaching, and praising God in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Christ's ordinances are baptism and communion.

Liturgical theology of any worshiping group requires an evaluation of the worship texts. This requires looking at the words spoken and sung in worship services, as well as the descriptions of worship when available. Due to the unique nature of Baptist worship, some attention must also be given to the goals and priorities of what is valued in worship. Therefore, just as in Ellis' study, "commentaries and reflections on worship in the Baptist community" will be included in this study.<sup>27</sup> In view of this, Ellis provides a four-stage methodology that he has founded upon Schmemmann's work, but adjusted for the unique aspects of Baptist (e.g., "free") worship.<sup>28</sup> As mentioned above, this process requires, (1) establishing the liturgical facts; (2) analyzing those facts; (3) synthesizing the meaning of the worship services; and (4) determining if the worship meaning is aligned with the broader theological convictions of Baptists. Due to the fact

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<sup>26</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 30.

<sup>28</sup> Ellis, *Gathering*, 23–24. The first three steps of this methodology are from Alexander Schmemmann whereas Ellis adds the fourth step as an adjustment specifically for Baptist (e.g., "free") worship.

that Baptist worship is free worship this last step is especially important to ensure that what is conveyed in worship is authentic to Baptist belief.

Given the major studies on English Baptist worship already referenced above, their findings serve as the foundation of liturgical theology for this study. Ellis' conclusion that the heart of Baptist worship is the confession "Jesus is Lord" as a kerygmatic affirmation, and Ward's conclusion that they likewise employed the gospel as a liturgical hermeneutic for worship, essentially define the expected findings of these British emigrants. The question under consideration is, "How did the Baptists in North America represent the gospel in worship that they brought from England?"

In summary, historic Baptist worship will be evaluated for three components that will serve to identify the presence of gospel form and content:

1. Is Christ central to worship?
2. Is the gospel content present in terms of historic narrative and effects in the believer's life?
3. Is the gospel faithfully "re-presented" according to the proposed "shape?"<sup>29</sup>

### **Baptists in North America**

Some claim that the Baptist story on English soil began in America. Isaac Backus (1724–1806), prominent Baptist historian and leading Baptist preacher during the American Revolution, is one such advocate. He claims that the results of Roger Williams' (1603–1683) baptism and subsequent baptizing of his small gathering in

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<sup>29</sup> This question is evaluated in a less stringent manner than Chapell did with formal liturgy. (See Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009].) In a Baptist model, the representation of seven or eight conversational elements is unlikely to be identifiable. However, the presence of elements that characterize God's initiative and man's response are much more likely. Also, the presence of elements that represent the central work of the cross and the sending of the church in its "vocation" as a result of worship are also likely to be present. This "shape" is represented by a simplified threefold model for evaluation: revelation and response; mediation and response; and exhortation and response.

Providence was “the first immersionist church in the entire English world.”<sup>30</sup> Whether or not this claim is accurate, it certainly is the first Baptist church in the New World as this group began meeting in Williams’ house in 1638. Williams’ religious journey was from Anglican priest trained at Cambridge, to Puritan, to Separatist, to Baptist. After four months he left the first Baptist church to become a “seeker.” J. Stanley Lemons explains that soon after his departure, the church began to flounder. Some became Quakers while others began to cheat the Indians of their land and to sell them liquor and gunpowder. “Some even betrayed Providence Plantations by registering their property deeds in Massachusetts, giving the Bay Colony an excuse to assert authority over part of Williams’ colony.” Under the leadership of Chad Brown and Thomas Olney, The congregation soon evolved into a General Six-Principle Baptist Church<sup>31</sup> in the 1640s—making it the first General Six-Principle Baptist church in the American colonies as

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<sup>30</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Isaac Backus—Puritan and Baptist* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 45. If Backus’ date of 1639 for Williams’ baptism is correct, his claim is inaccurate given the accepted date of 1638 for John Spilsbury’s Particular Baptist congregation in London. However, J. Stanley Lemons, the leading historian on the Providence Baptist story claims a date of 1638 for this initial gathering of the Calvinistic Baptist church, which is the more commonly accepted date now. Thomas Helwys’ Anabaptist church was gathered at Spitalfields in London about 1612. See J. Stanley Lemons, ed., *First Baptist, Providence*, vol II of *Baptists in Early North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2013), xiii–xiv.

<sup>31</sup> General Six Principle Baptists are based upon the six principles outlined in Heb 6:1–2: repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and final judgment. The most controversial of which is “going under hands” which is required for membership and participation in the Lord’s Supper. One of their historians claims a lineage that dates back to “About sixty years after our Lord ascended to glory, his kingdom came into our land; which of the messengers of his grace was first sent to prepare his way in the region, is not now certainly known, but it is generally believed that Paul and his associates first preached the gospel to the Britons” (Richard Knight, *History of the General or Six Principle Baptists in Europe and America* [1827; repr., Providence, RI: Smith and Parmenter, 1980], 2). Their activity in the New World was centered in Rhode Island during the Colonial Period of American History. David Benedict writes that at Providence, “It is probable that singing was first laid aside in times of persecution, on account of the danger of practicing it, and afterwards it was difficult to revive everywhere a due sense of its worth as a divine appointment” (David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* [New York: Lewis Colby, 1848], 454). This seems to indicate that they may have sung at some point in their early history but likely laid it aside when they embraced Six-Principle Baptist tenets in 1652. David Music and Paul Richardson write, “The congregation remained songless for nearly 120 years, singing not being reintroduced until 1771 by pastor James Manning” (David W. Music and Paul A. Richardson, *“I Will Sing the Wondrous Story:” A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008], 72).

well.<sup>32</sup> There are no written records for the church prior to 1755, but dispute and division seem to mark its early history.

According to Lemons, it was not until James Manning (1738–1791) became pastor in 1771 that the church stabilized, “leaving what eventually became a sidetrack in the Baptist movement in America [the General Six-Principle Baptist Association] for the mainline, the Regular Baptists.”<sup>33</sup> Manning was from the Philadelphia Baptist Association, the influence of which will be discussed in detail below. Not much is known about Providence worship in their earliest years. “They did not preach from a prepared text, but exhorted as they were inspired by God. They did not use prayer books, hymnals or psalters in their worship. Like the Quakers, they banned congregational singing. The only written text was the Bible itself; all else was extemporaneous.”<sup>34</sup> This all changed with the arrival of Manning, as Lemons explains:

The coming of James Manning to Rhode Island, the founding of the first Baptist college [Rhode Island College which became Brown University], and the organization of the Warren Association were all consequences of the efforts of the [Philadelphia Baptist Association]. The transformation of the Baptist church in Providence came with James Manning who brought the entire agenda of the Philadelphia Baptist Association with him, including Calvinist theology, a paid, educated ministry, congregational singing, the relaxation of the requirement for laying on of hands, and greater order and decorum, including the silencing of women in the meetings.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lemons, *First Baptist, Providence*, xiv–v.

<sup>33</sup> Lemons, *First Baptist, Providence*, xxiii. “All of the pastors between Roger Williams (1639) and James Manning (1771) were laymen chosen from within the congregation and ordained as Elders . . . The coming of James Manning to the pulpit of the Providence church brought with it that developing network of churches, ministers, education institutions, and aspirations of the Regular Baptists” (xxiii–xxiv).

<sup>34</sup> Lemons, *First Baptist, Providence*, xxvii.

<sup>35</sup> Lemons, *First Baptist, Providence*, xxvi. Lemons writes, “One of the most contentious issues for First Baptist was Manning’s introduction of congregational singing to a church that had not sung a song for over a century because the General Six-Principle Baptists banished singing from their services. Elder Samuel Winsor declared that such singing was ‘very disgusting’ and was one of the causes of the rupture in 1771. It took decades to establish congregational singing, and an organ was not installed until 1834.” When the church inquired about the non-attendance of one member—Arthur Fenner—in January 1778, he said he “abstained from Communion with this church in consequence of their practice of

John Clarke established the second Baptist church in America at Newport, Rhode Island in 1644.<sup>36</sup> The third Baptist church was Second Baptist Newport, established in 1656. First Baptist Church of Swansea, Massachusetts was established in 1663.

First Baptist Church of Boston was established in 1665 as the fifth Baptist church in America and one of the most influential in New England. A Baptist church in the heart of the Puritan Commonwealth was a prime target for persecution. Its founding pastor, Thomas Goold (1619–1675), attempted to stay in his Congregationalist church at Charlestown for many years after refusing to have his infant daughter baptized in 1655. He was eventually censured and put out. In 1663, a group of Baptist sympathizers began having worship services in his home. Some of these Baptists had recently fled England due to the harsh Clarendon Code of the 1660s and 1670s. When Goold was told that he should not have separated from the Charlestown Church because it was “God’s temple,” Goold answered, “Christ dwelleth in no temple, but in the heart of the believer.”<sup>37</sup> Goold felt that he had been put out of the Congregationalist church and had no option but to separate and suffer the consequences. He was arrested multiple times as a “schismatic”

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promiscuous Singing in Public worship, which he could not fellowship.” Fenner was one of the remaining Six Principle Baptists after nearly ninety of them split in 1771. He eventually left the church to join the General Six-Principle Church in Johnston, which was then pastored by the aforementioned Samuel Winsor. The church records from 1797 refer to a letter from Mr. Alpheus Billings that “his declining state of health would prevent his conducting the singing at Publick worship.” Mr. John Newman was to be solicited as a replacement, recorded Thursday Evening, July 27, 1797 (156). A report from Thursday Evening, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1798 reads: the Committee “appointed at our last Meeting to Consult on the best mode of performing sacred musick at the usual Time of Divine Service report as their opinion, that a number of the Members of the Church Qualified to Conduct the Musick should Convene in the Choristers Seat in order to take the lead and that such of the Congregation are inclined to join the same and that in order to promote this design a Meeting of the Church should be held once a week in the room below to improve themselves in singing, that the Congregation be inform’d of the same from the Pulpit and invited to attend the Meetings for instruction, and to unite Publickly in the performance of a branch of Divine Worship so pleasing, solemn & Edifying” (161–62). Additionally, the first inquiry regarding the cost of an organ was in 1817. It took seventeen years for an organ to be acquired finally in 1834 (xxvi).

<sup>36</sup> Some date this church earlier but apparently they were not a “baptizing” church until at least 1644 (Lemon, *First Baptist, Providence*, xviii).

<sup>37</sup> C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 44–45.

and subsequently imprisoned at least twice (in 1666 and 1668).

The church covenant of First Baptist Church of Boston, recorded March 28, 1665, expressed the Baptist commitment to word and Spirit:

The 28 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mo. 1665 in Charlestowne, Massachusetts, the Churche of Christe, commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptiste were gathered together And entered into fellowship & communion each with other, Ingaigeing to walke together in all the appointments of there Lord & Master the Lord Jesus Christ as farre as hee should bee pleased to make known his mind & will unto them by his word & Spirit, And then were Baptized.<sup>38</sup>

A description of their worship gathering is recorded from July–August 1665. It reads,

“The Anabaptists gathered y<sup>m</sup>s into a church, prophesied one by one, & some one amongst y<sup>m</sup> administered y<sup>e</sup> Lords Supper [Thomas Goold] . . . They also set up a lecture at Drinkers house once a fortnight. They were admonished by y<sup>e</sup> court of Assista.”<sup>39</sup>

Their “Confession of Faith”—one of the oldest in North America—also records their guidelines for worship: “When the church is mett together they may all propesie one by one that all may all learne & all may be comforted [1 Cor 14:23, 24, 25, 31] & they ought to meete together the first day of the weeke to attend upon the Lord in all his holy ordinances continuing in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship & breaking bread & praise [Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2, Acts 2:42].”<sup>40</sup>

On March 6, 1689, the constables of Charlestown were sent to Goold’s house to see who was meeting there and to report back. After a list of about twenty names, the report records the following:

When we came into the hous John Johnson was exorting the pepell: After he had don Thomas Goold spack from that place in first of the canticells the second vers let him kis me with the kisis of his mouth & then went to prayer & so ended. They said

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<sup>38</sup> Nathan E. Wood, *The History of the First Baptist Church of Boston*, ed. Constance E. Hanson (Salem, NH: Ayer Company Publishers, 1990), 56.

<sup>39</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 66.

it was att 2 of ye clock when they went thither to Th: Goolds hous.<sup>41</sup> There was no singing in worship at this time. Nathan Wood, the early historian of this group, seems surprised by this and indicated that the reason was, “perhaps lest it should attract too much attention, and yet they made no secret of their meeting together.” He continues, “One or two of them exhorted from the Scriptures, a prayer or two was offered, and they separated.”<sup>42</sup> It also is recorded that the church observed the Lord’s Supper once every month, which was the practice also at the time of the writing of Wood’s history of the church (1899).<sup>43</sup> According to Horton Davies, a typical Puritan order of worship in Boston in the late seventeenth century is set forth in figure 6.<sup>44</sup>

Opening Prayer of Intercession and Thanksgiving  
Reading and exposition of a chapter of the Bible  
Psalm singing  
Sermon  
Psalm singing  
Prayer  
Blessing

Figure 6. Horton Davies, Typical Puritan order of worship in Boston

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<sup>41</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 90.

<sup>42</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 91. Wood also points out that they were not dependent on the presence of a minister. “They believed that every individual should have liberty of utterance in their social gatherings. They had an elder who usually preached and administered the ordinances in an orderly way, but if the elder were necessarily absent, some lay brother was called on to preach or exhort in his place.” He concludes, “It is probable that the very simplicity and flexibility of the organization preserved it from utter destruction. It did not depend on any one man. Any one might expound the Scriptures to the others. Any one might pray in their assembly. Whoever of their number might be in prison, or absent for other cause, there was always some one present and ready to lead their service of worship.”

<sup>43</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 136.

<sup>44</sup> Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Publications, 1999), 8.

This order is reconcilable with the account of First Baptist Church of Boston above. Often, persecuted churches did not sing, especially if they knew constables were watching. Their presence might also have affected the freedom of these Baptists to worship as normal. It is likely that the structure Davies suggests is very similar to Baptist practice, especially since this structure seems to be embedded in most Baptist worship service orders that follow. Communion, when celebrated, would likely have followed the sermon. After meeting in private homes (most often in that of Gould) for its early existence, a meetinghouse was finally built in 1679 for its growing congregation.

It is not certain when they began singing in worship, but the early practice was fraught with logistical challenges and a lack of congregational skill. At the Baptist Church at Newport, John Comer first introduced congregational singing in 1726.<sup>45</sup> There was a close connection between the Baptist churches at Newport and Boston, so it is possible that singing began in Boston around the same time, if not before since Comer came from Boston. However, during the time of Elisha Callendar (c. 1688–1738, ordained in 1718) as pastor, there is evidence of the church singing in worship. One of the most enlightening and humorous descriptions of singing in early Baptist worship comes from this congregation. Wood describes an entry into the Church Record in 1728:

At a church meeting Sep 8 1728. Voted that our Brother Skinner Russell be desired from that time forward to Set the Psalm in Publick.” The singing in public worship of that time was wonderful in its variety and lack of harmony. There were no instruments of music. The Psalms, distorted into something which was strangely supposed to be metre, were sung. The irregularity of the metre made it impossible to fit any regular tune to a psalm. Sometimes, when the psalm was long, the singing would occupy a half-hour, during which the congregation stood, and each one sang a tune which seemed to have little connection with the tune of any other singer. The result was a singular babel of sounds in which harmony was not the most noticeable feature. The one hundred and thirty-third Psalm furnishes illustration of the irregularity of the metre:

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<sup>45</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 220. Comer was saved in 1721 and became an elder at First Baptist Church, Boston before becoming pastor at First Baptist Church, Newport. As a Reformed, Six-Principle Baptist who advocated singing, Comer is an unusual mixture (Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 52). Elisha Callendar’s grandson later became the pastor at Newport (Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 220).

How good and sweet to see  
It's for brethren to dwell  
together in unitee;

Its like oyle that fell  
the head upon  
that down did flow  
the beard unto  
beard of Aron  
the skirts of his garment  
that unto them went down;

Like Hermons due descent  
Sions mountains upon  
for there to bee  
the Lords blessing  
life aye lasting  
commandeth hee.

The awkward rhythm of the metrical psalm, and the lack of enough psalters for everyone to read along, made singing in unison nearly impossible. Wood explains, somewhat humorously,

The singers had no notes before them and each one sang pretty much at his own pleasure. It cannot be denied that they enjoyed their own singing and entered into it with peculiar zest. Perhaps the very defiance of all the rules of music gave them a sense of unconstraint, which was the chief element of their delight.

A new technique referred to as “lining out the psalm” was being practiced in an effort to get the congregation into some semblance of order and to improve their singing.

However, as most musical innovations in the church tend to do, this divided the congregation and some preferred the old way. “The new way seemed an encroachment upon liberty.” The “liners” eventually won out, but the new method really did not prove to be any great improvement over the old. According to Wood, “No method could make psalms metred after the fashion of ‘The Bay Psalm Book,’ to be sung well.” Brother Russell was supposed to “set the tune” at this time, but there is no evidence that the church fully employed the method of lining out at this time, though later they did.

Reading the Scriptures to the congregation was not a common practice at this time in

Baptist or Congregationalists churches.<sup>46</sup>

On July 7, 1740, “The Church voted to sing that Version of the Psalms done by Dr. Brady & Mr. Tate, so long as no objections should be offered against it.”<sup>47</sup> It appears that there were none and the church began using *Tate and Brady* at this time. The worship order was simply the following: “One psalm was sung without instrumental accompaniment, a prayer and the sermon followed. The service would not be overlong even if the sermon were longer than at present.”<sup>48</sup> In 1771, the church adopted Watts’ collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Song to replace *Tate and Brady*. In 1791, the congregation decided to use the London Baptist pastor John Rippon’s *Selection of Hymns* “at baptism and communion seasons, as a supplement to Dr. Watt’s hymns.”<sup>49</sup> These two examples at Providence and Boston in New England represent the earliest beginnings of Baptist worship, but not the most influential; that came from the Middle and Southern Colonies.

### **The First Baptists in Philadelphia (1688–1746)**

The first historic example of worship under consideration in this study is that of the Baptists in Philadelphia. There are three reasons for beginning this study with the Baptists at Philadelphia: (1) the connection here with the founding influence from Baptists’ roots in England is clear; (2) persecution did not hinder the free growth and development of the movement; and (3) the influence from this group upon other Baptist churches is unparalleled. Tom Nettles writes, “The Philadelphia Association serves as a

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<sup>46</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 218–220. Wood explains that Brattle Street—a Congregationalist church—was organized in 1699 “because of the dissent from the custom of not reading the Scriptures in public worship and the requiring of experience as a prerequisite to admission to the Lord’s table.” At the Second Church (another Congregationalists church) they were not read until 1729.

<sup>47</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 220.

<sup>48</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Church*, 220.

<sup>49</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 82.

bridge . . . between much of the Baptist life and self-conscious identity taken on by English Baptists and that which defined the growth of Baptists in America.”<sup>50</sup> The founding members of these early churches were primarily Baptists from England and Wales. They embraced Baptist theology and practices in the motherland of the British Isles while under the persecution of the Act of Uniformity and the Clarendon Code. They subsequently came to the New World to freely express the Baptist faith and advance it. The freedom of religious opinion, instituted by the Quaker William Penn (1644–1718), is a leading reason why so many came to Pennsylvania. Here they were free to assemble, practice, and propagate a Baptist identity to a degree that was not possible in New England.

While they are not the first Baptists in America, they are the first major influencers of Baptists in America.<sup>51</sup> In a century that began with no more than twenty Baptist churches but ended with almost a thousand, it is important to consider the substantial influence that this group had in the eighteenth Century. James L. Clark writes,

This was the first Baptist association organized in the New World and it remained the only body of its kind in the colonies for forty-four years. During this period the Baptists in all parts of the country looked to it for advice and assistance. It, therefore, became the model for the other early associations and retained this distinction long after those associations began to appear in the colonies.”<sup>52</sup>

The Particular Baptist tradition of England became known as the “Regular” Baptist tradition in America. Additionally, Regular Baptist life in the eighteenth century is

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<sup>50</sup> Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*, vol. 2 (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 75.

<sup>51</sup> James L. Clark writes, “The Pennepek congregation was the mother church for Baptists in the Middle Atlantic States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Delaware much like the First Baptist Church of Providence was in the New England States (*To Set Them in Order; Some Influences of Philadelphia Baptist Association Upon Baptists of America to 1814* [Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2001], 370).

<sup>52</sup> Clark, *Set Them in Order*, 2.

typically viewed with the Philadelphia Baptist Association as the epicenter of its activity. According to Weaver, “Scholars call it the most important Baptist entity of the century and thus refer to its influence as the ‘Philadelphia tradition.’”<sup>53</sup> As with so many other aspects of church life, what happened in Philadelphia with regards to Baptist worship became a model and influence for other Baptist churches around the country to emulate.

### **A Brief History**

Many of the Baptists in Philadelphia were Welsh Baptists. David Spencer writes in his nineteenth-century history of this group, “The Welsh Baptist historian (J. Davis) claims that ‘Wales is to be considered as the parent of the Baptist denomination in Pennsylvania.’”<sup>54</sup> Upon the restoration of Charles II and the Act of Uniformity, persecution in Wales had intensified greatly. After years of meeting in secret and experiencing fines, arrests, and whippings, several members of the Baptist Church of Dolau in Radnorshire, Wales, sailed for America. They arrived in Philadelphia in 1686 and settled on the banks of Pennepek Creek.<sup>55</sup> Other Baptists in this area of Pennsylvania came from Rhode Island including a pastor. Rev. Thomas Dungan, originally from London, had previously been a member of the First Baptist Church of Newport where he had studied for the ministry.<sup>56</sup> Dungan settled in this area in 1684 and started a church at

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<sup>53</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 52. “Before the First Great Awakening, there were actually more Six-Principle Baptists in New England, especially in the cradle of early Baptist life, Rhode Island. Most, but not all, Six-Principle Baptists affirmed Arminian theology. After 1750 and the First Great Awakening, the majority of Baptists were ‘Five-Principle,’ Calvinistic, and practiced ‘closed communion.’”

<sup>54</sup> David Spencer, *The Early Baptists of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1877), 18.

<sup>55</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 21. Pennepek is also spelled “Pennypek,” “Pennypack,” “Pennypeka,” “Pennepeck,” and “Pennypeck.” The church later became known as Lower Dublin Baptist Church.

<sup>56</sup> While FBC Providence was a non-singing congregation, FBC Newport seems to have been a singing congregation in its early days. In 1656 a group of members withdrew to form the Second Baptist Church, in part because of First Church’s use of psalmody. It abandoned the practice some time before

Cold Spring that was the first Baptist church in the area. Upon the death of Dungan in 1687, members of the church began trickling into the Pennepek church until it finally disbanded in 1702. Many of the Cold Spring members ultimately joined the Baptist church at Pennepek.

In 1687, Elias Keach arrived in Philadelphia. As the son of the celebrated Baptist minister in London, Benjamin Keach, he came dressed as a minister himself—in black with a band—as a ruse to cover what is reported to have been a “gay, wild, [and] thoughtless” life.<sup>57</sup> He was asked to preach and many people came to hear the son of the famous Baptist preacher. This was his first sermon and likely preached one of his father’s sermons. Of this event Morgan Edwards (1722–1795), later a prominent pastor of FBC Philadelphia and historian writes,

He performed well enough till he had advanced pretty far in the sermon. Then, stopping short, he looked like a man astonished. The audience concluded he had been seized with a sudden disorder; but on asking what the matter was, received from him a confession of the imposture, with tears in his eyes, and much trembling.<sup>58</sup>

He was subsequently baptized by Thomas Dungan and ordained, counting that moment as his conversion.

The Pennepek church was constituted in January 1688, with twelve members and the recently converted Keach as their pastor. This was the seventh Baptist church in America. It became the hub of vibrant gospel activity around the Philadelphia area. From there, Keach travelled and preached the gospel to any who would listen. Spencer

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1725 as it is reported at that time that they were a non-singing congregation (Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 72–73). It is not clear if Thomas Dungan advocated singing but it is possible and if so, this possibility contributes to the potential early singing date of the Pennepek Church, though Elias Keach’s influence alone is sufficient to establish this possibility.

<sup>57</sup> Horatio Gates Jones, *Historical Sketch of the Lower Dublin (or Pennepek) Baptist Church* (Morrisania, NY, 1869), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 23.

writes, “Mr. Keach extended his ministerial labors into New Jersey, to Trenton, Burlington, Middletown, Cohansey and Salem. He also frequently preached in Philadelphia, Chester, and other places. At that time all the Baptists of Philadelphia and New Jersey were regarded as general members of [the Pennepek] church.”<sup>59</sup> They gathered quarterly for the ordinance of communion, in a different location each quarter, to accommodate distant members. A cooperative work began to evolve as these locales began forming churches: Middletown in 1688, Piscataway in 1689, Cohansey in 1690, and Philadelphia in 1698. First Baptist Philadelphia became the eleventh Baptist church in America though it was considered an extension of Pennepek for almost fifty years.

David Benedict, the renowned nineteenth-century Baptist historian, writes of Keach: “He may be considered as the chief apostle among the Baptists in these parts of America.”<sup>60</sup> However, doctrinal disputes such as the matter of laying on of hands, among others, became contentious enough that Keach felt it best to free himself to continue travelling and preaching. Keach resigned his pastorate and moved to New Jersey where much of the growth was occurring at this time (the three newest churches after Pennepek were in New Jersey). John Watts (1661–1702) assumed the pastorate vacated by Keach in 1690. Watts was from Kent County, England, but had been baptized at Pennepek by Keach. Keach eventually returned to London in 1692 to a very successful pastoral ministry there where he served until his death. Watts preached at Pennepek and, beginning in 1698, also preached twice a month at Philadelphia until his death in 1702. This process of sharing pastors between the two churches continued until 1746. Philadelphia was considered a branch of Pennepek during that time. Evan Morgan (served 1706–1709), Samuel Jones (served 1706–c. 1722), Joseph Wood (served 1708–c.

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<sup>59</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 597.

1747), Abel Morgan (served 1711–c. 1722), and Jenkin Jones (served 1725–1746) all preached at both churches under a similar organization. FBC Philadelphia was formally constituted on May 15, 1746 as the center of activity had shifted away from Pennepek to the First Church in Philadelphia. Jones continued with them exclusively as their pastor until 1760, and was then succeeded by the dynamic and eventful tenure of Morgan Edwards, also a Welsh Baptist. Edwards had been recommended to the church by the famous English Baptist pastor, John Gill (1697–1771).

### **The Theology in Practice**

As has been mentioned, the majority of the founding and influential members of this group were largely of Welsh Baptist descent, committed to Particular Baptist principles. This group of churches became a bastion of Regular Baptist theology with the prevailing view of the atonement as being Calvinistic. They were also evangelistic as their history demonstrates. Douglas Weaver cites a response by the Association in 1724 to a query from one of its churches in which they refer to “a confession ‘owned’ by the association.”<sup>61</sup> Given that the founding pastor of the Pennepek church was Elias Keach—son of the secretary of the 1689 Second London Confession—and the orientation of the Baptist movement, as well as the colonies as whole, was to London; it is certain that this was the confession in view. This is further confirmed by the ratification of the same confession less than twenty years later as the Philadelphia Baptist Confession (1742). This version contained the addition of two new sections—one on the laying on of hands after baptism and one on the singing of hymns in worship.<sup>62</sup> The influence of the

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<sup>61</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 53. Tom Nettles confirms that it was the Second London Confession in view here, which they considered a “standard of orthodoxy among Baptists.” (Nettles, *The Baptists*, 76). Bill Leonard writes, “Known in the colonies as ‘Keach’s Confession,’ it was used in 1712 to resolve a doctrinal dispute in the Baptist church at Middletown, New Jersey” (Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2005], 84).

<sup>62</sup> James Clark believes the Welsh Tract Church was instrumental in the other Baptist churches

elder Keach through his son seems apparent here, as both of these were also present in the 1697 personal confession of Benjamin Keach. Weaver explains, “The strong Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession made that theological persuasion dominant in much of American Baptist theology during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”<sup>63</sup> This fact points to the remarkable influence this group had upon Baptists in America. This also demonstrates their early commitment to sound doctrine and adherence to the word of God. Clark writes, “The Philadelphia Association had no sympathy whatsoever with that which it considered to be false doctrine.”<sup>64</sup> The minutes of the Association are filled with examples of this conviction as the leaders respond to doctrinal questions (e.g., queries from the churches), handle matters of doctrinal disputes (e.g., “laying on of hands”), and give instruction through circular letters. The crowning effort in this regard is the ratifying of the first Baptist confession in America—The Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742. Weaver writes, “Baptists in the Philadelphia Baptist Association affirmed the final authority of the Bible in Religious matters. Nevertheless, they used a confession of faith as a doctrinal guideline and standard for orthodoxy. Doctrinal agreement was a condition for associational membership.”<sup>65</sup> They were confessional Baptists and they continued this inherited practice in the New World.

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adopting these two additional articles (Clark, *Set Them in Order*, 11).

<sup>63</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 53. David McCollum writes, “The Calvinistic Philadelphia Baptists emphasized evangelism because of their Welsh roots, which help them accept the [Great] Awakening. Philadelphia’s influence spread until most American Baptists accepted evangelistic moderate Calvinism” (“A Study of Evangelicals and Revival Exercises from 1730–1805: Tracing the Development of Exercise Traditions through the First Great Awakening Period to the Southern Great Revival” [Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009], 193).

<sup>64</sup> Clark, *Set Them in Order*, 88. “Those who had strayed from the doctrines which had been delivered ‘once for all to the saints’ were first approached on the subject and given opportunity to reconsider and then if they saw fit to repudiate the erroneous doctrine they were forgiven. But, if they decided to maintain the new doctrine they were immediately excluded from the membership of their church by its members.”

<sup>65</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 53.

## The Practice in Worship

As with any group that worshiped over three hundred years ago, reconstructing their regular practice of worship is a significant challenge. However, certain undeniable pieces can be assembled and then propositions may be suggested based upon other primary source material. It is certain that the earliest Baptists in Philadelphia maintained the practice of “the reading of the Scriptures, Preaching, and hearing the word of God” in worship, as prescribed by the Second London Confession. As described above, this included the application of the regulative principle in worship and the effort to discern “the acceptable way of worshipping God.” This called into question for some the practice of congregational singing. The confession states that worship should include, “teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs, singing with grace in our Hearts to the Lord.”<sup>66</sup> The disagreement ensued over whether singing in the heart should also afford the public expression with the voice, or should it be merely internal. Additional concerns regarding “conjoined” singing with unbelievers and the authenticity of the expression; the presence of fixed forms such as a psalter or hymn book in worship; and the appropriate matter for singing (e.g., Psalms or hymns of human composure?); makes this a highly contentious matter in both the New World and Old. Benjamin Keach is at the center of the controversy among London Baptists and it appears that his son also may have played an influential role in Philadelphia, which will be discussed below.

The Philadelphia Baptists also gathered in a variety of regional locales to celebrate communion at least twice a year, especially as the influence of the church widened in its geographical circle with the travel and preaching of Elias Keach and before local churches were established. This created a sense of cooperation and uniformity even before the Philadelphia Baptist Association was formed in 1707. Gavin

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<sup>66</sup> William Lumpkin, “Second London Confession,” in *Baptist Confession of Faith*, 281. Chapter XXII. “Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day.”

Morton Walker, in a historical address in 1932 celebrating the two hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Association, describes the early worship of the churches:

In early days [of worship] fixed forms were objected to because they did not give room for individual expression. Any Baptist might take part in his meeting. Hymn-singing was suspected by many because unscriptural persons might take part insincerely. It took about a century in America for congregational singing to become a regular practice among Baptists; but the Welsh element led to its adoption here earlier. A clerk led the singing from a place in front of the pulpit. Psalm- and hymn-books were at first procured in Britain, and later prepared here. Choirs appeared in the gallery, and a little over a century ago an organ was sanctioned in the First Church, without expense to the congregation . . . Gradually ritual has grown in our churches, the more so where the building is of the more appropriate type, and now our churches generally have forms of service which include, in varying degree, all that is acceptable in evangelical churches. (The writer has had for years, during Lord's Day morning worship, a period of silent prayer, when the congregation is asked to make confession, return thanks, offer petition and intercession, and renew their dedication to the Saviour). More and more the fact of worship is being stressed and its enrichment sought. The danger now is that the values of expression in worship may be missed; none of our meetings are conserving this sufficiently.<sup>67</sup>

Of communion he writes, "Development . . . has been in the introduction of individual cups and of unfermented wine, while close communion has given place to open." This infers that the original practice was that of a common cup of wine and close communion—allowing only baptized believers who were church members to participate. This ensured that those who came to the table were known by the church as having expressed authentically a profession of faith both in public affirmation and symbolic witness through baptism. Baptism was required for church membership and in some places laying on of hands was required as well. This led to baptisms and communion being held at a separate time, for church members only, and was not open as was public worship on Sunday.

Walker continues, "For these two centuries and more there has not been the slightest inclination on the part of any of our churches toward belief in any magical

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<sup>67</sup> Gavin Morton Walker, *Philadelphia Baptist Development in Two Centuries and a Quarter* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1932), 10.

change in the elements of the Lord's Supper." Of Baptism he writes, "In Philadelphia baptisms were on week-days in the Schuylkill, and at the place of the baptisterion a two-story brick building was erected for us on such occasions." Finally—"Our churches have never christened children, and have never wanted to; but the idea of dedicating children to the Lord in a suitable ceremony has found favor in many of our churches. In early records we find that it was considered irregular to baptize a person who wished to commune elsewhere, and baptism by one not baptized himself was null and void."<sup>68</sup> Walker also believes that the Baptists of Philadelphia were "very strict about the laying on of hands on the reception of members, at the setting apart of deacons, elders, and ministers." The role of this practice was especially stringent with regard to ministers. "A minister not ordained by the laying on of hands could not administer baptism and the Supper. One ordained by the laying on of hands for a Ruling Elder must be ordained again by the laying on of hands when called to the Word and doctrine."<sup>69</sup> While the matter of laying on of hands was one of the added sections to the Philadelphia Confession (1742), the church records indicate that this matter was one of great contention from the earliest days and was not widely held elsewhere. This was one of the early disputes that led to Keach's decision to resign from the pastorate at Pennepek, and most likely the predominant one, as it is the one most often referenced.<sup>70</sup>

There is little doubt that one of the other matters in dispute included the practice of congregational singing and hymns. Keach was a proponent of singing hymns

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<sup>68</sup> Walker, *Philadelphia Baptist Development*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Walker, *Philadelphia Baptist Development*, 11.

<sup>70</sup> Spencer lists only this matter specifically among "other matters of doctrine and practice" (Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 25). Horatio Jones mentions the matter of "predestination" in addition to laying on of hands (Jones, *Historical Sketch*, 10). Morgan Edwards lists the issues as being "absolute predestination, laying on of hands, distributing the elements, singing Psalms, seventh-day Sabbath, etc., which through [*sic*] the body ecclesiastic into a fever" (Morgan Edwards, *Materials Towards a History of American Baptists* [Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank and Isaac Collins, 1770], 9).

as added to the Philadelphia Confession in 1742 from the “Keach Confession.” However, at this early date—some fifty years before—these were still highly contentious matters as in other parts of the colonies and in England. The minutes of the Pennepek church reveal that Keach “‘usually concluded’ the Lord’s Supper ‘with singing of a hymn of praise composed for that purpose.’ Before preaching, he also ‘commonly used to sing a Psalm or part of a psalm.’”<sup>71</sup> After Keach’s return to London in the spring of 1692, he organized a church there where congregational singing was practiced regularly. In 1696 he published a collection of 100 hymns for use in worship entitled, *A Banqueting-House Full of Spiritual Delights, or Hymns and Spiritual Songs on Several Occasions*. In 1697 he published *The Glory and Ornament of a True Gospel-Constituted Church*, in which he outlined the principles of a true gospel church, including his thoughts on worship. These two works provide some insight into the early perspective that Keach might have brought to the early Baptist worship experience near Philadelphia.

On the title page of the hymn collection Keach lists Ephesians 5:19 to endorse the command from Scripture for singing. He then lists three reasons for such a collection in the “Epistle Dedicatory”: (1) the personal benefit of recalling sermons for private meditation; (2) the family benefit of hymns and spiritual songs to sing at home; and (3) “for the better and more orderly performance of this part of divine worship in the publick assembly; for my premeditation you will be capable conjointly to sing with more judgment and understanding and make the sweeter harmony in the ears of the God of order.”<sup>72</sup> These three reasons demonstrate the connection he saw between corporate

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<sup>71</sup> *Minutes from Olde Pennepack Record Books, 1687–1894* (Philadelphia: Pennepack Baptist Church, 1894), 126, quoted in Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 76. “The wording suggests that Elias may have been the author of the communion hymns. It is also possible that these texts were written by his father, Benjamin, who had first introduced hymn singing in connection with the Lord’s table. If the hymns were by Elias, they may be among those published in London, in 1696, following his return there.”

<sup>72</sup> Elias Keach, *A Banqueting-House Full of Spiritual Delights: or, Hymns and Spiritual Songs on Several Occasions* (London: Benjamin Harris, 1696), 18, accessed November 18, 2014,

worship and worship in the rest of life. He then expresses in no small detail his intention of keeping these hymns simple and accessible to all. He mentions the ongoing public debate regarding singing but feels that Richard Allen's *An Essay to Prove Singing of Psalms with Conjoined Voices a Christian Duty* (1696) has settled the matter and that he could not improve on it. However, he then includes a paragraph arguing for congregational singing anyway. His final benedictory remarks in the "Epistle Dedicatory" give a sense of the gospel theme of the collection:

And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.

The collection is essentially a collection of gospel-centered songs. He included songs for baptism, which became a common section in subsequent Baptist hymnbooks because no other groups besides Baptists were writing these. He also included several communion hymns that reflect a sense of the real presence of Christ at the table.<sup>73</sup> According to David Music and Paul Richardson, "A prominent theme in his hymns is that of covenant."<sup>74</sup> Many of them emphasize the keeping power of Christ, the benefits of the gospel to the believer, and the praiseworthiness of Christ.

In *The Glory and Ornament of a True Gospel-Constituted Church*, Keach makes some very compelling and robust observations regarding worship. Given that

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<http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/11/The-Glory-and-Ornament-of-a-True-Gospel-Church.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> He subtitles many of these as "A Sacramental Hymn" and they generally include language provoking the active image of Christ on the cross before the participant: "Behold! (saith Christ) look up, and see | your bleeding, dying Lord; O look! | Come hither, view me on the Tree! | And by my dear Father forsook. | Behold my wounds, darlings 'tis I | See here my bleeding hands and feet? | Draw near unto Mount Calvary, and at the cross your Savior greet (Elias Keach, "A Sacramental Hymn," *A Banqueting-House*, 3). It is quite possible that some of these hymns were composed and sung while in Philadelphia.

<sup>74</sup> Music and Richardson, "*I Will Sing*," 17.

much of his teaching in Philadelphia was while travelling to assembled groups that became churches, his influence could have spread quite widely and strategically. Keach believed that it is in gathered worship that the church has access to “divine Presence with them: or when the Glory of God fills his temple (Exod. 24.24. Mat. 18.20).”<sup>75</sup> Because of this, he believes public worship should be preferred before private, though he advocated private and family worship as was mentioned above.<sup>76</sup> While anyone could attend the general worship service, “the Lord’s Supper, holy discipline, and days of prayer and fasting” were to be shared as “the Church of Old” in “separat[ing] themselves from all Strangers (Neh. 1.2.).” The “publick Ordinances” of the church were “publick prayer, reading and preaching the Word, and in singing God’s praises, as hath formerly been proved.” At this point in his discourse he chastises those who might join the church in prayer but “not praise God with us.”<sup>77</sup> His definition of praising God certainly includes singing and he takes the next portion of the treatise to outline the benefits for the believer of participating in public worship, including singing. Much as his father pleaded in 1689 for singing as a solution to the acknowledged spiritual decline and zeal in Baptist worship, Keach advances the church’s prioritization of worship as a whole, to include singing. It is in the worship service that the church responds to God’s command and preference for his people to gather to praise him. He gives four reasons for doing so:

(1) Since God prefers it thus: Or has so great esteem of his publick worship. (2) Because he is said to dwell in Sion; It is his Habitation for ever. The place where his Honour dwells. (Psal. 132.13. Psal. 25.9.) (3) Here God is most glorified. In his temple every one speaks of his glory; My praise shall be in the great congregation.

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<sup>75</sup> Elias Keach, *The Glory and Ornament of a True Gospel-Constituted Church* (London, 1697), 18, accessed November 18, 2014, <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/11/The-Glory-and-Ornament-of-a-True-Gospel-Church.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup> The concept of private and family worship at least in part, was to prepare oneself for public worship. Early Baptists placed some emphasis on the need to prepare oneself spiritually to come to worship. It was never to be entered glibly or without serious consideration of its importance.

<sup>77</sup> Keach, *The Glory and Ornament*, 21.

(Psal. 29.2). (4) Here is most of God's gracious presence (as one observe it.)<sup>78</sup>

The first three points being a matter of obedience, the fourth engenders extended support. Keach adds several supporting points regarding the manifest presence of God in worship as his primary argument for the benefit of the worshiper. This is perhaps the most compelling part of his treatise to this study as he outlines the effects of transformation upon the worshiper:

His effectual Presence, in all Places; Where I record my Name, thither will I come; and there will I bless thee. (Exod. 20.24.) Here is More of his intimate presence: Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them. He walks in the midst of seven Golden Candlesticks. (Mat. 18.20. Rev. 1.13.) Here are the clearest manifestations of God's Beauty, which made holy David desire to dwell there forever. See the appearance of Christ to the Churches, Rev. 2. chap. 3. (Psal. 27.4.) In that it is said, that those that should be Saved, in the Apostles days, God added unto the Church. (Acts 2.47.) Here is most Spiritual Advantage to be got: Here the Dews of Hermon fall, they descend upon the Mountain of Sion. Here God commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore. I will abundantly bless her Provision, and satisfie her Poor with Bread. Here David's Doubt was resolved. (Psal. 132.3. Psal.130.15. Psal. 73.16, 17.) Here you received your first Spiritual Breath, or Life, many Souls are daily Born to Christ. That good which is most Diffusive, is to be Preferred; but that good which most partake of, is most Diffusive; O magnify the Lord with me! Let us exalt his Name together. Live Coals separated, soon die. (Psal. 87.5. Psal. 34.3.) Brethren (as a worthy Divine observes) the Church in her publick Worship is the nearest Resemblance of Heaven, especially in Singing God's Praises. What Esteem also had God's Worthies of old, for God's publick Worship? My Soul longeth, yea, even, fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! (Psal. 84.1, 2.) See how the Promises of God run to Sion, or to his Church: He will bless thee out of Sion. O let nothing discourage you in your waiting at the Posts of Christ's Door. David desired Rather to be a Door-Keeper in the House of God, than to Dwell in the Tents of Wickedness. Yet nevertheless do not neglect, for the Lord's sake, private Devotion; viz. Secret, and Family-Prayer: O pray to be fitted for publick Worship!<sup>79</sup>

He concludes this section by emphasizing the way that private, family, and corporate prayer and devotion work together as a threefold cord. However, priority is given to the public worship of God in the gathered assembly. Worship flows from the private prayer closet to the family hearth to the church's gathering. The worship gathering then sends one back to live a transformed life in the other circles of life.

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<sup>78</sup> Keach, *The Glory and Ornament*, 21.

<sup>79</sup> Keach, *The Glory and Ornament*, 21–22.

For Keach, the fundamental elements of public worship are prayer, Scripture reading, preaching and praising God. In a letter written on behalf of the Pennepek congregation in 1698, these same elements are listed: “We agree in the public worship of God and common duties of religion, as in prayer, preaching, praising God, reading and hearing the word.”<sup>80</sup> There is at least one other reason that the element of “praising God” included singing for the Pennepek congregation. Morgan Edwards explains that in 1701, an entire church of sixteen members arrived in Philadelphia that had been constituted in Pembroke, South Wales. The Baptists in the region welcomed them and encouraged them to settle in the vicinity of Pennepek as they had many principles in common. They stayed for almost two years and added twenty-one new members before relocating to Delaware due to tension over their insistence upon the practice of laying on of hands.<sup>81</sup> In Delaware they purchased a tract of land and became known as the Welsh Tract Baptist Church. Edwards explains, “They were the first to receive the *Century Confession* which was subscribed by 122 of them in 1716 with addition of article xxiii and xxxi. It has been translated for their use by Mr. Abel Morgan.”<sup>82</sup> Spencer cites Edwards in the following manner, “[The Welsh Tract Church] was the principle, if not sole, means of introducing singing, imposition of hands, church covenants, etc., among the Baptists in the Middle

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<sup>80</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 33. This letter was written to a congregation of Presbyterians who were sharing a building in Philadelphia (known as the Barbados storehouse) with the Baptists for worship. Their new pastor was from New England where Baptists were actively being persecuted and he did not possess a positive attitude toward the Baptists in Philadelphia. He was attempting to drive them out of the building where the two churches had shared occupation for over three years. This letter from John Watts, Samuel Jones and three others representing the Lower Dublin branch of Baptists meeting in Philadelphia was a courteous and cordial attempt to make peace. After two subsequent attempts to meet face to face with the Presbyterian minister to no avail (he never showed up at either appointed time that he set), the Baptists found another building to meet in—Anthony Morris’ Brewhouse.

<sup>81</sup> Spencer explains that the Lower Dublin church practiced this at first but afterwards grew indifferent to the practice. It was practiced in other churches as well and was originally required as a term of communion. Eventually, it was agreed that the “practice or disuse of the ordinance should not be a bar to communion” (Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 40–41).

<sup>82</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, 20. The Century Confession was the Keach Confession (e.g., Second London Confession with the addition of the two articles on singing hymns and laying on of hands).

States. Singing psalms met with opposition, especially at Cohansey.”<sup>83</sup> This quote referenced a time period around 1706. If Spencer’s citation is correct, some Baptists were singing in worship near the turn of the century, even after Keach had departed. This would make them likely one of the earliest groups of Baptists to sing regularly in public worship. By the middle of the century, most Baptist churches sang corporately in worship.<sup>84</sup>

One other reference is particularly noteworthy to the study of this time period. Spencer records a query made to the Association from the church at Brandywine. The Association, convened on September 23, 1723, was asked how the church “might improve their vacant days of worship, when they have no minister among them to carry on the public work?” The Association responded,

Solution—We conceive it expedient that the church do meet together as often as conveniency will admit; and when they have none to carry on the work of preaching, that they read a chapter, sing a psalm, and go to prayer and beg of God to increase their grace and comfort, and have due regard to order and decency in the exercise of those gifted at all times, and not to suffer any to exercise their gifts in a mixed multitude until tried and approved of first by the church. Agreed that the proposal drawn by the several ministers, and signed by many others, in reference to the examination of all gifted brethren and ministers that come in here from other places, be duly put in practice, we having found the evil of neglecting a true and previous scrutiny in those affairs.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 41. The Edwards citation either was different in another place or Spencer has elaborated on it. The citation in question is the one above. The early influences for singing at Pennepek could have come from Thomas Dungan’s group or Elias Keach, or both, before the founders of the Welsh Tract Baptist Church arrived in 1701.

<sup>84</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 78. “A major influence on the adoption of singing by many Baptists was the Great Awakening that occurred in the colonies during the second quarter of the eighteenth century.”

<sup>85</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 57. It is not clear that the churches were practicing prophesying (e.g., the reading of Scripture with interspersed comments) at this time, as was done in Baptist worship elsewhere. Perhaps they were and that is what this concern was related to. There was a sense that worship needed to take on more decorum at the time of this request. The response seems to demonstrate that this practice, if practiced earlier, has become less prevalent and possibly may be completely replaced with the prepared sermon by the called minister. This is likely as a result of the general desire of the Association to guard against false doctrine. Spencer writes of the time around 1700, “The varieties and phases of theological opinion prevalent [Quakers, Keithians, Seventh-Day Baptists, Presbyterians, Socinians, Anglicans, Sabellians, etc.], led the Baptists to feel the need of proper instruction in the true

In this response, the Philadelphia Baptist Association essentially codified their approach to worship decorum and order. The word of God is central to worship and the preaching of the word by a man approved to do so is the central act of hearing from God in worship. If such an equipped man is not present, the church is cautioned against allowing unproven and untested men to attempt to exercise this gift. This had apparently caused serious problems elsewhere. They encouraged the churches to practice a rhythm of Scripture, singing a psalm, and prayer. This simple *ordo* is a demonstration of an early Baptist sense of dialogue with God in worship (e.g., revelation and response). The word of God is the revelation of God; the psalm is an expression of praise in response to God; and prayer is invoking his aid to “increase their grace and comfort,” to which they anticipate his response in instructing and empowering them. Given the overt gospel content expressed above, it is not a stretch to imagine that the nature of the mediation of Christ is consistently represented in some manner in these gatherings as well. These early Baptists were gospel-centered people and they came to worship expecting to hear the gospel and with the anticipation that unsaved people would also be present and likewise in need of the gospel. The question of singing being answered, the content of the singing is the next matter of inquiry.

Early Baptists who sang were psalm singers, as were Congregationalists and

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faith for their children and the church members” (Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 29). Spencer also reveals a meeting at another time of the week that was held early in the history of Pennepek in which men met to pray and read and interpret the Scriptures. It is from these gatherings that future pastors and elders were identified. Some of these men would preach and lead in prayer on Sunday’s “meetings for Conference” when Keach was travelling so that “the church enabled always to have within her own fold those upon whom she should depend in the absence of her pastor” (25). This practice continued well into the eighteenth century. “The meetings for conference sustained by the Lower Dublin Church developed the talents of their young men, and kept up a constant supply of preachers for their pulpit. These young men, too, were under the constant supervision and encouragement of the pastor, and acted as his assistants” (43). Given the early problems experienced with doctrinal disagreement from alternative and erroneous strands of theology, and the impressionability of young converts in young churches, it seems likely that the Sunday services quickly became more regulated. The instruction from the Association given here seems to confirm that was the case, at least in the absence of a preacher, if not at other times as well.

other Separatists. Louis F. Benson theorizes, “If the earliest New England Baptists practiced psalm singing at all, they probably, like their neighbors, lined the psalms out of *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640).”<sup>86</sup> William Reynolds disagrees, noting that this was unlikely “at least until many decades had erased from Baptist minds the memories of the persecution they had suffered at the hands of Boston divines, some of whom were responsible for this psalter.”<sup>87</sup> This likely meant they instead sang from the Sternhold and Hopkins *Psalter* (1562), the Ainsworth *Psalter* (1612), or one of the editions of the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* (1556). Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady’s *A New Version of the Psalms* (1696), and Isaac Watts’ *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) and *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719) became options at the turn of, and early in, the eighteenth century. A common progression for churches in this century was to sing *Sternhold and Hopkins* (“the old version”), *Tate and Brady* (“the new version”) and then Watts’ psalms and hymns or Rippon’s *Selection*. There must have been some demand in Philadelphia for Watts because Benjamin Franklin issued a reprint of Watts potentially as early as 1733.<sup>88</sup> The progression among Philadelphia Baptists began with psalm singing and a hymn at communion, but at Pennepek probably expanded more quickly. Whether or not they used *Sternhold and Hopkins* is unclear, but the progression to hymns from Watts and Rippon seems certain. This is not just a progression toward hymnody, but toward gospel-centered hymnody. The metrical psalmody of *Sternhold and Hopkins* and *Tate and Brady* were from the biblical psalms in Old Testament language. These were replaced in some churches by Watts’ *Psalms of*

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<sup>86</sup> Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Its Use in Worship* (1915, repr., Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), 196.

<sup>87</sup> William J. Reynolds, “Baptist Hymnody in America,” in *Handbook to the Baptist Hymnal*, ed. Jere V. Adams (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 31–32.

<sup>88</sup> Benson, *The English Hymn*, 197.

*David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. It was a means of maintaining psalm singing with Christ-centered texts. Watts' psalms are quite prevalent by mid-century and his hymns soon after as the desire for gospel-centered language in congregational singing grows along with the acceptance of congregational singing. In 1782, the growing acceptance of Watts among Baptists led the Philadelphia Association to recommend to its constituent churches an edition of Watts' psalms published by printer Robert Aitkin in the city during the previous year.<sup>89</sup>

In 1789, the Association determined that a Baptist Hymn Book should be prepared for the churches. The Minutes state,

Our brethren Samuel Jones, David Jones, and Burgiss Allison are appointed a committee to prepare a collection of Psalms and Hymns for the use of the Associated churches, and the churches of this and of our sister Associations are requested to conclude how many of said collection they will take, sending information to Brother Ustick, with all convenient dispatch.<sup>90</sup>

Samuel Jones, pastor of the Pennepek (e.g., Lower Dublin) church served as the chairman of this committee. *Selection of Psalms and Hymns Done under the Appointment of the Philadelphian Association* went through several editions and contained nearly four hundred hymns.<sup>91</sup> It appears to have been in wide use among the churches. All of the psalm versifications are from Watts' *Psalms of David*. Several of Watts' hymns are also included as are hymns by Benjamin Beddome, Anne Steele, Charles Wesley, William Cowper, Samuel Davies, Philip Doddridge, Benjamin Francis, Joseph Hart, John Ryland, and John Newton. Jones references the *Rippon Collection* in the preface and part of the intent with this collection seems to have been to make a less expensive but comparable

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<sup>89</sup> A. D. Gillete, ed., *The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707 to A. D. 1807 being the first One Hundred Years of its Existence* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851), 1880–181. Songs from Watts' *Psalms of David* and his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* are utilized in the 1763 ordination of Samuel Jones in Philadelphia (Music and Richardson, "I Will Sing," 84).

<sup>90</sup> Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, 142.

<sup>91</sup> It was reprinted in 1801, 1807, and 1819 according to Clarke (*Set Them in Order*, 17).

collection available to Baptist churches in America. Given that two pastors in the Association personally selected the hymns, it can safely be assumed that some of these were hymns in active use at the time, and potentially for some time before.

Additionally, the hymnbook also reveals something of the placement of hymnody in the Baptist worship service of the eighteenth century. The hymns are divided into three functions related to their placement in the service: (1) to open the service, (2) before the sermon, and (3) after the sermon. Jones explains, “It is thought, however, that no material inconvenience will follow, except that sometimes it may be difficult to find an hymn after the sermon, that will accord with the subject of the discourse: but the hymns under the word Dismission, in the Index, which are of general import, will in good degree remedy the defect.”<sup>92</sup> It is clear that it had become common practice to have a closing hymn that related to the sermon.<sup>93</sup> This gave the congregation a vehicle to respond to the sermon text and a memory aid to recall the main points of the message upon their departure. In this way, they left the service singing the main points or theme of the sermon set to a tune. The organization of this hymnal also demonstrated a pattern of congregational singing at the start of the service and then both before and after the sermon. Prayer and Scripture reading (if practiced) likely occurred between the opening hymn and the hymn before the sermon, where prophesying used to occur. More will be said about this below.

As to theme, hymns in the section entitled, “At the Opening of Public Worship” are generally hymns of gathering and entreaty, whether calling people’s

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<sup>92</sup> Samuel Jones and Burgiss Allison, *Selection of Psalms and Hymns under the Appointment of the Philadelphian Association* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken and Son, 1790), iv.

<sup>93</sup> It was the practice of John Newton at Olney to sing a hymn before the sermon, and to write a hymn each week that fit the theme of the sermon in order to sing one afterwards as well. (See William E. Phipps, *Amazing Grace in John Newton: Slave Ship Captain, Hymn Writer, and Abolitionist* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001], 118.)

attention to God in worship or calling upon the Holy Spirit to inhabit and help them in their praise. Anne Steele's "The Savior's Invitation," Watts' "Come We that Love the Lord," and Wesley's "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" are among those found in this section. A poignant example of an opening hymn is Benjamin Beddome's "Sprinkled with Reconciling Blood I dare Approach Thy Throne, O God." Each of the twenty-five "opening hymns" suggested is reflected by gospel content and as a whole are representative of a general sense of approaching worship on the basis of Christ's completed work of atonement. While the Steele and Beddome hymns were relatively recent to this 1790 publication, the hymns of the earlier British hymn writers (e.g., Watts, Wesley, Cowper, Newton, etc.) had been around for decades. It is possible that some of these hymns had been being sung for half a century before this hymnbook was printed.<sup>94</sup>

Hymns in the section entitled, "Before the Sermon" are clear expressions of consecration and invocation. This had been a practice with Keach as well. Here the intent seems to be for the church to call upon the Lord to help them by preparing them for the sermon they are about to hear. Anne Steele's "Father of Mercies, In Thy Word What Endless Glories Shines?" Wesley's "O For an Heart to Love my God," and Watts, "Come, Holy Spirit, Heav'nly Dove" exemplify the intended ethos of this section. Interestingly, there are also numerous hymns in this section that call the congregation to reflect on the gospel as they prepare to hear the word of God. Several Watts' hymns such as "Sweet is the Memory of Thy Grace," "What Shall I Render to my God for All His Kindness Shown," "Father, I Sing Thy Wondrous Grace, I Bless My Savior's Name,"

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<sup>94</sup> See Morgan Edwards', *The Customs of Primitive Churches* (Philadelphia: Andrew Steuart, 1768). Edwards cites the use Watts in "a narrative of proceedings at the constitution of one Baptist church in the year 1732" (7). He notes that the congregation and Watts' version of Psalm 132 (10–11) and describes the singing of Watts hymns and psalms—noting the texts and accompanying tunes for each—at the occasions of ministerial ordinations and installations, rebuking of backslidden members, readmission of excluded members, the Lord's Supper, laying on of hands, and burial of the dead (23, 31, 52, 71, 79, 83, 89, 98). Also quoted in Music and Richardson, "*I Will Sing*," 85.

and “Let Our Lives and Lips Profess the Holy Gospel We Profess” are examples of this. There appears to have been a sense at this point in the service that the gospel had been reviewed, and the heart softened, before hearing the word of God. It is only by the gospel’s converting power that the worshiper could have ears to hear and eyes to see the beauty and truth of God’s word. By the same transforming power the truth could change them. There are thirty-four hymns in this section; almost half reflect specific gospel content and the rest gospel effect.

Hymns in the section entitled, “After the Sermon,” are varied. Some are intentionally gospel-focused such as Watts’ “Blest are the Souls that Hear and Know the Gospel’s Joyful Sound,” and “Out of the Deeps of Long Distress,” and the anonymous text “Rich Grace, Free Grace Most Sweetly Calls,” are chief examples of the invitation hymn calling the unsaved who are present to respond to Christ for salvation. Others are songs of benediction such as Joseph Hart’s “Father Before we Hence Depart” and one by Thomas Gibbons from *Rippon’s Selection*. In this hymn both the anticipation of sanctification and ultimate glorification in eschatological hope are evident:

Now may the God of peace and love  
Who from the imprisoning grave  
Restored the shepherd of the sheep,  
Omnipotent to save.

Thro’ the rich merits of that blood,  
Which he on Calvary spilt,  
To make the eternal covenant sure,  
On which our hopes are built.

Perfect our souls in every grace,  
To accomplish all his will,  
And all that’s pleasing in his sight,  
Inspire us to fulfill.

For the great Mediator’s sake,  
We for these blessings pray:  
With glory let his name be crown’d,

Thro' Heaven's eternal day!<sup>95</sup>

While these are merely a handful of examples of almost four hundred hymns, the sampling demonstrates at least two aspects of eighteenth-century Baptist worship. First, there was a desire for intentional gospel content throughout the service. Examples of gospel content are found in opening hymns, hymns before the sermon, and hymns after the sermon. Second, there is a sense of dialogue inherent in the delineation of hymn placement among other elements of worship. Opening hymns tend to orient the worshiper to God (e.g., revelation). Hymns before the sermons are varied, but many reflect on the gospel as the basis for hearing and responding to the word about to be preached. Others simply aim to give the worshipers words to prepare their hearts to be changed. Finally, hymns after the sermon were intended to correlate with the sermon's discourse. There is an intentional effort to send the people out with a better sense of how they should now live in light of what they have heard from God's word and experienced in worship that day. A spoken benediction also seems to have been a common practice in worship at this time in addition to the closing hymn.<sup>96</sup>

## Summary

There is no example of a bulletin or order of Baptist worship from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. They do not exist now because they did not exist then. There also does not appear to be a thorough description of any single worship service from which one could be derived.<sup>97</sup> At best there are broad summary

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<sup>95</sup> Thomas Gibbons, "Now May the God of Peace and Love," in *Selections of Psalms and Hymns* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken & Sons, 1790), lxxi.

<sup>96</sup> Morgan Edwards demonstrates this in his example from 1732 with use of the Num 6 Aaronic blessing. See *Customs of Primitive Churches*, 11.

<sup>97</sup> The only exception to this seems to be Morgan Edwards' *Customs of Primitive Churches* (1768) who elucidates almost every word spoken in the services he represents. Many of these are unique types of services rather than a typical public worship service. The work was intended to be an account of how each of these services (e.g., ordination, Lord's Supper, laying on of hands, burial of the dead, etc.) was performed in a particular church, in order to serve as a model for other churches. However, the

descriptions such as have been discussed above. However, in piecing together some of the historic accounts, instructions from pastors and the Association, and reflections of the leaders in worship, a sketch of early Baptist worship in Philadelphia may be derived. The elements of worship included prayer, Scripture reading, singing (e.g., praising), and preaching. Communion and baptism were often held at different times than public worship to ensure that only truly converted church members were present. Specific songs were written for these events, especially since Baptists were the only ones who needed songs for believer's baptism. The gospel was the central message of public worship. This provided the opportunity for unbelievers to hear and respond to it in saving faith; and believers to rejoice in, reapply, and renew their commitment through it for sanctifying faith. The migration from metrical psalms to Watts' Psalms in New Testament language to hymns with intentional gospel content demonstrates this expanding emphasis in congregational singing.

Christ is central to the worship gathering and his manifested presence through the Holy Spirit is expected. Therefore, Baptist worship is unapologetically Trinitarian. The main element of worship is preaching. If prophesying was practiced in the earliest days, it has either been suppressed or eliminated by the early eighteenth century in Philadelphia. This was likely due to the concern over maintaining sound doctrine, which was a deep concern for this group. The gifts of those in the congregation were to be proven first, and then employed in public worship. One of the earliest suggested forms of worship shape (e.g., *ordo*) includes Scripture reading, a psalm, and prayer for aid, when there was no one to preach. This demonstrates the rhythm of dialogue in early Baptist worship. God speaks through the Scripture reading; man speaks in response through the

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Philadelphia Baptist Association never adopted the work for use in its churches and the Association spoke out in 1771 when it had been assumed that they had done so. See Gillette, *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, 141.

psalm; and man asks for God's help in prayer. This help would presumably come in the sermon through which God would again speak and to which man could again respond. Though the information derived from the 1790 Baptist hymnbook is after the time period under consideration, it likely reflects a pattern that had developed, or was developing during this time period among the churches. The hymnal is organized with the anticipation that the recipients would understand and agree to the need for hymns in these places of the worship service, without any explanation in the hymnal as to why this should be done. Jones and Allison presume this is (or should be) the practice wherever this hymnal is used. Morgan Edwards in *The Customs of Primitive Churches*, writes in 1768, "This is plain, public worship should begin in prayer, [1 Tim 11:1], and end with a benediction, [1 Cor 14:16], and that the [rest] should be decently ordered, [1 Cor 14:40]." While he states that what comes between the opening prayer and closing benediction has to change at times for different purposes, he provides what he considers a standard order for worship: "short prayer suitably prefaced; reading a portion of Scripture; a longer prayer; singing; preaching; a third prayer; singing a second time; administering the Lord's supper; collecting for the necessities of the saints; a benediction."<sup>98</sup> Reconciling the two sources provides an expanded potential *ordo* of Baptist Worship in Philadelphia, as shown in figure 7.

Regarding the model proposed in this study, there are clear aspects of the presence of each gospel movement (e.g., revelation and response; mediation and response; exhortation and response). God's revelation is either represented by the opening hymn or responded to in the same. There is uncertainty regarding how the prayer and Scripture time might be used, but many of the examples of hymns to precede the sermon reflected on the gospel as an impetus to hear him speak or the effects of the

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<sup>98</sup> Edwards, *Customs of Primitive Churches*, 100.

gospel that compel one to listen. The sermon was doctrinal, but rooted in a declaration of the gospel for all.<sup>99</sup> This is poignantly demonstrated by a sermon delivered by Samuel Jones at the century anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Baptist Association.

Opening Prayer  
Opening Hymn\*  
Scripture Reading\*  
Prayer\*  
Hymn before the sermon  
Sermon closed with prayer  
Lord's Supper (when celebrated)  
Collection for the saints  
Closing Hymn  
Benediction

\*The order of these elements may have varied according to Edwards

Figure 7. Potential order of worship at Philadelphia (early eighteenth century)

The sermon was read—for which he apologized—and it contained a historical review of the first one hundred years of the Association. However, the general theme was the advancement of the gospel. Finally, at the end of the sermon, after his apologies for the unusual content of his sermon, he delivered the gospel:

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<sup>99</sup> There are four of Elias Keach's sermons available to modern readers. They are sermons preached in London in 1693, but very likely represent the style and typical content of the type of sermon he preached in Philadelphia a year or two earlier. The four sermons are all based on Romans 3:24 and are a systematic discourse on the topic of justification preached on four consecutive Sundays in September of that year. The form of the sermons appears to be in the Puritan pattern of doctrine, reason, and use. The weightiest aspect of the sermon is the doctrine section, which occupies the vast majority of the sermon. See Elias Keach, *A Plain and Familiar Discourse on Justification Being the Substance of Four Sermons* (London: John Harris, 1694).

To speak of the deplorable state of man under the wrath of God, and the sentence of condemnation; to display the unsearchable riches of the grace and love of God in the way of recovery and salvation through Jesus Christ; to describe the work of the Spirit in taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us, his work of conversion and sanctification; to paint the awful process in the great day, and finally the irrevocable perdition of the ungodly, and the glory and felicity of the righteous; these are subjects that will admit, and even call for animation. Here the preacher may well glow with ardor, and the hearer feel an interest. These subjects, when accompanied with divine power, will melt the affections, bow the will, and mend the heart.<sup>100</sup>

This is Jones' way of delivering the expected message in a sermon and exhorting other preachers to do the same. Whatever the doctrine of the morning, it should be tethered to the gospel. The service was concluded with a hymn that often correlated with the sermon, followed by a spoken benediction. It does not take too much imagination to see a revelation and response, mediation and response, and exhortation and response pattern fitting into this form. There is little question that the worship service intended to point worshipers to God initially, and provide the means of response throughout the service. There is also little question that the sermon is a means of exhortation with the concluding hymn, benediction, and manner of life that follows serving as a response to that. This is two-thirds of the model. The theology for mediation and response was inherent in many elements, especially the hymns, but the *ordo* may not have been specific to the model. Did Baptists have a means in the middle service elements of prayers, Scripture reading, and the hymn that preceded the sermon of pointing worshipers to the need for confession and then to the cross for provision of forgiveness? The intentional gospel content throughout may have provided that through the hymns and sermon. Or the expectation of preparation before coming to worship may have intended that.

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<sup>100</sup> Samuel Jones, *A Century Sermon: Delivered in Philadelphia, at the Opening of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, October 6th, 1807* (Philadelphia: Bartram and Reynolds, 1807), 25. There is an advertisement on the back of this sermon pamphlet for two hymnals: A new edition of *Dr. Watts Psalms and Hymns Adapted to the Baptist Churches* and the third edition of the *Selection of Psalms and Hymns of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*.

### **The First Baptist Church of Charleston (1750–1800)**

On December 20, 1746, the Baptist Church at Southampton, Pennsylvania licensed a young man named Oliver Hart (1723–1795) to preach the gospel. During the next three years Hart was married, had his first child, and he was ordained. He is listed among the ministers of the Philadelphia Association in 1749, though he certainly attended these meetings earlier.<sup>101</sup> Upon receiving an urgent call from the Baptist Church in Charleston, which was in dire need of a pastor, Hart responded immediately: “I embarked at Philadelphia on board the ship St. Andrew, James Abercrombie Commander, for Charles Town, South Carolina, on ye 13<sup>th</sup> day of November 1749 and arrived at Charles Town the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December following, out 19 days.”<sup>102</sup> Hart served that church for the next thirty years. Tom Nettles describes Hart’s influence in this manner, “Hart’s Christian worldview and zeal for the church and the truth had long-term impact for the influence of Christianity, particularly Baptist life, in America.”<sup>103</sup>

Loulie Latimer Owens, prominent Charleston Baptist historian, has stated, “It would be inaccurate to refer to a ‘Charleston Tradition’ before the pastorate of Oliver Hart.”<sup>104</sup> One of the documents bearing Hart’s name in Philadelphia was an essay entitled, “The Power of the Association” (1749). By 1751, he was responsible for the formation of the second association of Baptist churches in America. In Ward Furman’s history of the Charleston Association, he describes the providential arrival of Hart: “The

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<sup>101</sup> Gillette, *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, 59. Hart’s name is listed in the Associational minutes from September 19, 1749 alongside Jenkin Jones, the pastor who had baptized him after his conversion in 1741. Jones was the pastor of the Pennepek and Philadelphia congregations at the time of Hart’s baptism. In 1749 he was solely the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia.

<sup>102</sup> *A Copy of Original Diary of Rev. Oliver Hart of Charlestown, Pastor of the Baptist Church of Charleston*, ed. Loulie Latimer Owens (1749, typewritten copy, 1949), E-text Collection, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

<sup>103</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 77.

<sup>104</sup> Amy Lee Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches of the Charleston Baptist Association” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995), 100.

settlement of Mr. Hart in Charleston is an important event in the annals of these churches. His unexpected arrival while the church was destitute of a supply, and immediately after the death of the excellent man [Isaac Chandler or Chanler] who had occasionally officiated for them, was believed to have been directed by a special providence in their favor.”<sup>105</sup> His work at the Charleston Church was providential for Baptist worship also.

While the Philadelphia Tradition is synonymous with associational cooperation among a group of churches, the Charleston Tradition is synonymous with a distinctive approach to worship that was founded in Philadelphia. This approach was established and defined by Oliver Hart and refined by Richard Furman (1755–1825). This was a tradition with roots that reached back to the Puritan tradition of the English Particular Baptists, with at least one significant source connecting through the Baptists of Philadelphia and the other being the group that founded the church out of New England. Both of these influences had a deeply historical perspective. Walter Shurden writes, “At the heart of [Puritanism] were two central affirmations which were bequeathed to Charleston. One was the centrality of the religious experience; the second was the sole authority of Holy Scripture.”<sup>106</sup> Amy Lee Mears’ dissertation is a helpful survey of the worship during this time period. She affirms Philadelphia’s imprint: “The worship patterns of the Philadelphia churches were reflected in Charleston worship.”<sup>107</sup> Mears also highlights the connection to English Baptists through the Kittery transplant. These Baptists came from FBC Boston, which she considers, “one step removed from the British Baptists who were the progenitors of the faith tradition.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Wood Furman, *A History of the Charleston Association of Baptist Churches in the State of South Carolina* (Charleston, SC: J. Hoff, 1811), 8.

<sup>106</sup> Walter B. Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey: Some Transitions in Baptist Life* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 202.

<sup>107</sup> Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 56.

<sup>108</sup> Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 57.

If there is one word to describe the Charleston Tradition, especially against its counterpart in Baptist life in the Sandy Creek Tradition, it is the word “order.” Shurden categorizes this worship order in four respects: (1) theological order, (2) ecclesiastical order, (3) liturgical order and (4) ministerial order.<sup>109</sup> Theological order is represented by the Charleston Association’s adoption of the Philadelphia Confession in 1767 as *The Charleston Confession*. Ecclesiastical order is demonstrated by the practice of church discipline learned in Philadelphia and codified in Charleston through its publication of “A Summary of Church Discipline.”<sup>110</sup> Of the liturgical order Shurden explains,

It represented a style in public worship that was ordered and stately, though pulsating with evangelical warmth. The ordinances were more important to those eighteenth-century Baptists than to many of their successors. Worship appeared to be neither spontaneously charismatic nor primarily revivalistic. It was directed toward heaven, not earth. The object was to praise God, not entertain people.<sup>111</sup>

With regard to ministerial order, the vision of Hart precipitated a legacy of support and funding for ministerial education. The first educational fund ever promoted and supported by a group of Baptists in America was by Charleston Baptists in 1755. At least five colleges can trace their founding to the active work of these same Baptists and the roots of the first seminary for Southern Baptists also reach back to Charleston Baptists.<sup>112</sup> Their inclusion in this study of worship is for three reasons: (1) The Charleston Tradition is one of the defining styles of worship among Baptists; (2) The extraordinary influence of the Charleston Baptist Association is similar to that of the Philadelphia Baptist

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<sup>109</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 202–03.

<sup>110</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *A Summary of Church Discipline: Shewing the Qualifications and Duties, of the Officers and Members of a Gospel Church*, ed. Oliver Hart, Francis Pelot, and David Williams (Charleston, SC: W. Riley, 1831). A copy of this is available in James Leo Garret, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962).

<sup>111</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 203. Shurden’s description of Sandy Creek as reflecting ardor rather than order seems to downplay his description here of Charleston’s “evangelical warmth.”

<sup>112</sup> Furman, Georgetown, Richmond, Wake Forest, and Mississippi College, as well as the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary are “clearly traced to the Charleston Tradition” (Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 203).

Association;<sup>113</sup> and (3) Its influence through training ministers makes its model highly influential as the worship of the “Mother Church of Southern Baptists” is propagated through the ministerial training process and the ministry of the ministers trained by it.

### **A Brief History**

Though the distinctive characteristics of Charleston order have as their codifying influence an eighteenth-century Baptist from Philadelphia, the foundation of this congregation came from New England Baptists in the seventeenth century. William Screven (1629–1713) was ordained for gospel ministry by the First Baptist Church of Boston. Screven travelled regularly by horseback from Kittery, Maine to Boston in order to attend the church. The church planting effort began simply enough as Screven and his wife, along with a man named Humphrey Churchwood,<sup>114</sup> were baptized on June 21, 1681. That Screven was well known and proven to the Boston church is demonstrated by the fact that he was licensed, ordained, and the church planted by September 25, 1682, just fifteen months later.<sup>115</sup> Screven had already known persecution in Boston as he had been arrested and imprisoned earlier in 1682. This persecution seems to have continued initially in Kittery, but whether it was due to persecution or other reasons, the Kittery

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<sup>113</sup> Shurden writes: “In the eighteenth century Charleston was to the Baptists of the Southern Colonies what Philadelphia was to the Middle Colonies—the hub of Baptist Activity” (*Not an Easy Journey*, 202).

<sup>114</sup> Churchwood wrote the letter, dated January 3, 1682, requesting of the Boston church, “to have a gospel church planted here in this place; and in order hereunto, we think it meet that our beloved brother, William Screven, who is, through free grace, gifted and endued, with the spirit of veterans, to preach the gospel” (Robert A. Baker, Paul J. Craven, and R. Marshall Blalock, *History of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, 1682–2007* [Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2007], 50–51).

<sup>115</sup> Wood, *First Baptist Boston*, 179–181. Humphrey Churchwood is listed as the church’s only deacon on the church covenant, along with the names of eight men—all of whom were baptized in Boston—representing the founding families of the church that became FBC Charleston. Wood believes this is the first Baptist covenant among English speaking people (182).

church relocated to Charleston, South Carolina in 1696.<sup>116</sup>

That this was the total relocation of the church is demonstrated by the fact that the church remained as constituted in Charleston, and that there is no record of a Baptist church in Kittery after Screven and his group departed. There were other Baptists in Charleston who eventually joined with the Kittery group. Basil Manly Sr. (1798–1868), one of the subsequent pastors of the church, and prominent Southern Baptist statesman, noted in the Charleston Association minutes that most of the early Charleston church consisted of the migrants from Maine.<sup>117</sup> They built their first house of worship by 1701. These were Regular or Particular Baptists for the most part, though some disputes would arise early in the church's history from General Baptists in the church. While there were some General Baptists in the minority, Screven seems to have been able to unite both Particular and General Baptists in one Baptist congregation. However, a schism began to grow and Screven urged the church to secure promptly a Particular Baptist as pastor to follow him. Manly quotes Morgan Edwards on Screven's request: "Had they attended to this counsel, the distractions, and almost destruction of the Church, which happened twenty-six years after, would have been prevented."<sup>118</sup>

The decades between William Screven's death in 1713, and the arrival of

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<sup>116</sup> Baker and Craven believe persecution by the Puritan theocracy in Massachusetts had ceased by 1684. Indian raids during King William's War; the harsh climate of Maine winters; the presence of plentiful timber in South Carolina for the ship's masts; and the possibility of contacts (including Baptists) in South Carolina, are suggested as contributing factors for the church's relocation (Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 68).

<sup>117</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 81. Manly prepared a historical address for the church in honor of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church.

<sup>118</sup> Basil Manly, *Mercy and Judgment, A Discourse Containing Some Fragments of the History of the Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, Delivered at the Request of the Corporation of Said Church, September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, A.D. 1832* (Charleston, SC: Press of Knowles and Vose, 1837), 16. The event Manly references as having occurred "twenty-six years later" is the schism of November 25, 1736 when General Baptists and Particular Baptist formally separated. The General Baptists withdrew on this date and formed the General Baptist church at Stono. Screven's request was made in 1710, three years before his death (Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 109).

Oliver Hart in 1749 were marked with suffering and harassment for all of the inhabitants of the city. Hurricanes, fever, Indian raids, Queen Anne's War, and the tyranny of Pirates delivered wave upon wave of devastation for the people of Charleston and the surrounding region. While the church records from this time period were destroyed by a hurricane on September 15, 1752, Robert Baker and Paul Craven, leading historians on the Charleston church, have been able to piece together enough details to formulate the following summary of "the darkest days of the Charleston Church:"

The internal history of the church was just as tumultuous as conditions were on the outside. The principal problems involved the difficulty of securing stable pastoral leadership, the loss of many leaders by death and removal, a diminishing membership because of the formation of separate churches by some of the arms or branches of the original church, doctrinal controversy and schism, conflict over George Whitefield and the First Great Awakening, a deep rift in the membership over the dismissal of the pastor, and a lengthy period of litigation over the church property.<sup>119</sup>

Manly referred to this time period in his historical account as "a mournful pause in the hopes of the church."<sup>120</sup>

When Hart responded to the desperate request from Charleston, he found a broken body of believers. Strife and controversy had battered the group now in desperate need of strong and stable pastoral leadership. They had not had a dedicated pastor since 1744. Isaac Chandler, that pastor of the Ashley River church, had been preaching for the Charleston Church once a month as their only source of true preaching. He died in 1749, leaving them with no source of sound preaching. Manly describes the event of Hart's arrival in typical sermonic flair:

But, while God's dispensations are mysterious, they are all wise; and while it is the

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<sup>119</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 101. It is especially difficult to determine the names and dates of the pastors during this time. They all were likely part-time or lay ministers. Isaac Chanler (also Chandler), pastor of the Ashley River church helped out about once a month, but he died unexpectedly on November 30, 1749, leaving what Manly referred to as a "famine of hearing the words of the Lord" (121).

<sup>120</sup> Manly, *Discourse*, 29.

rule of his administration to interpose with seasonable aid in the hour of his people's extremity, he sometimes brings them into the greatest straits, that they may better appreciate and improve the blessings he bestows. The Lord had provided an instrument by which he designed greatly to promote the cause of truth and piety in the province, in the person of the Rev. Oliver Hart; and having selected the Charleston Church as the honored receptacle of such a gift, he prepared them to value it by quenching the only lamp that gleamed through the dark wilderness around. The feelings of the more reflecting part of the church, therefore, can be better imagined than described, when they discovered that *on the very day* on which "devout men carried" Mr. Chanler "to his burial, and made great lamentation over him," *Mr. Hart arrived in the city.*<sup>121</sup>

Hart's grandfather has been active in the Pennepek Baptist Church in its earliest years.

Hart, who was raised in the Pennepek congregation himself, became a leader in the Southhampton branch of that congregation that officially formed as an independent church in 1746. The 1740s were the revival years of the Great Awakening. Hart had heard the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield (1714–1771), and Gilbert Tennent (1703–1764). He had also heard great Baptist preachers such as Abel Morgan (1673–1722) and Benjamin Miller (1715–1781). His presence at the center of the active and vibrant Philadelphia Baptist Association, under the tutelage of Jenkin Jones (1690–1761), had prepared him well for this daunting task.<sup>122</sup> The letter from the Charleston Church was read at the Philadelphia Association meeting of September 19, 1749—the first time Hart had attended as a messenger. Baker and Craven write, "Oliver Hart was especially fitted to wrestle with the very problems that he would meet at Charleston."<sup>123</sup>

Hart possessed a deep spirituality and an energetic spirit for pastoral work. His

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<sup>121</sup> Manly, *Discourse*, 11; emphasis Manly's.

<sup>122</sup> Baker and Craven: "His preparation, however, had been more complete than appears at first glance. The normal method of training for the ministry in that day was through an intensive internship program. Often the young novitiate would move into the home of his pastor, accompany him in his daily ministry, read his books, watch him observe the ordinances, and perhaps even copy his style of sermon preparation and preaching. It is quite probable that this kind of internship was practiced by young Hart between 1741 and 1748 when he married. He was quite close to Jenkin Jones, his pastor, until 1746. This kind of internship would provide him with a considerable amount of spiritual and functional preparation that could never have been found in a classroom" (*The First Baptist Church*, 127).

<sup>123</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 127. Hart would not only have to deal with the significant problems in the church, but the extraordinary affluence in the town with its related pitfalls; multiple destructive hurricanes; and two major wars impacted his ministry efforts while there.

preaching schedule in Charleston included regular preaching services on Sunday mornings and afternoons at the meetinghouse; a Sunday evening lecture in one of the church member's homes on some aspect of doctrine; three weekly evening lectures (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) to the Religious Society organized in 1755; and a Wednesday afternoon lecture that he lamented was poorly attended. Regarding spiritual zeal, he may have been unparalleled among the ministers in the city. When Edmund Botsford found himself under the conviction of sin in 1766, he went from one place of worship to another to find a preacher who could speak to his needs. At the time he was staying with a family of very wicked people and one of the boarders, a scoffer, told him: "There is but one minister in this place, who can be of any service to you, but he, I am told, is a Baptist; all the rest of the ministers deserve not the name. I would advise you to go and hear him."<sup>124</sup> Botsford did so and was soon after converted and became a member of the church.

The controversy between Regular and General Baptists had resulted in such a contentious division, that litigation was required to determine legal ownership of the original church building on lot 62 of Church Street. Even though the church erected another building at the south end of Church Street, (later called the Mariner's Church), the congregation met alternately in both buildings. After Hart arrived, an agreement was reached whereby the General Baptists were given sole use of the old building while sole use of the parsonage on the same property, and the new building belonged to Hart's congregation. Baker and Craven conclude, "This seems to have ended the continuing confrontation between the two groups, and there is no indication of any further friction between them during the remainder of Hart's ministry in Charleston."<sup>125</sup> This spirit of

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<sup>124</sup> Charles D. Mallory, *Memoirs of Elder Edmond Botsford* (Charleston, SC: W. Riley, 1832), 28–30.

<sup>125</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 133.

cooperation was extended also to Separate Baptists as that movement expanded into the area. Even Joseph Pilmoor (1739–1825), one of the first Methodist missionaries (e.g., Arminian in theology) sent to America by Wesley, was welcomed by Hart who allowed him to preach twice to large crowds at his church.<sup>126</sup> This cooperative spirit, coupled with visionary leadership skills, enabled him to become a prominent fixture in the Charleston Baptist Association and among Baptists in the South. As many Baptist pastors often did during his day, he not only carried on his pastoral and preaching responsibilities admirably, but “lead broad foundations for a cooperative denominationalism in South Carolina.” Baker and Craven describe his denominational role:

He was the pioneer denominational leader in the South and vitally concerned with the growth and development of other Baptist churches. He sensed that in winning people to Christ he had fulfilled only part of the Great Commission. Baptists as a denomination should share the responsibility of “teaching them to observe all things” after they had become disciples and been baptized.<sup>127</sup>

### **Theology in Practice**

As mentioned above, the Philadelphia Confession was adopted in Charleston in 1767 under Hart’s leadership. That confession was the original Second London Confession of 1689, with the two articles added from the Keach Confession regarding the laying on of hands and congregational singing. The Charleston Association dropped the article regarding laying on of hands, though they did prescribe the practice for the

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<sup>126</sup> Baker and Craven relate the following story when Hart was fleeing from the British in 1780: “This friendly attitude toward other denominations did not mean that Hart was not totally Baptist in his doctrinal views . . . two Presbyterian elders [in Mossy Brick, Virginia] were impressed by his biblical preaching and invited him to speak for them at their Stone Meeting House on the following Sunday . . . Hart said in his diary that after his companion Edmund Botsford had preached, he arose and took the text from Mark 16:16 ‘from which Text I endeavored to prove that Believers are the only proper Subjects of Baptism, and that Dipping is the Mode of Administration’ (Hart, *Diary*, 14). Subsequently, “all invitation to the Baptist ministers to preach there had been canceled” as “the Presbyterians did not want a Baptist preaching in their churches any more” (Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 135).

<sup>127</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 147.

ordination of a minister.<sup>128</sup> The doctrinal and theological convictions in Charleston were very similar to those of the Baptists in Philadelphia. The conviction regarding the atonement was decidedly Calvinistic, though the presence of General Baptists in the church, and the history of strife with this group, certainly resulted in a softening to the Calvinistic edge. The rigor to guard the doctrine in Philadelphia seems slightly more vigilant than in Charleston, though the same principles of church discipline were put in place. In fact, the manual for church discipline was written in Charleston.<sup>129</sup> It seems unlikely however, that the Baptists in Philadelphia would have allowed a professed Arminian Methodist sent from John Wesley himself, to preach at the Pennepek church where Hart grew up. Hart was vigilant to warn against false doctrine and in the circular letter found in the minutes of 1774, he says as much: “Strictly guard against all heretical principles and men; keep a close communion with God; endeavor to inculcate by instruction and promote by example the fear of God in your families.”<sup>130</sup> He was seemingly able to do this while extending the opportunity for others to preach in his pulpit on occasion.

Richard Furman called Hart “a fixed Calvinist, and a consistent, liberal Baptist.” To this he added,

Christ Jesus, and Him crucified, in the perfection of his righteousness, the merit of his death, the prevalence of his intercession, and efficacy of his grace, was the foundation of his hope, the source of his joy, and the delightful theme of his preaching.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, February 6, 1775* (Charleston, SC: 1775), 2. “A Minister is to be set apart by the laying on of hands after prayer and fasting” (2).

<sup>129</sup> See Charleston Baptist Association, *Summary of Church Discipline*.

<sup>130</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, February 7, 1774* (Charleston, SC: Charleston Baptist Association, 1774), 4.

<sup>131</sup> William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860), 7:49.

Baker and Craven write of Hart, “The Charleston church heard pungent and powerful preaching when her pastor was in the pulpit.”<sup>132</sup> While he did not receive formal training himself, he was diligent in his study. This diligence was both to ensure that he had interpreted the text rightly, and that he had sufficient application for his hearers. Furman described Hart’s preaching thus, “His sermons were peculiarly serious, containing a happy assemblage of doctrinal and practical truths, set in an engaging light, and enforced with convincing arguments.” His use of Scripture revealed “an intimate acquaintance with the Sacred Scriptures, and an extensive reading of the most valuable, both of ancient and modern authors.” As to delivery, Furman describes him in this way, “His eloquence, at least in the middle stages of life, was not of the most popular kind, but perspicuous, manly and flowing—such as afforded pleasure to persons of true taste, and edification to the serious hearer.”<sup>133</sup>

Finally, the Calvinistic theology of Hart and his church was equally evangelistic, just as it was in Philadelphia. Basil Manly describes Hart’s example and practice: “While his great end in life was the glory of God, he viewed the salvation of sinners as a principal means of promoting it. He longed for the souls of men; and was jealous over them and himself, with a godly jealousy, lest by any means he should run in vain.”<sup>134</sup> The desire to make disciples of Christ also translated into a concerted effort to identify and train up other men to send out for the gospel’s sake. A strategic effort to contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints was mounted through the formal education of ministers. The efforts of the Association having been mentioned above, Hart’s impassioned appeal on their behalf is represented in the minutes in 1774:

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<sup>132</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 136.

<sup>133</sup> Sprague, *American Baptist Pulpit*, 7:49.

<sup>134</sup> Manly, *Discourse*, 33–34.

“Brethren lift up your hearts for success on the word preached, and that God would raise up many faithful Ministers of the Gospel: look out among your young men for such as have pioneering abilities, and encourage them to improve their talents for the service of the sanctuary.”<sup>135</sup>

### **The Practice of Worship**

Hart’s ministry in Charleston was cut short when he had to leave abruptly, fleeing from the British in 1780. He was never able to return to his position in Charleston. Soon thereafter, he found himself back in the Philadelphia Baptist Association as pastor of the Hopewell Baptist Church in New Jersey where he served until his death in 1796. Unlike his previous tenure in the Philadelphia Association—as a young, aspiring minister—he was now a seasoned pastor with much valuable experience. Having been asked to preach to the Association in 1783, he prepared a message from Haggai 2:4 entitled, *An Humble Attempt to Repair the Christian Temple*. This message provides a starting point for discerning his theology of worship practice. His concern was that “lukewarmness and indifferency in religion” remained a chief concern among the Baptist churches.<sup>136</sup> This was reflected in a number of ways, but attendance at worship was a clear one. In outlining the responsibilities of various offices in the church (e.g., civil magistrates, pastors, deacons and church members), his charge to the church members was “they should constantly attend the word and ordinances, in their own

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<sup>135</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, February 7, 1774* (Charleston, SC: Charleston Baptist Association, 1774), 4. Speaking of the College in Providence, Rhode Island, Hart writes: “In this seminary several pious young men already have been, and no doubt many more will be educated, who may be able defenders of gospel doctrines and ordinances, against the errors which are continually propagated, by the energies of gospel truths.”

<sup>136</sup> Oliver Hart, *An Humble Attempt to Repair the Christian Temple—A Sermon, Shewing the Business of Officers and Private Members in the Church of Christ, and How their Work should be Performed; with some Motives to Excite Professors Ardently to Engage in it. Preached in the City of Philadelphia, October 21st, 1783 at the Opening of the Association and Published at their Request* (Philadelphia: Robert Aitken, 1785), 3.

church. The shameful negligence of too many professors, in this respect, is one grand cause of the decay of religion among us.”<sup>137</sup> The benefits of attending worship are numerous, but they center on the gospel and the presence of Christ that it reveals to the worshiper.

Hart tells the pastors that their primary duty is to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15). He elucidates what preaching the gospel means and in doing so provides the shape and content of the gospel in worship:

Preaching the gospel will lead to an explanation of what the apostle calls *the form of sound words* [2 Tim 1:3]. Which may include the following and sublime and important doctrines, viz. the being of a God—A trinity of persons in the godhead—the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity—The corruption of human nature, and impotence of men to that which is spiritually, or morally good—The everlasting love of God to his people—The eternal election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory—The covenant of grace—Particular redemption—Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ—Pardon and reconciliation by his blood—Regeneration and sanctification by the influences and operations of the holy Spirit—The final perseverance of the saints in grace—The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. This is the epitome of *the faith which was once delivered to the saints*, which ministers are to preach, and for which they should *earnestly contend* [Jude 1:3].<sup>138</sup>

Using the terminology introduced in this study—revelation and response, mediation and response, and exhortation and response—Hart has broadly described the gospel, with its eschatological hope. In a sermon two years earlier to the same body in 1781, he was more explicit in his explanation of how the gospel functions in worship. This gospel-themed and Christ-centered focus in worship was inherited from Philadelphia. However, it was instilled in Charleston in a very intentional and well-developed manner. His 1781 message to the Association is a treatise on worship and represents a seasoned maturity and understanding of the topic. What he was exhorting the ministers in Philadelphia to now do in worship, he had developed in Charleston for the previous thirty years.

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<sup>137</sup> Hart, *An Humble Attempt*, 28.

<sup>138</sup> Hart, *An Humble Attempt*, 14–15; emphasis Hart’s.

This sermon, based upon 2 Chronicles 29:35, is entitled, *A Gospel Church Portrayed and her Orderly Service Pointed Out*. His intention was to show how the gospel orders a church, and in so doing, its worship. Using the reference point of Hezekiah and the rebuilding of the temple, he established his motive: “So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order.” Hart applies the old covenant concept of rebuilding the ceremonial rituals to the new covenant reality of worship through Christ. “The *service* of this house comprehends the whole of social, publick, gospel worship, as pointed out in the holy Bible. Good *order* is essentially necessary to an acceptable discharge of this service.”<sup>139</sup> Clearly the recent attraction of the more emotional and spontaneous Separate Baptist worship is fixed as the backdrop to his corrective exhortation: “It is a mere burlesque on religious worship, to attend on it, in a confused, elamorous, frantick manner, as some do; insomuch that the house of God among them, seems to be metamorphosed into a bedlam.” He concludes his introductory remarks with a citation from 1 Cor 14:40: “Let all things be done decently and in order.”<sup>140</sup>

Hart then begins to assemble the order of the analogous *house* of new covenant worship. The foundation of worship is the church built upon the Lord Jesus Christ. The building materials are “only those persons who are regenerated, converted, and sanctified.”<sup>141</sup> They become the house of God through the gospel. Hart explains,

They become a gospel church, therefore, by consideration, or mutual compact; in which, “they give themselves up to the Lord,” “and to one another, by the will of God;” covenanting by grace divine, to discharge all the duties incumbent upon them, in this gospel relation; and to walk in all of the commandments and “ordinances of the Lord blameless.” Thus they become a body corporate under Christ the head.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 7; emphasis Hart’s.

<sup>140</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 7.

<sup>141</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 9–10.

<sup>142</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 12. Citations are from Col 2:19ff.

The door to the house is Christ, the shepherd of the sheep (John 10:9). There are windows in the house that represent the ordinances of Christ:

These ordinances, therefore are the windows of the church; and being exceedingly lucid, let in the most refulgent rays, emitted from the glorious Sun of righteousness; to the great comfort and inexpressible joy of all who are so happy as to dwell in this house, which often causes them to say, “It is good for us to be here.”<sup>143</sup>

Inside the door of the church is a pavement of tightly fixed stones, which are the saints of God in close fellowship with one another. Though they consider themselves the meanest on earth and are often trampled upon by the world, “they are polished by the gracious influences of the Spirit of God.” The pillars of the church are the ministers who stand tall both in the “outward deportment,” but also “with regard to the doctrines of the gospel.” Using the analogy of a king in a gallery, he encourages the audience to consider an example of the splendid gallery that houses a great king:

How splendid! How well decorated! How finely finished! Incapable of any additional elegance or beauty, from the nicest touches of the finest pencil! —Those galleries must have been intended to accommodate persons of high rank. The grandest monarch might, in character, reside there. —But here is the inscription, in capitals—*the king is held in his galleries*.<sup>144</sup>

He reveals the greater reality in the following words, “These things will appear more conspicuous if we scrutinize the figure before us. These galleries are the ordinances of the gospel. —The king who is said to be held in them, is King Jesus—The King of Glory—the king of the saints.” The ordinances serve as galleries, which serve to afford communion and delight of the saints with their king. “In these ordinances he is held with the cords of love, grace, and promise. Here is his abode—here he delights to dwell, and

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<sup>143</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 14. Citation is from Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:4).

<sup>144</sup> Oliver Hart, *A Gospel Church Portrayed, and her Orderly Service Pointed Out—A Sermon, Delivered in the City of Philadelphia at the Opening of the Baptist Association, October 4, 1791* (Trenton, NJ: Isaac Collins, 1791), 17; emphasis Hart’s.

hold fellowship with his saints.”<sup>145</sup> He then quotes John Gill on Song of Solomon 7:5:

Here Christ and his people walk and converse together; here he discloses the secrets of his heart to them, leads them into a further acquaintance with his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and here they have delightful views of his person and fullness; see the king in his beauty, and behold the good land which is far off.<sup>146</sup>

In worship, the worshiper is drawn to the roof, which are “all the perfections of the deity.” It is the roof that “claims our principal attention.”<sup>147</sup> This is the house of worship built on the gospel plan. While the saints are this gospel-built house of living stones, its builder is “the triune Jehovah” and worship should draw their attention to Him.<sup>148</sup>

The second part of his sermon is the manner in which the service of this house may be built in order. This requires the proper roles of the officers of the church. In particular, the ministers, whose work lies chiefly in “preaching the gospel, administering ordinances, leading and governing the church.” Hart lists the elements of worship as preaching the gospel, prayer, singing the praises of God, and the ordinances of baptism and communion. This list is right out of the historic Baptist confessions. Hart also references church discipline as a necessary part of gospel worship.

Hart calls preaching “the most important service that ever demanded the attention of man.” In preaching, the preacher “stands between the living and the dead—the living God and dead sinners.” Referencing the gravity of the act, Hart exhorts preachers: “They should preach the pure gospel, and not a mere system of morality. Cautious should they be of blending law and gospel, grace and works. They should preach salvation, through Christ, in a way of free, rich, and sovereign grace.” He continues, “Their language should be plain, yet masculine; their reasoning clear, yet

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<sup>145</sup> Hart, *A Gospel Church*, 17.

<sup>146</sup> Hart, *A Gospel Church*, 17–18. The citation is from John Gill’s *Exposition on the Whole Bible*: Canticles vii.5.

<sup>147</sup> Hart, *A Gospel Church*, 18.

<sup>148</sup> Hart, *A Gospel Church*, 19.

nervous; their countenance open and free; their action easy and graceful.”<sup>149</sup> Mears writes, “Even when other purposes existed, [sermons] functioned as vehicles by which men and women were brought to the knowledge of God in Christ. Regardless of the calendar or liturgical setting, the prevailing concern of the preacher was to present salvation through Christ to the hearers.”<sup>150</sup> In early Baptist history, services were likely to have two or three sermons on a Sunday. When the Association gathered their first two days were spent “in public exercises of devoting” before handling the Associational business for two days.<sup>151</sup> This generally consisted of a sermon in the morning, one in the afternoon, and one in the evening, with the last sermon of the second day following by communion. The structure of preaching should also represent order. This taught the worshiper how to listen to the message. One approach seemed best to Hart as his sermons followed a predictable structure. He introduced the text, exegeting the passage. He then proceeded to number and explain the points under consideration—a process called “proving.” He closed with application where he drew conclusions for each group

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<sup>149</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 23. Amy Lee Mears writes, “The preaching of Oliver Hart was probably the strongest influencing factor on preaching styles among South Carolina Baptists in the eighteenth century” (Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 100). When speaking to two young men who aspired to gospel ministry, Hart gave this advice: “You cannot be qualified to deal with wounded spirits, unless you have been sensible of your own wounds. It is not possible you should, in a suitable Manner, direct Sinners to Christ, without an actual Closure with him yourselves” (Baker and Craven, *First Baptist Church of Charleston*, 140). Today this practice has been characterized as “Preaching the gospel to yourself every day” (Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* [Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006]).

<sup>150</sup> Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 90. Mears also points out the inherent connection here between “Charlestonians” and “the moderate Calvinism of their Philadelphia counterparts.” This is not to say that other doctrines were not taught. “Sermons for adults taught doctrine, Scripture, and godly living. Oliver Hart’s ‘Christian Temple’ sermon lists fourteen doctrinal matters that lend themselves easily to preaching. The nature of God, the Trinity, the fall of humanity, human depravity, God’s love, election, grace, redemption, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, perseverance of the saints, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are included among the important doctrines that should be ‘delivered to the saints’” (95).

<sup>151</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, November 15, 1791* (Charleston, SC: Charleston Baptist Association, 1791), 1.

of hearers.<sup>152</sup> This pattern is the essentially the doctrine, reason, use pattern he learned in Philadelphia.

Prayer is the “very material part of the house of the service of the house of the Lord.” Hart muses, “But there could be no propriety in terming the Lord’s house, a house of prayer, if prayer were not a considerable part of the service of that house.” Just as King Solomon dedicated the temple “by a most excellent prayer,” in like manner, “the gospel church is an house of prayer.” Hart described the relationship of three venues of prayer and worship in a circular letter to the Charleston Association in 1775:

*First*, be careful to maintain the Life and Power of Godliness in your Souls; in order to which, keep close to God in Prayer; the Neglect of which tends to Coldness in Religion, and renders the Soul more unfit for Communion with God. *Secondly*, Maintain the Worship of God in your Families, pray with and for them, instruct them in the Principles of Religion, and enforce your Precepts by the best Examples. *Thirdly*, Keep your Places in the House of God, and neglect not the assembling of yourselves together, as the Manner of some is; but keep close to the Ordinances of God’s House; attend to all publick and private Meetings of the Church to which you belong.<sup>153</sup>

Here he references the preparation for worship in private prayer that is a common practice in the spirituality of the day. He also shows the concentric circles of private prayer, leading to family prayer, which usher the family into the corporate gathering of worship.

There does not seem to be any recorded controversy regarding singing in Charleston.<sup>154</sup> If there was one, it occurred before Hart arrived. In his sermon, Hart refers to “Harmoniously singing the praises of God, with united voices.” His estimation of singing in worship is very high. He writes in the 1781 sermon, “No part of the divine

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<sup>152</sup> Mears, “Worship of Selected Baptist Churches,” 113.

<sup>153</sup> Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, February 8, 1775* (Charleston, SC: Charleston Baptist Association, 1775), 4; emphasis original.

<sup>154</sup> The *Summary of Church Discipline* (1772) that Hart helped assemble included singing as a component of ordination (Charleston Baptist Association, *Baptist Confession and Summary of Church Discipline*, 9).

service so resembles heaven as [singing]. The angels, we are sure, make it part of their service.” While the church at Charleston had been singing in worship, his support for singing is certainly made in the context of a debate that still lingered over the matter:

The light of nature directs us to the performance of this service. It is of a moral nature, binding upon all rational intelligences, and has ever been in practice, from the earliest ages, not only among those who have had the advantage of divine revelation, but also among the heathen. The “sweet psalmist of Israel,” who was a man after God’s own heart, advanced psalmody to a high pitch of glory [2 Sam 23:1]. In his opinion, this service was more pleasing to God than offerings and sacrifices; and he was anxious that all the inhabitants of the earth should join in this service. Good king Hezekiah, when restoring the worship of God, was careful to set this service in order; so that, “when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also.” [2 Chron 29:27] Neither was this glorious part of divine worship omitted in the gospel church. At the institution of the Lord’s Supper, the solemnity was concluded by singing an hymn. [Mark 14:26] A divine precedent this—sanctioned by the direction of Christ, who, no doubt, joined in chorus with his disciples. The apostle Paul, in two distinct epistles, exhorts the churches to the practice of speaking to themselves, or “teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody, with grace in their hearts, to the Lord.” [Eph 5:19; Col 3:16] Now the apostle might have saved himself this labour, had it not been the duty of the churches to sing praise to God, with united voices. I would ask for what purpose the Almighty has endowed us with organical powers of melodious symphony, or a concordant harmony of voices, if not publickly to sound forth his praise? Methinks the winged choristers of the grove, which sing among the branches, reproach the silence of those people, who do not make singing praises of God, an important branch of the service of the house of the Lord.<sup>155</sup>

Edmund Botsford’s description below from 1766 references the act of congregational singing in worship at First Baptist Charleston in passing, as if a forgone conclusion. The next year in 1767, the Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia Confession, taking care to exclude the article on the laying on of hands, but to include the article on congregational singing. A church covenant of the Cashaway Baptist Church, part of the Charleston Baptist Association stated, “We believe, that singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs vocally in an Ordinance of ye Gospel to be performed by Believers and that every one ought to be left to their liberty in using it.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 25–26.

<sup>156</sup> Leah Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670–1805* (Florence, SC: Florence Printing,

It is certain that by the turn of the century, singing in the Charleston Tradition was in full bloom. Leah Townsend cites the city newspaper in Charleston regarding a service led by Richard Furman on the death of Alexander Hamilton in 1804: “Hymns and anthems sung by the choir accompanied these and other services. It was thus with music and fine oratory and influential leadership that the First Church of Charleston entered the new century.”<sup>157</sup> The style of singing in the Charleston Tradition is generally considered to be more orderly or restrained when contrasting it with the Separate Baptists’ Sandy Creek Tradition. The worship at FBC Charleston “made fuller use of standard psalm and hymn texts and tunes sung in a more restrained manner.”<sup>158</sup> It is likely that the ordinary progression from psalmody to hymnody occurred in Charleston just as it did in Philadelphia. Given that singing had already been accepted, and hymn singing at that, one expects that Watts, and later Rippon, were the main psalm and hymn collections in use during Hart’s tenure and the beginning of Furman’s pastorate.<sup>159</sup> Watts

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1935), 88–89. Townsend notes, “The article is almost identical to one promulgated by the British Baptist pastor John Gill in 1729.” She also references the diary of “Mr. Pugh” who attended singing school in 1765” and who “made a hand copy of *The Cashaway Psalmody*.” Cashaway was originally a branch of the Welsh Tract Baptist Church in Delaware that relocated from the Pennepek area and were strong proponents of congregational singing there. Cashaway was a part of the Charleston Baptist Association and the Associational meetings were hosted there for a few years after 1758 to accommodate the distance for them and certain North Carolina churches in the Association (112).

<sup>157</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists*, 31. While most choirs at this time were seated in the balcony at the rear of the sanctuary, in Charleston the choir was seated at the foot of the pulpit, “around the font,” according to Tupper (H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church of South Carolina* [Baltimore: R. H. Woodward, 1889], 297). The Furman-era building included the church’s first “indoor baptistry at the base of the pulpit” (Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church of Charleston*, 284). The purpose of the choir would have most likely been to support and provide leadership for the congregational singing (David W. Music, “Congregational Song Practices in Southern Baptist Churches: A Historical Overview,” *Southern Baptist Church Music Journal* 9 [1992], 13).

<sup>158</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 79.

<sup>159</sup> Mears believes that the version of Watt’s psalms and hymns arranged by John Rippon was popular in South Carolina, as it was already in use in New England when printed in 1792. It had been printed in London in 1787. Rippon’s *Selection* was also in use in South Carolina after its English publication in 1787. “As Joseph Cook, pastor of the Euhaw church was dying in 1790, he asked a friend to read to him from Rippon’s *Selection*, Hymn 324. ‘Thus far my God hath led me on,’ a hymn of John Fawcett.” In 1994, a copy of Rippon’s *Watts* was discovered on a shelf with various old hymnals in the

was introduced largely by Whitefield through the Great Awakening. Rippon's *Selection* introduced American Baptists to the great Baptist hymn writers of England.<sup>160</sup>

Additionally, the choir probably was not a regular fixture until the nineteenth century.

Reminiscences by Eliza Yoer Tupper observed that it was during the pastorate of Richard Furman (served 1787–1825) that the choir at Charleston's First Church would commence "some familiar old-fashioned tune."<sup>161</sup> The presence of an organ probably did not occur until after Furman, probably by 1831.<sup>162</sup>

The only existing description of a worship service under Hart's leadership is from Edmund Botsford, who visited on the last Sunday of August 1766:

Presently the minister came; though I did not like his dress, there was something in his countenance which pleased me. He began worship by prayer; I was pleased with it. After singing, the venerable man of God took his text from Acts xiii.26; "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God; to you is the word of this salvation sent." To describe the exercise of my mind under this sermon would be impossible. However, upon the whole, I concluded it

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history room of the Welsh Neck church ("Worship of Selected Churches," 136). Henry S. Burrage believes that *Psalms and Hymns of Dr. Watts, Arranged by Dr. Rippon; with Dr. Rippon's Selection* (1820) was popular in the Middle Atlantic States. "The [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] was recommended by several Baptist pastors in Philadelphia to 'all Baptist churches throughout the country,' as the 'best book of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs in use among Christians.'" (See *Baptists Hymn Writers and their Hymns* [Portland, ME: Brown Thurston, 1888], 648.)

<sup>160</sup> "Richard Rose writes: "This volume brought to America the works of important English Baptist hymn writers. Appearing first in 1787 in England, Rippon's *Selection* contained 599 hymns with a heavy representation of Baptist authors." (See "*The Psalmist: A Significant Hymnal for Baptists in America during the Nineteenth Century*" [D.M.A. project, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991], 26.) R. D. Roberts adds, "Because of the universal acceptance of Rippon's hymnal, he is responsible, more than any single person, for launching the prominent eighteenth century Baptist authors into the main stream of English hymnody. Through the Rippon collection the works of Beddome, Fawcett, Fellows, Needham, Ryland, Steele, and Samuel Stennett became well-known to all Protestant congregations in both England and America" (see "John Rippon's *Selection of Hymns* and its Contributions to Baptist Hymnody" [M.C.M. thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972], 35–36).

<sup>161</sup> Tupper, *Two Centuries*, 297.

<sup>162</sup> Tupper, *Two Centuries*, 107. Tupper cites the treasurer's account book for that year [1831]: "Paid Organ Committee. [\$] 1210." That organ was subsequently destroyed during the Civil War. Music and Richardson write, "In 1829, the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, in a close vote, granted permission to have an organ installed at no expense to the Church." They also cite the Methodist, Francis Asbury writing in his journal: "[The Baptists in Georgetown, South Carolina] have built an elegant church, planned for a steeple and organ" ("*I Will Sing*," 106–7).

was possible there might be salvation for me, even for me. I then determined, that, in future, I would attend worship in this place. I do not remember, that, when able to go, I ever once omitted attending, while I lived in Charleston. Indeed, I would not have omitted one sermon for all the riches in the world.<sup>163</sup>

There were no kneeling benches or altars for people to come kneel and pray. Mears cites an unpublished essay by Edmund Botsford in which he “made an effort to explain the Baptist disapproval of bowing and kneeling, particularly during the administration of the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>164</sup> The original floor plan for the 1775 building included a center aisle. This design was controversial due to the associations with the processions of the Anglican and Catholic traditions. The plans had to be redrawn with two aisles, and other South Carolina churches followed the same pattern. The only real movement in Baptist worship was the journey to the river for the baptism before the advent of the interior baptistry. “After a protracted time of worship and baptism, ‘the audience sang with great energy and harmony up to the house,’ where the recently baptized members had changed clothes and joined the congregation for further worship.”<sup>165</sup> Baptisms always concluded with the observance of communion during this time.<sup>166</sup>

It is not clear how the Lord’s Table was fenced. Rather than celebrating communion at a different time and place, as was done in the early days at Pennepek. Morgan Edwards seemed to indicate that this had changed by the time of his pastorate in Philadelphia in the mid-eighteenth century. He lists that element as part of the Sunday order of worship, when celebrated. This may have been the practice Hart observed growing up, though he might have observed the earlier practice of a separate meeting. In

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<sup>163</sup> Mallory, *Botsford*, 30. His reference to Hart’s dress is that of the black minister’s gown and white band that Hart regularly wore.

<sup>164</sup> Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 71.

<sup>165</sup> Mears, “Worship in Selected Churches,” 74. Mears cites, William B. Johnson, “Reminiscences of William B. Johnson,” ed. J. Glenwood Clayton, *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November 1978): 23.

<sup>166</sup> Baker and Craven, *The First Baptist Church*, 284.

Charleston, communion was either a part of the baptism service as noted above, or the regular Sunday worship service as Edwards describes. Unbelievers would have been present if the latter. In *The Gospel Church*, Hart states that the proper participant of communion was one “in a church state”—the baptized believer. Those who were not members in good standing were not eligible to participate. He so emphasized the ordinance that he stated, “It is of so much importance that there cannot be an orderly gospel church without it.”<sup>167</sup> According to Mears, most churches in the Charleston Baptist Association celebrated the Lord’s Supper on a quarterly basis. It was a common practice for churches to meet on the Saturday before communion “in order to prepare for the ordinance” in which a “preparation sermon” was preached.<sup>168</sup> Hart’s sermon in 1781 designates aspects of Zwinglian symbolism, but he also cites John Gill and the Song of Solomon in his section regarding the ordinances that reflects Calvin’s real presence.

With the close connections between Charleston and Philadelphia, it is likely that the order of worship was similar. Mears explains, “Though there have been discovered no detailed, prescriptive worship orders for the Charleston church, the patterns [described] . . . contain similarities to those of the Philadelphia congregation.” She continues, “The interspersed prayers, the reading of Scripture, singing, the sermon, and the collection were elements shared by churches of both regions.”<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Hart, *The Gospel Church*, 27–28. The *Summary of Church Discipline* included instruction regarding who may participate in communion and the process of restoration. Edmund Botsford issued tickets for communion as was Morgan Edwards practice in Philadelphia (Mears, “Worship of Selected Churches,” 175).

<sup>168</sup> Mears, “Worship of Selected Churches,” 173–74. This aspect of preparation for the table is demonstrated by the decision by the Association to maintain their two-day schedule of public devotion that culminated with the Lord’s Supper. The minutes record the following in response to the request to adjust the schedule: “It is proper and necessary that the exercises of the Saturday should be preparatory to the sacred transaction of approaching the table [on Sunday]” (Charleston Baptist Association, *The Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, November 5, 1808* [Charleston, SC: Charleston Baptist Association, 1808], 3).

<sup>169</sup> Mears, “Worship of Selected Churches,” 185.

## Summary

Don Hustad suggests that the reason that there is no recorded worship patterns for Charleston Baptists is that their “separatist and nonconformist heritage caused them to be hesitant to prescribe any worship order.”<sup>170</sup> In all of the research done on this historic church and its prominent model for Baptist worship, there does not appear to be a single worship order recorded. The closest is the Botsford summary above, which is stark and possibly oversimplified. He also was emphasizing the preaching of Hart in his journal to he seemed to single that part of the service out. What can be discerned for this account is that Hart opened the service with prayer, as Morgan Edwards described. Also, singing preceded the sermon, as the *Selection of Psalms and Hymns Done under the Appointment of the Philadelphian Association* (1789) indicated was the practice. However, given the overlap of Morgan Edwards historical research and the “golden years” of the Charleston Tradition under the Furman pastorate, the worship services may have eventually looked similar to what Edwards reported from Philadelphia. Hustad suggests that may have been the case. A potential order of worship for Charleston is shown in figure 8.<sup>171</sup> This certainly fits Botsford’s account. Hustad also points out that Edwards insisted upon a congregational “amen” at the end of prayers, which may or may not have been at practice in Charleston. The ecclesiastical gown and band seems to have been the practice in both places as Botsford commented on in his journal. Hart likely brought that practice from Philadelphia.

One other note regarding worship content (e.g., the words spoken/sung in worship) should be made here. In Barnet Williams’ study, “An Investigation of Baptist Worship from 1620–1850,” he cites the practice of singing a hymn at Baptism by the

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<sup>170</sup> Don Hustad, “Baptist Worship Forms: Uniting the Charleston and Sandy Creek Traditions,” *Review and Expositor* 65 (1988): 31.

<sup>171</sup> Hustad, “Baptist Worship Forms,” 32.

First Baptist Church at Charleston. The specific hymn he mentions is John Ryland's (1753–1825), "Baptismal Hymn" from the *Watts and Rippon Hymn Book*. He believes

A short prayer, suitably prefaced  
Reading of Scripture  
A longer prayer  
Singing (congregational)  
Sermon  
A third prayer  
Singing  
The Lord's Supper (on appointed Sundays)  
Collecting for the necessities of saints  
Benediction<sup>172</sup>

Figure 8. Potential order of worship at Charleston (mid-eighteenth century)

this practice "began about the middle of the eighteenth century."<sup>173</sup> The practice may have begun at this time (during the Hart pastorate) but the hymn he references was not published until 1791.<sup>174</sup> Additionally, *The Psalms and Hymns of Dr. Watts, Arranged by Dr. Rippon*, was not published until 1827. *Rippon's Selection* was first published in

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<sup>172</sup> Edwards, *Customs of Primitive Churches*, 100.

<sup>173</sup> Barnet L. Williams, "An Investigation of Baptist Worship from 1620–1850 (Th.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1954), 38–39.

<sup>174</sup> John Ryland, "When Abraham's Servant to Procure," also known as a "Baptismal Hymn," first appeared in *The Christian's Duty, Exhibited, in a Series of Hymns* (Germantown, PA: Peter Leibert, 1791), No. 314, p. 284. This hymnal was printed by the German Baptist Brethren. (See "The Christian's Duty, Exhibited, in a Series of Hymns: Collected from Various Authors, Designed for the Worship of God, and for the Edification of Christians," Hymnary.org, accessed December 26, 2014, <http://www.hymnary.org/hymnal/CD1791?page=3>.)

1787, which included Watts' hymns but not the one in question by Ryland.<sup>175</sup> While it is likely true that they sang a hymn at baptismal services in the mid-eighteenth century as was referenced above, it was not the Ryland hymn and it was not from Rippon's collection of Watts. However, this does reflect the pervasive use of Watts and Rippon in the church. This reflects strongly upon the gospel content of hymns sung in the worship that became known as the Charleston Tradition.

There are two important conclusions regarding Charleston worship, given that an order of worship cannot be derived other than what as already been established in Philadelphia. The first conclusion is the penchant for order. Though some Separatist flexibility in worship order is potentially maintained before the sermon, the emergence of the Separate Baptists and the Sandy Creek tradition out of the Great Awakening serve to *push* the Charleston tradition towards more order. Later examples of the Charleston Tradition are very fixed. However, this is more than *ordo*. In fact, it may be truer regarding hymn selection and focus in the service as the following study of the Sandy Creek Tradition will reveal. The content of hymnody practiced and the general focus of the service are different in the two traditions. This serves to highlight the second important conclusion regarding worship in Charleston. It is decidedly Christ-focused and gospel-themed. Recalling Furman's quote evaluating Hart's preaching:

Christ Jesus, and Him crucified, in the perfection of his righteousness, the merit of his death, the prevalence of his intercession, and efficacy of his grace, was the foundation of his hope, the source of his joy, and the delightful theme of his preaching.<sup>176</sup>

The overall service—including the increasing presence of Watts' psalms and hymns, and later Rippon's Selection—was gospel-themed throughout. The heart message of the service was the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and man's

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<sup>175</sup> Music and Richardson, "I Will Sing," 52.

<sup>176</sup> Sprague, *American Baptist Pulpit*, 7:49.

response to that. This is why Edmund Botsford found at First Baptist, Charleston, and only First Baptist, the message of the gospel he so badly needed to hear.

### **The Baptists at Sandy Creek, North Carolina (1755–1800)**

The Great Awakening of the second quarter of the eighteenth century is considered such because it impacted people from New England to Georgia and involved multiple denominational groups.<sup>177</sup> The result was religious growth throughout the colonies. At times, the growing pains of the Awakening precipitated theological strife and splits within denominations. Weaver describes this aspect of the Awakening:

“Baptists were generally opposed to the revival. The Arminian churches in New England disliked the Calvinism of the revival leaders. Many Baptists were wary of the episodes of wild emotionalism that characterized some of the conversions. Most of the conversions were among Congregationalists.” Ironically, the first Great Awakening still proved to be a major factor in Baptist growth as the Congregationalists split. “Many ‘New Lights’—those who advocated revival methods—left the Congregationalist fold after abandoning their commitment to infant baptism in favor of believer’s baptism.”<sup>178</sup> Many of these “Separates” became Baptists, establishing their identity as “Separate Baptists.”

Isaac Backus and Shubal Stearns (1706–1771) were Congregationalist converts from New England. Their similar spiritual journeys from Congregationalist to Awakening convert to Baptist are illustrative of the journeys of countless others during this time period. Additionally, the majority of the Baptist churches in New England became Calvinistic Baptist churches as a result of the influence of the Awakening. This

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<sup>177</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 60. See also Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>178</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 60. It is of this movement from the Congregationalists to the Baptists that George Whitefield reportedly said, “My chickens have turned to ducks” (60–61).

change allowed the Associations at Philadelphia and later Charleston to become cooperative partners with a wider circle of influence in the gospel effort. Backus became the pastor of the Separate Baptist Church at Middleborough, Massachusetts in 1756, a church he started. Closed communion and itinerant evangelism marked this church, much as the practice had been in Philadelphia and Charleston. He published the earliest history of Baptists in America; a three-volume work entitled *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists* (1777, 1784, 1796).<sup>179</sup>

Shubal Stearns' journey began similarly, but his path within the Baptist faith took a different direction geographically. Converted under the preaching of George Whitefield, he initially became the preacher of a new Separate Congregationalist church in rural Connecticut. The church eventually split over the matter of baptism and he took a group first to Virginia, and ultimately the group settled at Sandy Creek, North Carolina. Joined by his sister and brother-in-law, Martha (1726–1754) and Daniel Marshall (1706–1784), Stearns became the undisputed leader of the Separate Baptists movement in the colonial South. Separate Baptists grew so rapidly that by the time of the American Revolution they were the largest dissenting group in the South.<sup>180</sup>

Many of this group having experienced spiritual birth as a result of the Great Awakening amidst its dramatic experiences and spiritual exercises,<sup>181</sup> they sought the same dynamic quality for their worship services. Hustad writes, “Strongly influenced by

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<sup>179</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 61.

<sup>180</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 62.

<sup>181</sup> David McCollum defines these “exercises,” or “bodily exercises,” as “Revival phenomena which engaged the psyche and/or the body were called among other things ‘experiences,’ ‘enthusiasms,’ ‘extravagant affections,’ and ‘bodily agitations.’ ‘Exercises’ is a general descriptor that signified the means of grace and religious experience. This usage of ‘exercises’ spanned the period . . . 1730–1805.” He adds, “These behaviors were not confined to the religious gatherings popularly called camp meetings. They occurred at church services, riverside baptisms, Bible studies, prayer meetings and in the workplace” (McCollum, “A Study of Evangelicals,” 1).

the George Whitefield renewal movement in the colonies, they practiced a charismatic variety of worship whose central purpose was evangelism.”<sup>182</sup> John F. Loftis describes the typical worship service of the Sandy Creek Tradition:

In general, worship among Separate Baptists was characterized by informality, noise and disorder. Separate preachers exhibited an energetic, passionate, and loud proclamation style. Congregations were often moved to tears, screaming, and even rendered prostrate. Members of the congregation entered spontaneously into the service with prayers and exhortations. Even young converts and women were encouraged to respond to the movement of the Spirit.<sup>183</sup>

Often characterized as the worship of the fiery, frontier folk of the day, this movement was the counterpart to the comparatively refined Charleston Tradition. Shurden writes, “The second word in the Southern Baptist synthesis is *ardor*.” This comes from the Sandy Creek Tradition. Where the Charleston Tradition generally connotes the word “order” in worship, this movement has been perceived as people given to ardor. And this was expressed in “individualism, congregationalism, biblicism, and egalitarianism.”<sup>184</sup> To this, Shurden adds four characteristics of Separate Baptist worship as expressed in the Sandy Creek Tradition.

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<sup>182</sup> Hustad, “Baptist Worship Forms,” 32.

<sup>183</sup> John F. Loftis, “Factors in Southern Baptist Identity as Reflected by Ministerial Role Models, 1750–1925” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 89–90.

<sup>184</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 204; emphasis Shurden’s. Shurden is credited with having made popular the phrases “Charleston Tradition” and “Sandy Creek Tradition” that have become shorthand for defining these distinctive Baptist worship styles. One weakness of such a characterization is to intimate that the Charleston Order lacked ardor. While Charleston certainly established more order in their services, relative to the charismatic spontaneity of Sandy Creek, the Charleston expression of worship was still an expression of ardor. In particular, Oliver Hart was equally a product of revival as his Separate Baptist brethren. Eric Coleman Smith plans to address the potential over-amplification of this particular distinction in a future dissertation. Smith writes in his prospectus: “The thesis of this dissertation is that, Oliver Hart was a Regular Baptist pastor who was deeply influenced by the revival spirituality of the Great Awakening, thus providing evidence that revival played a greater role in Regular Baptist identity than is often suggested. The Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek were clearly birthed out of the revival of the Great Awakening, and their contribution to the expansion of Baptist life in the South is both undeniable and utterly remarkable. But I want to argue that the flame of revival also touched their Regular Baptist brethren in Charleston, producing a piety marked by both the order of their Particular Baptist lineage and the ardor of the new evangelical awakening” (Eric Coleman Smith, “Order and Ardor: The Revival Spirituality of Regular Baptist Oliver Hart [1723–1795] of the Charleston Tradition” [Ph.D. prospectus, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015], 15).

First, their worship was evangelistic. “They had one value: winning people to Jesus Christ and to an emotionally identifiable experience. Faith was feeling and every Sunday was a camp meeting.” Second, their ministry was charismatic. Just like the conversion experience, the call of God to preach “was internal and experiential, never a professional choice. Ministerial education was not encouraged, it was discouraged.” It was deemed a detriment to preaching. All that one needed to preach was the call of God to do so. Third, their ecclesiology was ruggedly independent. They formed the fourth Baptist association in America as the Sandy Creek Baptist Association in 1758. “But unlike the Charleston Tradition, the Sandy Creek Tradition did not spend as much time defining associational authority as they did declaring church autonomy.” This is represented in part by a number of doctrinal issues related to queries that the Association put back to the inquiring church rather than seeking to answer it. Finally, their theological approach was biblicistic. “With a highly literalistic approach to Scripture, they found not two but nine Christian rites in the Bible.” With roots in New England Congregationalism where non-binding creeds became substitutes for the authority of the word of God, they were “ardently opposed to confessions of faith.”<sup>185</sup> Shurden adds the following summary, “In brief, the Sandy Creek Tradition consists of revivalistic experientialism, anticonfessionalism, exaggerated localism, fierce libertarianism, and a commitment to personal evangelism.”<sup>186</sup>

The reasons for including Sandy Creek Baptists in this study are threefold: (1) they come most directly out of the Great Awakening which is arguably the most spiritually shaping event in American history. (2) They are among the most influential Baptist groups of the eighteenth century and changed the shape of Baptist worship in the

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<sup>185</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 205–6.

<sup>186</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 206.

centuries that follow. (3) They represent the Sandy Creek Tradition, which is the counterpart to the Charleston Tradition. These two worship traditions represent the totality of influence in Baptist worship. Though they appear as contrasting styles in some ways, it is their blending that accounts for most of the worship services among Baptists in the centuries that follow. Most Baptists since then have elements of worship from both worship traditions. Very few churches can authentically claim to be the practitioner of solely one tradition. Most have something from both.

### **A Brief History**

Shubal Stearns was born in Boston in 1706, but his family moved to Tolland, Connecticut early in his life. There they joined a Congregationalist church where he remained until 1745 when he heard Whitefield preach. Stearns was converted and subsequently embraced the New Light understanding of revival and conversion.<sup>187</sup>

William McLoughlin explains the resulting effect of so many new and zealous converts from the Great Awakening: “Religious zeal spilled over into very bitter quarrels about doctrine, church government, and ritual.” Seeking to reform their churches, “many fervent New Lights were ready to conclude that it was impossible for them to reform established churches from within.”<sup>188</sup> Their movement theme was from 2 Corinthians 6:17—“Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” This is how they gained the label and stigma of “come-outers” or “Separates.” Stearns did the same and separated from his Old Light, Congregational church. In 1751, Stearns became the pastor of a group of New Lights in Connecticut.

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<sup>187</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 155. “New Light advocates, in general, favored the revival and considered most of its phenomena as consistent with, if not directly indicative of, a work of God’s Spirit. They were particularly interested in an experience of conversion—observable, communicable, and transforming” (107).

<sup>188</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty* (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1991), 103–04.

Very soon after beginning this pastorate, Stearns rejected infant baptism (as did a portion of his church) and was baptized as a believer by Wait Palmer (1728–1785). He was then ordained as a Baptist minister in March 1751. Three years later Stearns moved south, believing that the Spirit had led him to do so in order to start a great spiritual work there. It was in Opekon, Virginia that he, along with several of his church members from Connecticut, joined Daniel and Martha Marshall.<sup>189</sup> Here they worked among a group of Baptists associated with the Philadelphia Baptist Association. Feeling that he did not meet with the success that he had been called to, he received information from some friends in North Carolina about the need for a preacher there.<sup>190</sup> On November 22, 1755, “He and his party once more got under way, and, traveling about two hundred miles, came to Sandy Creek, in Guildford county North Carolina.”<sup>191</sup> David Benedict provides the earliest description of the forming of Sandy Creek Baptist Church: “As soon as they arrived, they built them a little meetinghouse, and these 16 persons formed themselves into a church, and chose Shubael Stearns for their pastor, who had, for his assistants at that time, Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, neither of whom were ordained.” He continues regarding the manner in which the Anglican inhabitants received them:

The doctrine of the new birth, as insisted on by these zealous advocates for evangelical religion, they could not comprehend. Having always supposed that religion consisted in nothing more than the practice of its outward duties, they could not comprehend how it should be necessary to feel conviction and conversion; and

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<sup>189</sup> Martha Marshall became famous for her exhortations. She was considered the “Priscilla” to her husband’s more modest speaking gifting, as she was considered “more eloquent.” Daniel Marshall was a prominent leader among the Separate Baptists and Martha a dynamic “helper in the gospel.” The Sandy Creek Baptists permitted women to have a more prominent role in worship than did the Regular Baptists. They had women elders and deaconesses, in addition to allowing them a more vocal role in their services, including preaching at times. (See Robert Baylor Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, rev. and ed. G. W. Beale [1810; rev. 1894; repr., Lafayette, TN: Church History Research and Archives, 1976], 374.)

<sup>190</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 155. Some had to travel forty miles to hear preaching in this area.

<sup>191</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia*, 65. This is now Randolph County, North Carolina.

to be able to ascertain the time and place of one's conversion, was, in their estimation, wonderful indeed. These points were all strenuously contended for by the new preachers.<sup>192</sup>

The growth of the church was dramatic, as this group of sixteen grew to six hundred and six members in very short order. Warren Dixon records that between 1755 and 1758, Stearns baptized over nine hundred people.<sup>193</sup> Benedict writes, Daniel Marshall, “though not possessed of great talents, was indefatigable in his labors. He sallied out into the adjacent neighborhoods, and planted the Redeemer's standard in many of the strongholds of Satan.”<sup>194</sup> Several preachers were raised up in North Carolina to meet the growing need as churches (e.g., “branches”) began to be formed rapidly. As church members preached to other areas and started other churches, it became clear that an association should be formed. In 1758, the Sandy Creek Association was formed and it also grew rapidly. Of the Sandy Creek Association, Morgan Edwards writes,

In 17 years [Sandy Creek] has spread its branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesopeck [sic] Bay; and northward to the waters of the Pottowmack [sic]; it in 17 years, is become mother, grandmother, and great grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers.<sup>195</sup>

Stearns became known as the “Reverend Old Father” in the Sandy Creek

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<sup>192</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 683.

<sup>193</sup> Warren Dixon, “Sandy Creek Separate Baptist Church,” *Randolph County*, accessed December 16, 2014, <http://www.co.randolph.nc.us/hlpc/downloads/sandyCreek.pdf>.

<sup>194</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 684. “At Abbott's Creek, about thirty miles from Sandy Creek, the gospel prospered so largely, that they petitioned the mother church for a constitution, and for the ordination of Mr. Marshall as their pastor. The church was constituted in 1756; Mr. Marshall accepted the call, and went to live among them.” Marshall later continued his itinerant preaching, preaching in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia—establishing the Baptist church at Kiokee in 1772, which is the oldest continuing Baptist church in Georgia. His son, Abraham, eventually became the leading pastor for the pioneer Baptist movement in Georgia. He continued his ministry there for thirty-five years (Nettles, *The Baptists*, 158). Abraham's son, Jabez (Daniel's grandson), became pastor after him for thirteen years.

<sup>195</sup> Morgan Edwards, “Materials Towards the History of the Southern Baptists in the Provinces of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia,” quoted in Nettles, *The Baptists*, 157 and in Benedict, *A General History*, 685. C. B. Hassell wrote in 1829: “As of now, more than a thousand churches are existing now which arose from this beginning” (Dixon, “Sandy Creek Separate Baptist Church,” 1).

Association. Weaver explains, “He asserted autocratic authority at times.” There were occasions when ministers and churches that disagreed with the association were “disfellowshipped.” Weaver also writes, “Associational gatherings focused on preaching and, according to some scholars, were evangelistic ‘camp meetings’ thirty-years before the nineteenth-century Second Great Awakening popularized camp meetings on the frontier.”<sup>196</sup> In 1770, the Association split into three associations even as the Sandy Creek Church was reduced from over six hundred people to fourteen. Shubal Stearns “finished his course” at Sandy Creek on November 20, 1771.<sup>197</sup> The Sandy Creek Church never again regained its size or prominence, but the seeds that were planted there produced fruit both far and wide. Nettles summarizes, “Through the organizational skills of Stearns and the untiring preaching endeavors of Daniel Marshall, the Great Awakening spread deep into the South.”<sup>198</sup>

As to the relationship between Separate and Regular Baptists, there was initially suspicion at best and outright scorn at worst. When Daniel Marshall was called to preach at Abbott’s Creek soon after their arrival in North Carolina, Stearns sought help with his ordination. Believing that an ordination required a plurality of elders and Stearns being the only ordained minister among them, Stearns contacted the nearby Regular Baptist congregation at Peedee River in South Carolina. The request was sternly refused, the unnamed recipient declaring that “he had no fellowship with Stearns’ party; that he believed them to be a disorderly set, suffering women to pray in public, and permitting every ignorant man to preach that chose; and that they encouraged noise and confusion in their meetings.”<sup>199</sup> Stearns was able to reach out to Marshall’s brother-in-

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<sup>196</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 62.

<sup>197</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 684–85.

<sup>198</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 158.

<sup>199</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 684. It is probable that the church in question here is the

law, a Mr. Leadbetter of the church on Lynch's Creek, to carry out the ordination.

A more endearing experience involves John Gano (1727–1804) who attended the second meeting of the Sandy Creek Association in 1759. Whether by assignment from the Philadelphia Association, the Charleston Association, or of his own accord, Gano visited from his pastorate at the Jersey Settlement in North Carolina. Stearns received Gano with great affection, but the tension between Separates and Regulars became quickly apparent. The other members of the Association treated him “with coldness and suspicion; and they even refused to invite him into their Association.” Benedict comments benevolently of the Regular Baptist: “But Mr. Gano had too much knowledge of mankind, humility and good nature, to be offended at this treatment.” He continued to observe the proceedings and was evidently prepared to return when Stearns, who was bothered by his brothers' treatment of Gano, urged them to invite Gano to preach. They did so, though they would not allow him a seat at their Assembly. Of Gano's sermon Benedict writes,

With their invitation he cheerfully complied, and his preaching, though not with the *New Light* tones and gestures, was in demonstration of the spirit and with power. He continued with them to the close of their session, and preached frequently much to their astonishment as well as edification. Their hearts were soon opened towards him, and their cold indifferent and languid charity were, before he left them, enlarged into a warm attachment and cordial affection; and so superior did his preaching talents appear to them, that the young and illiterate preachers said, they felt as if they could never attempt to preach again.<sup>200</sup>

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Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738 out of the Welsh Tract Church in Delaware that had previously come from the Pennepek area. It was originally called the church at Peedee and the pastor during the time in question was Joshua Edwards, who ministered from 1752 to 1758. However, another minister, Robert Williams had been ordained there in 1752 and his ministry overlapped that of Edwards. He was a highly contentious individual and a staunch Calvinist, zealous to convince others of his position. He was eventually brought under church discipline by the church regarding a matter or matters that history does not appear to record. In spite of their gentle attempts to demonstrate kindness through multiple appeals to meet with him, he would not comply. He disowned the church's authority saying that it was not a “Church of Christ,” and was subsequently suspended and ultimately ejected (Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists*, 65). It is possible that Stearns' request could have been received by Edwards or Williams or another party.

<sup>200</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 686; emphasis Benedict's. The “*New Light* tones” that Benedict refers to was the preaching style of Stearns and other Separates, which apparently mimicked

While Gano recognized certain matters of difference in doctrine and practice, his general assessment of the Sandy Creek Baptists was formulated in this statement: “Doubtless the power of God was among them; that although they were rather immethodical, they certainly had the root of the matter at heart.” in that they had a genuine understanding of conversion and a theology to support it.<sup>201</sup>

### **Theology in Practice**

Gano’s comment that the Sandy Creek Baptists had “the root of the matter at heart,” precipitated the evaluation from Terry Wolever that Gano “did not see so much of a *doctrinal* problem with the Separates,” and in this “he reflected the general sentiment of the Particular Baptists toward the Separates.”<sup>202</sup> Nettles equally asserts, “Historical precedence makes this judgment virtually certain.”<sup>203</sup> William H. Whitsitt (1841–1911), the Baptist historian and third president of Southern Seminary, made the following assessments of the theology of these Separate Baptists: “These Separate Baptists were all

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Whitefield. Weaver describes their “holy whine” as “a shouting preaching style that evidently modulated between singing, chanting, and normal speech” (Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 62).

<sup>201</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia*, 65–66, also quoted in Nettles, *The Baptists*, 155, and commented on (162).

<sup>202</sup> Terry Wolever, *The Life and Ministry of John Gano* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 1, 304; emphasis Wolever’s.

<sup>203</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 162. The Philadelphia Association had sent Benjamin Miller because members had complained about “supposed irregularities in the church, particularly under the influence of Daniel Marshall.” Miller had some experience in reforming a church and he was sent to investigate the validity of the complaints. Nettles writes: “Benjamin Miller’s visit to Opekon, Virginia, in 1754 provides a clear test of the doctrinal content of the preaching of Stearns and his brother-in-law Daniel Marshall . . . . Miller had served faithfully as a pastor, an active member of the Philadelphia Association, and as an itinerant preacher.” After a lengthy survey of the argument, he concludes: “Unless Miller was completely without discernment (very unlikely, as he was appointed to tasks that required careful and compassionate discernment) or had shaken off the former convictions of his soul concerning the truth and the character of gospel ministry (also highly unlikely in light of his continued work and responsible leadership in the Philadelphia Association), we may be justified in concluding several things concerning the Stearns/Marshall tandem. First, their giftedness in proclamation and teaching appeared adequate in content and edifying in effect . . . . Second, their spirit, though exuberant, did not come under censure as arrogant, prideful, or improperly enthusiastic, but as warmly spiritual . . . . Third, their theology supported the strength of the exercises” (165–66).

of them Calvinists by persuasion. They were not Calvinists of the stern old type that formerly had prevailed, but rather Calvinists of the school of Jonathan Edwards.” The theology of Stearns and Marshall was the Calvinism of the Great Awakening. Whitsitt called them “Whitefieldian Baptists,” and claimed, “Nine tenths of our denominational strength in the southern states is derived from Whitefield through the agency of Stearns and his co-laborer Daniel Marshall.”<sup>204</sup> This form of Calvinism is considered evangelical Calvinism due to its fervent desire to see the gospel preached and men saved. Their zeal for evangelism was so great that some have considered them practicing Arminians, believing that such a combination of Calvinist theology and avid evangelism are incompatible.<sup>205</sup> Perhaps a balancing perspective is found in one of their own—John Leland (1754–1851), who wrote, “It is a matter of fact that the preaching that has been most blessed of God, and most profitable to men, is the doctrine of sovereign grace in the salvation of souls, mixed with a little of what is called Arminianism.”<sup>206</sup> Coming from Whitefield and the Great Awakening, the clear written practice of their theology—when it was written—is that of Calvinism. At the same time, their evangelistic zeal and practices were so ardent that they appear as practicing Arminians.

Initially, the Separate Baptists were opposed to most confessions of faith. This hindered their uniting with the Regular Baptists in any formal way. They also did not

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<sup>204</sup> William Heth Whitsitt, “Baptists in America,” Handwritten Manuscript, Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, quoted in Nettles, *The Baptists*, 171.

<sup>205</sup> R. B. C. Howell in his *The Early Baptists of Virginia* (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1857) traces the Separate Baptists to the General Baptists of Virginia (and Europe before this). As such he considers them pure Arminians. Nettles adds to this: “It seems that these historians have made an assumption built upon a particular bias, that is, a convinced and consistent Calvinist cannot be evangelistic” (Nettles, *The Baptists*, 170).

<sup>206</sup> John Leland, *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland, Including Some Events in his Life, Written by Himself; with Additional Sketches, &c by L. F. Greene*, ed. L. F. Green (1845; repr., Gallatin, TN: Church History Research & Archives, 1986), 172, quoted in Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 206.

record or prepare their sermons out of a fervent desire to be led of the Spirit. No extant sermon exists of Shubal Stearns so it is not possible to recover his preaching and theology. He preached extemporaneously. Their doctrinal practice in general gave at least some ability to agree to the major tenets of the Philadelphia Confession.

Advocating this perspective, Semple writes regarding the union of the Separates and Regulars in Virginia in 1787: A large majority believed “as much in their confession of faith [the Philadelphia Confession] as they [the Regulars] did themselves,” but “if there were some among them who leaned too much towards the Arminian system they were generally men of exemplary piety and great usefulness in the Redeemer’s kingdom.”<sup>207</sup>

Morgan Edwards writes of the Separates, “The faith and order of both [Regulars and Separates] are the same, except some trivial matters not sufficient to support a distinction, but less a disunion; for both avow the *Century-Confession* and the annexed discipline.”<sup>208</sup>

Edwards did not specify what he considered those trivial matters that were different.<sup>209</sup> One clear distinction, at least initially, regarded the long list of nine rites that the Sandy Creek Baptists subscribed to—baptism, the Lord’s Supper, love feasts, laying

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<sup>207</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia*, 100. Nettles argues against those who claim that the theological practice of the Separate Baptists must have been Arminian due to their evangelistic zeal (see Nettles, *The Baptists*, 170).

<sup>208</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, 43, quoted in Nettles, *The Baptists*, 166. Nettles summarizes the theological distinctions among Baptists in this manner: “Distinctions urged between Stearns and the Separate Baptists on the one hand and the Philadelphia/Charleston Regular Baptists on the other are artificial. Their doctrine was the same, as was their concern for gospel preaching and Holy Spirit-induced conversion. After their union at the end of the eighteenth through the beginning of the nineteenth century, the influence of one can hardly be distinguished from that of the other. The growth of Baptists in the South comes from the strengths shared by both groups. Any dichotomy between Calvinism and evangelism in this union reveals a basic misunderstanding. The followers of Stearns helped bring into practice the evangelistic convictions of the Regulars; the confessional detail of the Regulars helped give expression to the theological convictions of the Separates. The union was not an incongruous mixture of incompatibles” (172).

<sup>209</sup> He simply writes “matters of trivial importance, such as dress, &c.” as being a “bar of communion.” According to Edwards these “had been for some time removed” (Morgan Edwards, “Union of Regular and Separate Baptists” in *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, ed. H. Leon McBeth [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990], 166.)

on of hands, washing feet, anointing the sick, right hand of fellowship, kiss of charity, and devoting children. The extensive list was an effort to “carry out, to the letter, all suggestions of the New Testament.”<sup>210</sup> This stands in contrast to the Regular Baptists around them who held to only two ordinances of the New Testament. While not all churches in the Sandy Creek Association practiced all nine rites, those who did still maintained association with those who did not. Most of these rites eventually fell into disuse and when they finally subscribed to principles of faith, they only list two.

Another distinction was their emphasis of the same pneumatological practice as their founder did—seeking to hear from and act on the impressions of the Spirit. For example, early in their Association’s history they did not elect a moderator, but instead waited on God to direct someone to take the lead.<sup>211</sup> As was mentioned above, their preachers did not generally prepare a message, but preached extemporaneously, seeking to be “Spirit-led.” Another aspect of this mandate is reflected in a decision the Association made in 1758. Responding to a query from one of their churches, they decided that “dancing in the Spirit,” though unusual, should be tolerated “because there was a genuine work of grace among the people.”<sup>212</sup> Additionally, they placed a great deal of confidence in visions and divine impressions. Benedict explains that they “had

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<sup>210</sup> John Leland, *Virginia Chronicle* (Virginia, 1790), 42, quoted in Benedict, *A General History*, 686. The practice of devoting children was founded upon the circumstances of bringing little children to Christ. When circumstances permitted, the mother carried the infant to the meeting and the minister either took it in his arms, or laid his hands on it, and thanked God for his mercy, and invoked a blessing on the child, at which time it received its name. This rite, which was by many satirically called a *dry-christening*, prevailed, not only in the Sandy Creek Association, but in many parts of Virginia. Most of these rite fell out of use, though still affirmed by the Association when asked about their use. The *Principles and Faith of the Sandy Creek Association* (1816) listed only the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Article VIII (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 358).

<sup>211</sup> This practice changed in 1805 when they elected a moderator for the first time.

<sup>212</sup> George W. Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Association* (New York: Sheldon and Company Publishers, 1859), 75. The minutes from October 26, 1805 record the following answer: “We do not find in God’s word, nor can we approbate it, but recommend the churches to use great tenderness with those who are exercised in that way, before they make it a bar to communion” (49).

strong faith in the immediate teachings of the Spirit in special instructions as to the path of duty.”<sup>213</sup> Semple related the practice of their people seeking God to receive “tokens of his will.” In following these tokens one would “inevitably be led to the accomplishment of the two great objects of a Christian’s life—the glory of God and the salvation of men.”<sup>214</sup> Many of Stearns’ decisions, such as coming to Sandy Creek, were the result of impressions and/or visions perceived from the Spirit. At the same time, the Separates agreed with the Regulars that Scripture was the perfect rule and nothing contrary to it should be heeded. David McCollum observes, “They assumed immediate impressions were valid while judging them by Scriptural standards.”<sup>215</sup>

In general, theological precision was not a priority for these Baptists, though they had deeply held convictions regarding the authority of the word of God.<sup>216</sup> Winning the lost to the gospel was uppermost in their priorities of belief. “These people were so much engaged in their evangelical pursuits that they had no time to spend in theological debates, nor were they very scrupulous about their mode of conducting their meetings.”<sup>217</sup> Reflecting the latter part of this statement, Gano upon his personal visit to the Sandy Creek Baptists, reported that their practices were “rather immethodical.”

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<sup>213</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 683. William Shurden refers to the Sandy Creek Baptists as “semipentecostals” (Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 206).

<sup>214</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia*, 13.

<sup>215</sup> McCollum, “A Study of Evangelicals,” 179.

<sup>216</sup> There are examples of early doctrinal statements found in the preamble to the Sandy Creek covenant (1757) and the Abstract of the Article of Faith and Practice of the Kiokee of the Baptist Denomination (1771–1772), established by Daniel Marshall. Both are clearly Calvinistic statements affirming particular redemption, effectual calling, imputed righteousness, and perseverance of the saints, in addition to progressive sanctification and believer’s baptism. The *Principles of Faith of the Sandy Creek Association* was published in 1816 that affirms each of these again, in addition to total depravity (see Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 358).

<sup>217</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 685.

## The Practice of Worship

David Bebbington describes the Separate Baptist movement as having enjoyed “enormous dynamism.” He continues, “Set free from the shackles of the standing order, Separate Baptists were free to itinerate in the manner of Whitefield. They carried their urgent message of the new birth around New England and then spilled over to the South.”<sup>218</sup> He proceeds to relate the account of Elnathan Davis at a baptismal service conducted by Stearns in a North Carolina creek in 1762 or 1763:

Davis, at first merely a curious observer, was astonished when a man who was stricken in conscience wept on his shoulder. The young man ran to report to his friends that the crowd had been seized by a “crying and trembling spirit” and decided at first not to return, but then was drawn back by “the enchantment of Shubal Stearn[s]’ voice.” Davis himself began to tremble, fell down in a trance, and woke up with alarm at the wrath of God against his sins. A few days later he reached an assured faith, received baptism from Stearns, and before long was serving as pastor of a Separate Baptist church in the colony. Through episodes such as this, the revival temper ensured rapid denominational expansion.<sup>219</sup>

The Sandy Creek model for worship was based upon a revivalistic model of mass evangelism, evidenced by bodily exercises that was observed in the Great Awakening, and predicated upon salvation as the primary purpose for gathering. There are very few written accounts of early Sandy Creek worship, but what exists are of essentially evangelistic gatherings. Even their baptismal services, a gathering for just believers in other places, often served as an opportunity for evangelistic outreach, as the account above demonstrates. The desire for unsaved people to have the opportunity to hear the gospel and respond with an experiential outpouring of the Spirit was always uppermost.

Benedict describes the similar nature of the Sandy Creek Associational meetings: “When assembled, their chief enjoyment was preaching, exhortation, singing,

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<sup>218</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 78.

<sup>219</sup> Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries*, 78. Also, Thomas S. Kidd, “‘Do the Holy Scriptures Countenance Such Wild Disorder?’ Baptist Growth in the Eighteenth-Century American South,” in *Baptists and Missions: Papers from the Fourth International Conference on Baptist Studies*, ed. Ian M. Randall and Anthony R. Cross (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 109.

and conversation about their various exertions in the Redeemer's service, the success which had attended them, and the new and prosperous scenes which were opening before them." The ministers left encouraged and with their hearts inflamed for the gospel work that "no common obstacles could impede."<sup>220</sup> While this is often the purpose of associational meetings in other places, what was unique is that even when the Association gathered, it often drew a crowd of non-church members. Edwards writes quoting James Read, "Great crowds of people attended [the meetings of the Association], mostly through curiosity. The great power of God was among us. The preaching every day seemed to be attended with God's blessing."<sup>221</sup>

Preaching was the main event of Sandy Creek worship whatever the purpose of gathering, and Shubal Stearns was the exemplar. His manner of preaching defined the fundamental ethos of the Sandy Creek meetings. Benedict writes of their arrival at Sandy Creek: "Their manner of preaching was, if possible, much more novel than their doctrines [to the Anglicans they encountered in North Carolina]." He describes Stearns preaching:

He was a man of small stature, but good natural parts and sound judgment. His voice was musical and strong, and many stories are told respecting the wonderful and enchanting influence which was exerted on his hearers by his vocal powers, and the glances of his eyes. His character was indisputably good as a man, a Christian, and a preacher.<sup>222</sup>

Stearns became the model of preaching to the degree that others in the movement sought to emulate him. The mode of preaching was marked by "a very warm and pathetic address, accompanied by strong gestures and a singular tone of voice" that has been described by some as "a holy whine."<sup>223</sup> The doctrine of the new birth appears to have

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<sup>220</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 685.

<sup>221</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, n.p., quoted in Benedict, *A General History*, 685. McCullom writes, "Baptist union meetings, camp meetings, and baptisms were public events attended by many who had received little religious instruction" (McCullom, "A Study of Evangelicals," 184).

<sup>222</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 683, 686.

<sup>223</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 157.

been his consistent theme in preaching. Stearns' message was always the simple gospel, presented in a manner than the most uneducated among the hearers could understand. "Being often deeply affected themselves when preaching, corresponding affections were felt by their pious hearers, which was frequently expressed by tears, trembling, screams, and exclamations of grief and joy."<sup>224</sup> According to Isaac Backus, "Separate Baptist preachers expected to be exercised in the sense of receiving perceptible inspiration that enabled them to preach without notes."<sup>225</sup> George Purefoy, a nineteenth-century pastor in the Sandy Creek Association describes his forebears' conviction to God's word in preaching:

The Baptists at this time were all strict constructionists; they then would "buy the truth and sell it not." God's word was strictly the main of their counsel. There was then none of that time-serving, man-pleasing, and latitudinarian construction of God's word that now prevails. Baptists then boldly and earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. Now many of them are afraid to preach the whole truth, and defend their doctrines and ordinances, for fear it will give offence to those who are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. Baptists are the stewards of God's word, and should be found faithful in its defence and observance.<sup>226</sup>

Singing in congregational worship was never a question among the Sandy Creek Baptists. Nettles refers to their "fiery style of worship," which no doubt includes their singing, while Music and Richardson similarly record that they "became well known for the enthusiasm with which they sang."<sup>227</sup> Their hymn repertory likely began with the psalms and hymns of Watts, as did other Baptists and Congregationalists of the eighteenth century from which they came. According to Irvin Murrell, this was kept largely by oral tradition among Baptists, but mixed with the written tradition of British hymnody. "The

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<sup>224</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 683–684.

<sup>225</sup> Isaac Backus, "A Fish Caught in His Own Net," in *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism; Pamphlets, 1754–1789*, ed. William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 191, 235–37; quoted in McCullum, "A Study of Evangelicals," 186.

<sup>226</sup> Purefoy, *A History*, 51.

<sup>227</sup> Nettles, *The Baptists*, 153–54 and Music and Richardson, "I Will Sing," 79.

hymns and tunes they brought with them were folk hymns and tunes that they had heard sung by their parents and grandparents. The tunes usually were those that had been associated with old love songs or ballads.” The texts in use were often the most popular ones from Watts and other widely circulated hymns of the day. “There was, therefore, a joining of the written tradition of hymns with the folk song tradition from England.”<sup>228</sup>

Northern singing school and Southern folk hymn tunes later become the steady diet of this tradition as they later “found little use for most of the British tunes.”<sup>229</sup> The practice of lining out was beginning to be replaced with regular singing in other places. There is no evidence of traditional lining out among Sandy Creek Baptists, but the camp meeting practice of congregational response to an improvised melody from the preacher may have developed in the Sandy Creek tradition. This approach to singing would have been especially effective in the itinerant ministry so often utilized by these preachers, especially among working class attendees. In this practice, “A preacher might improvise a melody for a line from a familiar hymn by Isaac Watts or another British writer, to which the congregation could respond with a ‘shouting word’ (for example, ‘Hallelujah’) or a brief refrain.”<sup>230</sup> The tunes to these songs were likely adapted secular folk tunes or other familiar folk hymn tunes. Tune books for these songs began to be published around the turn of the century, indicating an established demand for their use. The music that came from this movement is often referred to as “revival hymnody” or “spiritual songs,” directed toward the seeker.<sup>231</sup> Many of these songs came from regional collections later

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<sup>228</sup> Irvin J. Murrell, “Ardor and Order: Southern Antebellum Baptist Hymnody . . . and Beyond” in *Baptist History Celebration 2007: A Symposium on our History, Theology, and Hymnody* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2008), 39.

<sup>229</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 79, 304.

<sup>230</sup> Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 289.

<sup>231</sup> Music and Richardson describe the emergence of a new type of published collection of songs at the beginning of the nineteenth century, intended for social and revival meetings that were a part of the series of spiritual awakenings. “Texts from Watts and the evangelical Calvinist Baptists of England

published by the Richmond publishing houses as early as 1802, reflecting a demand in this area of the country for this approach.<sup>232</sup> By this time the Baptists had become united and this reflected a united desire for congregational song. Singing occurred before the sermon in their services, and often afterwards in the form of an altar call.

Prayer is a matter of great importance, as it related to their desire for evangelism and revival. Many references are made in the Sandy Creek Association minutes to the need for prayer: opening and closing sessions with prayer; days of fasting and prayer; fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands for the ordination of a minister or evangelist; a monthly concert of prayer; special prayer for revival; prayer meetings; and to private and family prayer.<sup>233</sup> Their meetings were described at times as “scenes of the most solemn and affecting nature; and in many instances there was heard at the same time, throughout the vast congregations, a mingled sound of prayer, exhortation, groans, and praise.” There were also times, especially in camp meetings, when worshipers exhibited,

Falling down under religious impressions . . . religious epilepsies . . . not only at the great meetings, where those scenes were exhibited which were calculated to move the sympathetic affections; but also about their daily employments, some in the fields, some in their houses, and some when hunting their cattle in the woods . . . in some cases, people were thus strangely affected when alone . . . And besides falling

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served effectively for both the declaration of the gospel in worship and its offer to the unsaved in evangelism. Hymns from the Wesleys were increasingly included in Baptist collections, implying—and sometimes stating—a broader reach of the gospel. The informal songs of the revivals, which lacked the literary polish of those from British writers—and, indeed, lacked any such aspiration—were increasingly found in a range of collections” (Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 157).

<sup>232</sup> In 1802, John Courtney (c. 1744–1824), the second pastor of FBC Richmond, published *The Christian Pocket Companion* for the use of “United Baptists” reflecting the joining of Regular and Separate Baptists joining in 1787. “We may surmise that the distinction between hymns and spiritual songs was not a rigid one, with the same texts sometimes functioning in formal and informal contexts.” (Music and Richardson, “*I Will Sing*,” 178). Irvin Murrell has suggested that the categorization of a text as a spiritual song might reflect its popularity in the particular region (Murrell, “An Examination,” 104).

<sup>233</sup> The minutes of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association prior to 1805 were never printed; they were recorded in a book annually which was destroyed by fire in 1816 (Purefoy, *A History*, 31–32, 49, 51, 73, 89, 116).

down, there were many other expressions of zeal, which in more moderate people would be considered enthusiastic and wild.<sup>234</sup>

A unique element of Sandy Creek Baptist worship, in contrast to the Charleston Tradition, was the practice of exhortation, at least when distinguished from preaching. This was possibly derived from the practice of prophesying in earlier Baptist worship, but the intent was directed to the unsaved rather than the saved. Exhorting was a common practice both within and outside their services and men or women could practice it. Martha Marshall became famous for her exhortations. It was suggested that those who did not have the gift for preaching should pursue this gift. Exhortation seems to have been an impassioned appeal to individuals to repent of their sins and trust Christ for salvation, similar to the use of the term “witnessing.” It was practiced house-to-house and in the context of the gathered assembly.<sup>235</sup> It often was also used in conjunction with prayer (e.g., praying and exhorting) and sometimes in the context of prophecy, though rarely with the latter. Certain portions of the worship service were marked by the conglomeration of the elements of praying, praising, and exhorting, all occurring simultaneously among the worshipers. The following account from the First Separate Baptist Associational Meeting in Virginia in 1771 serves as a period account of Sandy Creek worship:

Went for the Association about 18 miles (Saturday morning, May, 1771). Got to the Association about one o'clock. Brother Hargitt was then about to preach to about 1,200 souls, from 40th chapter Isa., 11th verse (“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”) Brother Burruss got up immediately (after) and preached from Isa., ch. 55, 3d verse (“Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David”) with a good deal of liberty, set the Christians all afire with the love of God; Assembly praising God with a loud voice; Brother

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<sup>234</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 687. This description is generally about the Second Great Awakening among the Sandy Creek Baptists.

<sup>235</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia*, 7, 227, 374, 379–80. “Mrs. Marshall, being a lady of good sense, singular piety, and surprising elocution, has in countless instances, melted a whole concourse in tears, by her prayers and exhortations” (374).

Waller exhorting till he got spent; Brethren Marshall and E. Craig both broke loose together, the Christians shouting and they speaking for the space of half an hour or more; then ceased.<sup>236</sup>

Finally, Sandy Creek Baptists held a firm written stance on the matter of closed communion and the requirement of baptism for access to the table. It became a matter of disagreement when fostering the partnership with Regular Baptists in the Kehukee Association. When it was discovered that some of the Regulars had been baptized before their conversion by careless Arminian preachers under whose pastorate they had formerly been, it created quite a commotion and led to division. It was not until the Regulars corrected the matter that Separates returned to the process of uniting the two in the Kehukee Association. Three examples of written confessions of the Sandy Creek Baptists reviewed for this study included this requirement. The *Sandy Creek Principles of Faith (1816)* states in Article X, “That the church has no right to admit any but regular baptized church members to communion at the Lord’s table.”<sup>237</sup>

## Summary

In general, the worship services were unplanned, unprepared for, untimed, and flexible in that leaders sought to make room for the Spirit to move in them. Weaver characterizes the view of some scholars in that the Associational gatherings were essentially “evangelistic ‘camp meetings’ thirty-years before the nineteenth-century Second Great Awakening popularized camp meetings on the frontier.”<sup>238</sup> They were not completely without form or content. Benedict refers to “some calculation” in the

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<sup>236</sup> “Observations by an Attendee of the First Separate Baptist Associational Meeting in Virginia in 1771,” *Baptist History Homepage*, accessed December 28, 2014, <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/separate.bapt.assoc.html>. This is an account from the journal of Elder John Williams.

<sup>237</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 358. The *Kehukee Articles of Faith (1955)* includes in Article 12: “Persons who are sprinkled and dipped while in unbelief are no regularly baptized according to God’s word, and that such ought to be baptized after they are savingly converted into the faith of Christ” (356).

<sup>238</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 62.

meetings to “move the sympathetic affections” in the quote above. The driving desire was to see the Great Awakening from which they came, continue in the South. This required certain elements of worship—preaching in particular—and the gospel message. There are two overriding factors regarding their worship that are firmly rooted in their revivalistic beginnings: (1) the Spirit will use biblical elements such as preaching and exhortation, but is free to lead in unpredictable ways; and (2) salvation of the unsaved is the primary, and often solitary, goal. This approach was believed to be supported by and, intended to be governed by, a firm commitment to the Scriptures. However, there is no evidence of a firm commitment to the regulative principle to govern the aspects of worship. While they wrestled with certain issues at the Associational level they often referred certain matters, such as dancing in worship, to the conscience of the local church. In doing so that warned against hampering the work of grace among the people.

Purefoy reveals one of the most influential practices of the Sandy Creek Baptists that became a mainstay of Baptist worship that followed. This single addition to worship represented both an *ordo* change and thematic change in Baptist worship. His purpose is to indict the Primitive Baptist churches that were previously committed to missions but became a part of the anti-missions movement. In doing so, he cites their previous practice from their own minutes:

The ministers usually, at the close of preaching, would tell the congregation that if there were any persons who felt themselves lost and condemned under guilt and burden of their sins, if they would come near the stage and kneel down, they would pray for them . . . . The act of coming to be prayed for in this manner, had a good effect.<sup>239</sup>

In conjunction with this comment he writes, “The ministers (in 1802) used frequently, at the close of worship, to sing a spiritual song, suited to the occasion, and go through the

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<sup>239</sup> Purefoy, *A History*, 32–33.

congregation, and *shake hands* with the people while singing.”<sup>240</sup> The inference and affirmation in these conjoined statements reflects the Sandy Creek practice of an altar call following the sermon. The practice of the altar call and singing at the end of the service became their most influential contribution to worship services that followed, insofar as it was done with evangelistic intent. It is perhaps this influence that undergirded the inclusion of a section of hymns in the Philadelphia collection of hymnody published in 1790 for use “after the sermon.”<sup>241</sup>

The unavailability of a preacher was a common problem in churches of this day. Philadelphia had to give instructions for this circumstance among their churches and Sandy Creek had to do the same as they attempted to keep up with their rapid growth. In the Sandy Creek Associational minutes of October 26, 1816, they encourage those churches to “meet on the Lord’s day, for prayer and religious edification.”<sup>242</sup> This seems to imply that when a preacher is not available, evangelism is not the main goal of the gathering. In 1858, they recommended to each of its churches, “to come together for worship on each Lord’s Day, whether they have preaching or not. When they have no minister present, spend one hour in singing, prayer, and exhortation.”<sup>243</sup> The presence of exhortation here in the absence of preaching could be for evangelistic purposes, or for the aforementioned goal of religious edification.

That singing, prayer, exhortation, and preaching are the Sandy Creek elements of worship is clear. There is no reference to Scripture reading in their services, though it

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<sup>240</sup> Purefoy, *A History*, 33.

<sup>241</sup> Samuel Jones and Burgiss Allison, *Selection of Psalms and Hymns under the Appointment of the Philadelphian Association* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken and Son, 1790).

<sup>242</sup> “Minutes of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, October, 26<sup>th</sup>, 1816,” quoted in Purefoy, *A History*, 74.

<sup>243</sup> “Minutes of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, October, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1857,” quoted in Purefoy, *A History*, 177.

could be reasonably assumed that the sermon text is read before the sermon. There is no prayer of confession because the whole service generally is a presentation of the gospel to the unsaved. Prayer and intercession generally occurred before the service, sometimes on Saturday, for revival and salvation. It is also does not include a Call to Worship and the hymnody is not of the theme that directs one vertically toward God in worship. The message of the services and meetings are not really directed toward the saved. It is gospel-themed for the purposes of evangelism. The direction of dialogue is more often preacher to attendee (“horizontal”). The aspect of response in worship is demonstrated primarily with the goal of seeing the unsaved respond to the gospel. Participation was unpredictable at times as attendees could participate spontaneously with prayers and exhortations. Due to these factors, and the lack of substantial records, it is challenging to codify a Sandy Creek service order from this historical period.

However, some patterns of *ordo* can be approximated from the historical accounts that do exist. The typical worship service likely began with prayer. This was a common practice among Baptists in general, but the Sandy Creek Baptists in particular had the strong desire to invoke the work of the Spirit in the service. Additionally, the minutes record their practice of opening and closing the Associational gatherings with prayer so it seems probable that this was a worship service practice as well. Given that the high point of the service was the sermon, the elements that occurred between the opening prayer and the sermon likely included some combination of singing, prayers, and exhortations. This seems to have been the unstructured part of the service where things might occur in different sequences or even at the same time. This is the point of the service where participants likely participated spontaneously, but this does not preclude that possibility of this occurring at other times. The sermon(s) was the high-water mark of the service. This is the time that the gospel was presented plainly and clearly, but with great emotion. Again, spontaneous participation and/or bodily exercises could occur

here, but the attention was on the gospel message proclaimed extemporaneously by a Spirit-led preacher. This was the most anticipated part of Sandy Creek worship. There could potentially be multiple sermons and exhortations as the Spirit led. Some type of altar call response, most likely facilitated by singing again, followed the sermon. This was not a single song or brief response to close the service as is often the case today. This demonstrated the effects of the pinnacle of the service and could include a lengthy time of prayer, exhortation, singing, praising, moaning, etc. as the Spirit affected people through exercises and ultimately, repentance and salvation. Given these descriptions, a potential service at Sandy Creek might have look like the one in figure 9.

William Lumpkin concludes, “More than any other group, they impressed the revivalistic stamp upon American religious life.” Their additions to Baptist worship history, for better and worse, are that “successors have inherited and perpetuated: too great a dependence on mass evangelism and excessive emotional appeal . . . and too little training of their congregations in Christian faith and worship.”<sup>244</sup>

Prayer for revival (Before the service or even on Saturday)

Opening Prayer

Singing, praying, and exhorting (potentially simultaneous)

Sermon(s) (unprepared, but reliant upon the Spirit)

Response to the gospel (“altar call”)

Closing Prayer

Figure 9. Potential order of worship at Sandy Creek (late eighteenth century)

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<sup>244</sup> William Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), 148–50. Lumpkin also includes “the undervaluing of ministerial education” in this list.

### **Excursus: Separate and Regular Baptists Unite for Revival and Missions**

Though the Regular and Separates began the second half of the eighteenth century wary of one another, the substantial growth of the Separates drew the attention of the Regulars. Weaver writes reflecting the opinion of Robert Semple in 1810, “The differences between Regular and Separate Baptists were never great and . . . jealousy played a significant role in the tensions between them.”<sup>245</sup> Both groups were Calvinistic; both preached conversion; and both practiced believer’s Baptism. Additionally, both desperately desired revival and the advance of the gospel. They had much in common and this led to efforts to unite the two types of Baptists leading up to the turn of the century. Building upon the efforts of men such as Oliver Hart and John Gano, who had reached out to Separates early, Richard Furman, William T. Brantley (1787–1845), and Basil Manly became paradigmatic of this newly united Baptist front. Each was saved under Separate Baptist preaching while themselves going on to pastor the *flagship* Regular Baptist churches of FBC Philadelphia and FBC Charleston. Basil Manly became one of the leading figures in the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The issue of holding to confessions in this union was a problematic one. Separates believed confessions and creedal statements led to formality and spiritual stagnation. Their concern was that a confession would lead away from the authority of the Scriptures as they felt had occurred among the Congregationalists in New England. Regulars on the other hand felt that Separates were “not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned any confession of faith [until 1816]; and that they kept within their communion many who were professed Arminians.”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Weaver is citing early nineteenth-century Virginia Baptist historian Robert Semple in these remarks (*The Baptist Story*, 64).

<sup>246</sup> Benedict, *A General History*, 61. The Sandy Creek Principles of Faith were not published until 1816. They also felt that they could “bear with some diversity of opinion in doctrines,” rather than “break with godly men of exemplary piety.”

However, the Separates finally adjusted their aversion toward confessions. “They were willing to accept the Regular’s confession with the stipulation that it was not a binding statement of faith on anyone’s conscience. Despite differences in style and doctrine, the two groups were drawn together by revivalism.”<sup>247</sup> It should also be pointed out that Regulars adjusted their stance as well as they permitted association without insisting upon the authority of a statement of confession such as the Philadelphia Confession. This proved to have a significant influence upon the course that followed.

When the Second Great Awakening broke out around the turn of the century, Baptists did not stand on the sidelines this time as they had in the Great Awakening of some sixty years earlier. The growth was evident in all types of Baptists and especially in the frontier areas such as Kentucky, where Baptist work previously had been sparsely missional. However, the revivalistic practices of the Separate Baptists modified their theology over time to what some have characterized as an Arminian direction of general atonement, to mirror their evangelistic practice. This was reflected both in preaching content and in an aggressive evangelistic style.<sup>248</sup> Regular Baptists had to decide how they would respond to the adjusting theology of their new partners. There was room for both under the new banner of broad cooperation at the associational level, but the dynamic nature of the relationship was more evident at the local church level in the blending of two disparate worship traditions. In the words of William Shurden,

And now a suggestion: if you marry a semipresbyterian from Charleston to a

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<sup>247</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 65. The nature of their agreement in Virginia in 1787 served as a blueprint for others that followed: “To prevent the confession of faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the conscience of any, we do not mean, that every person is bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained; yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ, and free and unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every Christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel. Upon these terms we are united, and desire hereafter, that the names Regular and Separate be buried in oblivion; and that from henceforth, we shall be known by the name of the United Baptist Churches, in Virginia” (Benedict, *A General History*, 61).

<sup>248</sup> Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 64.

semipentecostal from Sandy Creek, you will get a whole host of Southern Baptists spreading all over the Southland. This is what happened beginning in 1777 in North Carolina and continuing until 1801 in Kentucky, the Charlestonians and the Sandy Creekers began coming together. Together they formed the Southern Baptist Convention and the blending helped shape the Southern Baptist synthesis.<sup>249</sup>

This blend is reflected in a number of ways. One of these is in the content of hymnody and the hymns chosen for hymnals. David Singer analyzes the progressive moderation of Calvinism over the turn of the century in the content of hymns between 1784 and 1844:

While the decline of Arminian General Baptists and the rapprochement between the Separate and Regular Baptists converted the denomination as a whole to an evangelistic Calvinistic theology, this strict Calvinism soon began to undergo significant changes. These changes, which were attributable in part to the influence of Enlightenment ideas, but even more so to the initial impact of the powerful Arminianizing dynamic inherent in Calvinism itself, particularly in revivalist phases, were faithfully reflected in the hymnals published between 1784 and 1807. To any careful reader of these hymnals it would have been evident that Calvinist theology had entered a transitional phase.<sup>250</sup>

In particular, the doctrine of limited atonement is slowly replaced by the doctrine of universal atonement by virtue of the hymn texts chosen for the hymnals of the nineteenth century. Additionally, the theocentrism of the earlier hymnals is replaced with anthropocentrism in the later hymnals. Man becomes the leading figure in the drama of salvation rather than God. Finally, greater emphasis is put on God's role as the "glorious lover of mankind."<sup>251</sup> The role of Christ as the atonement for sin is consistent in both.

The new partnership of Regular and Separate Baptists in cooperative effort for revival, and later worldwide missions, laid the foundation for a united Baptist effort of the nineteenth century and beyond. It was initially a problematic one for a different reason—one that mirrored the growing division in the country. That effort eventually split over the issue of slavery in the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

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<sup>249</sup> Shurden, *Not an Easy Journey*, 206.

<sup>250</sup> David Singer, "God and Man in Baptist Hymnals, 1784–1844," *American Studies* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1968): 16, accessed August 24, 2014, <https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/amerstud/article/viewFile/2157/2116>.

<sup>251</sup> Singer, "God and Man in Baptist Hymnals," 16–17.

What remained to be seen is what this blended worship would look like as it migrated to the frontier areas west and north into Canada.

## CHAPTER 5

### AN INQUIRY REGARDING THE EXISTENCE OF GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP FORM AND CONTENT IN PROMINENT BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA: SYNTHESIS ON THE FRONTIER

The nineteenth century dawned with revival in the air; a freshly forming spirit of cooperation among Baptists; a vision for the evangelization of their rapidly expanding country; and an emerging burden and capacity for domestic and worldwide mission. Baptist numbers were surging alongside their Methodist revival partners. The nation's western frontier was equally a frontier for Baptists as church-planting efforts began to push from the Atlantic Ocean toward the Mississippi River and north into Canada. A form of worship had been established among Baptist traditions in the eighteenth century that emphasized preaching as the main element of worship. Unaccompanied congregational singing had been embraced in both the church and the camp meeting. What remained to be established was the synthesis of two seemingly incompatible worship traditions: order and ardor, edification and evangelism, Calvinism and what began to look more and more like Arminianism.

The Charleston Tradition, associated with Calvinism, was marked by a planned service of predictably ordered elements of worship that sought primarily to edify the saints of God. It was equated with decorum and structure. The Sandy Creek Tradition, associated increasingly with Arminianism, was marked by a loosely patterned service of unplanned reliance upon the Spirit of God to save sinners. It was equated with emotion and revivalism. Both sought to glorify God and proclaim the gospel, but their distinctions were significant. On some points, one tradition had to take precedence over the other. Most of these choices would be made in the pastor's study, with the aim of his

sermons, the view he had of worship, and the hymns he chose to sing. Additionally, whereas the eighteenth century was largely a century of importing British hymnody, the nineteenth century was an age of adding diverse American hymnody to this foundation. Many hymn writers were also the pastors, making this yet another means by which direction in worship was to be determined. Baptist worship was growing, changing, and diversifying as quickly as the denomination and the country. It was also splitting.

### **Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, Alabama (1822–1855)**

It would be hard to find a church during this time period that was more influential in its region and state than Siloam Baptist Church. Though the Southern Baptist Convention was not founded until 1845, much of the groundwork was laid, and early growth evidenced, in Marion, Alabama. Siloam was established in 1822 and played a central role in the formation of the Alabama Baptist Convention in nearby Greensboro in 1823. Siloam's first pastor was moderator of the Cahaba Association and the first president of the Alabama State Convention. By 1841, Judson Female Institute (now Judson College), and Howard College (now Samford University) were founded from Siloam. In 1843 the *Alabama Baptist*, the Baptist state newspaper, also began in Marion. The "Alabama Resolutions," passed at the state convention's meeting at Siloam in 1844, led to the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention a year later in Augusta, Georgia.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in 1845, convention leaders met at Siloam to found the Board of Domestic Missions (later the Home Mission Board and now NAMB). This was a flagship church

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<sup>1</sup> In the years leading up to the Civil War, some northern Baptists among the Triennial Convention (formed in 1814) opposed the appointment as missionaries, those who owned slaves (essentially southern Baptists). James Reeves of Georgia became the litmus test as he was put forth in 1844 as a potential missionary. The Baptist Home Mission Society of the convention refused to ordain him. The Alabama Resolutions affirmed the right of slaveholders to serve as missionaries and rejected the jurisdiction of the Home Mission Society. These were subsequently sent out to Baptists in every slave-holding state leading up to the historic gathering in Augusta, GA in 1845. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed. The northern Baptists inherited the Triennial Convention, which became the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907.

among Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists of the mid-nineteenth century.

The connections outside of Alabama were equally significant. Many highly educated and bright thinkers came to teach at one of the two colleges. Aspiring Baptist ministers came to Howard to be trained for pastoral ministry while influential Baptist women came to Judson—one of the first colleges in America for women.<sup>2</sup> Mission Board personnel shuttled in and out of Marion for their duties until it was relocated in 1882 to Atlanta; and the *Alabama Baptist* heralded the news of the Baptist work across the state from this small town. The common Sunday experience for all was that they worshiped at Siloam—where the pastor was one of the most notable in the state, and the church demonstrated an exemplary synthesis of Charleston and Sandy Creek traditions.

### **A Brief History**

When Charles Crow (1770–1845) constituted Siloam Baptist Church in June 1822, Perry County was no more than a few log cabins in the heart of the state. The town of Marion and the church were constituted within a few weeks of each other. Alabama had just been admitted to the union a few years earlier in 1819 ushering in rapid growth from the eastern seaboard. Crow was a Separate Baptist from Bush River Baptist Church in Newberry, South Carolina, where he had been saved in the revival of 1802 during the Second Great Awakening.<sup>3</sup> Many of these revival converts moved to Perry County almost two decades later to establish the Ocmulgee Baptist Church near Selma in 1820

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<sup>2</sup> Howard began primarily as a literary college but in January 1844, a professor of theology was hired. Its purpose was to train ministers who were badly needed for the rapidly expanding Baptist work in Alabama (Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* [Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998], 59.) John R. Sampey, fifth president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was trained at Howard College (Julie Murfee Lovelace, *A History of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, Alabama* [Marion, AL: Julia Murfee Lovelace, 1943], 1) and (Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 56). It should also be noted that higher education was not highly esteemed in Alabama at the time and establishing and supporting a college in Alabama was challenging, especially for ministry.

<sup>3</sup> The *Alabama Baptist* called Crow's doctrine that "of the high Calvinistic order, yet not ultra" (History of Siloam, *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, September 12, 1849, microfilm.)

with Crow as their pastor. The Siloam Women's Society of Marion contacted Crow about starting a church there. Residents were becoming "increasingly concerned" about the "moral status of the inhabitants of [wicked] Marion. Open bar rooms, bawdy houses, street fights, were common in this frontier town."<sup>4</sup> Western Alabama consisted of thick forests and almost every building was some form of a log cabin. Julia Lovelace records the words of W. B. Crumpton describing Marion at the time Crow arrived:

Imagine, if you can, a thickly wooded fertile section at a crossroads, a shack of a store nearby. That would about describe the place where the fine old town of Marion now stands. A crossroads church was soon established. Perhaps it was not hard to build, as labor and logs were in abundance.<sup>5</sup>

Hosea Holcombe (1780–1841), one of several who migrated from South Carolina writes, "Houses for the worship of God were scarce for several years after the writer came to [Alabama] in 1818, and many of those erected were more like Indian wigwams than anything else, only they were more open and uncomfortable."<sup>6</sup> When the weather permitted it was common for some Alabama pastors to meet outside under a shade tree rather than suffer the accommodations of early Baptist churches. Crow pastored Siloam for its first eight years, along with his pastorate at nearby Hopewell. "There were few

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<sup>4</sup> J. Hugh LeBaron, *Sketches from the Life of Charles Crow 1770–1845* (J. Hugh LeBaron, 1995), n.p., accessed January 1, 2015, <http://www.angelfire.com/al2/crowe/sketches.html>. "From records available, it appears nine persons were present when the church was organized. A meeting house was erected on a quarter acre of land set aside for churches in Marion, and the congregation received title to it on June 4, 1824. Here Charles preached one weekend a month for the next eight years. It would be less than objective to call his ministry at Siloam Church a success. He did not reform 'wicked' Marion as he intended. The people there did not respond significantly to his ministry."

<sup>5</sup> Lovelace, *History of Siloam*, 3. Washington B. Crumpton (1842–1926) was executive secretary of the State Mission Board of Alabama for twenty-five years and delivered the Centennial Address in recognition of the one hundredth anniversary of the church in 1922. He lived in Marion for the last ten years that the Home Mission Board was located in Marion (1872–1882).

<sup>6</sup> Hosea Holcombe, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Alabama* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1840), 43. Holcombe was president of the Alabama Baptist Convention from 1833–1838. He was asked to write a historical account of Baptists in Alabama, during which time he travelled widely throughout the state collecting information to write this volume.

pastors in Perry County at this time, and every minister served several churches.”<sup>7</sup>

Crow’s name is associated with at least five churches during this time, and as a result preached at Siloam only once a month—a common practice for Baptist churches then.

Sandy Creek-styled camp meeting revivals broke out in Alabama in the 1830s. Holcombe writes, “In the course of the last year [1831–1832], revivals have been experienced in many parts of the state: the Lord has, by the outpouring of his spirit, visited the people in [many] counties . . . [including] Perry.”<sup>8</sup> Holcombe was a member of a church that experienced this revival in central Alabama, near Marion.

The first camp-meeting, perhaps ever known in Alabama, was held with the church, where the writer has his membership. This meeting took place about the first of October, 1831, it continued for five or six days, and twelve or fifteen families tented on the ground. Here the Lord made bare his arm, and displayed his power in the salvation of many precious souls. The groans and cries of repenting sinners, the songs and prayers, the shouts and praises of Christians, formed an awful, yet delightful harmony. At this meeting there commenced the greatest general revival, ever known at that time, in middle Alabama; it continued over twelve months; during which period there were near 500 baptized in three or four churches.<sup>9</sup>

Three relatively brief pastorates passed before the arrival of Siloam’s most notable pastor—James H. DeVotie. William Calloway (who founded the church with Crow and continued as pastor from 1830–1833 after he left), James Veazy (served 1833–1835), and Peter Crawford (served 1835–1840), all served during this remarkable period of revival

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<sup>7</sup> Lovelace, *History of Siloam*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 45. Holcombe lists sixteen Alabama counties but most were in the middle of the state around Perry County. Marion is the county seat of Perry County.

<sup>9</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 45. This revival occurred in the winter of 1831 into 1832. “From that time camp-meetings became common among the Baptists in different parts of the state; yet some churches disapprove of the course. That there was extravagance at some of those meetings, we think few will deny yet there was much good done. It was not unusual, to have a large portion of the congregation, prostrated on the ground; and in some instances they appeared to have lost the use of their limbs. No distinct articulation could be heard; screams, cries, groans, shouts, notes of grief, and notes of joy, all heard at the same time, made much confusion, a sort of indescribable concert. At associations, and other great meetings, where there were several ministers present, many of them would exercise their gifts at the same time, in different parts of the congregations; some in exhortation, others in praying for the distressed; and others again, in argument with opposers. A number of the preachers did not approve of this kind of work: they thought it extravagant. Others fanned it as fire from heaven.”

and growth for the church. Though church records from this time were lost or destroyed by fire, town records record the deed to Siloam of a two-acre tract set aside for churches in 1833. S. A. Townes, in *The History of Marion* (1844), writes, “The Baptists have one of the most elegant and tasty houses of worship in the state, erected in 1837 at a cost of \$7,000.00.”<sup>10</sup> Of this time period Holcombe writes,

Siloam—this church has been one of the most prosperous in the state, is situated in the beautiful little town of Marion, Perry County . . . This church has prospered very much recently, and is, perhaps the largest in the state, except the African church in Huntsville. There are a number of respectable, liberal, and intelligent brethren here; and many of the females are among the precious ones of the earth . . . [This church] built for themselves a house of worship, which cost them eight or nine thousand dollars, besides a number of other liberal subscriptions, and donations for other purposes, which were given about the same time. They likewise pay their pastor \$800 to \$1000 annually. In the last two years, there have been about 100 baptized.<sup>11</sup>

During these years the Alabama State Convention met at Siloam three times and met there almost every other year during DeVotie’s tenure as pastor. Lovelace summarizes, “The prominence and influence of Siloam Church from the time of its organization is attested by the frequency with which the Alabama Baptist Convention met in Marion.”<sup>12</sup>

James Harvey DeVotie (1813–1891) was born in Oneida County, New York. His mother was Presbyterian and his father was “an irreligious farmer.” He was converted in 1830 and moved to Savannah, GA the following year to live with his uncle who was a Baptist. He was baptized and licensed to preach at First Baptist Church in Savannah. He then attended Furman Theological Seminary for less than two years and pastored the Baptist church at Camden while a student there. At the age of twenty, he served the FBC of Montgomery for one year and then FBC of Tuscaloosa for four years

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<sup>10</sup> S. A. Townes, *The History of Marion: Sketches of Life, etc. in Perry County, Alabama* (1844; repr., Marion, AL: A. H. Cather Publishing Co, 1985), 26.

<sup>11</sup> Holcombe, *A History*, 146.

<sup>12</sup> Lovelace, *History of Siloam*, 10.

before coming to Siloam in 1840.<sup>13</sup> Basil Manly Sr. and DeVotie crossed paths several times as they “both had South Carolina connections; both pastored congregations in Montgomery and Tuscaloosa; [and] both became prominent figures in the Alabama and Southern Baptist Conventions.”<sup>14</sup> DeVotie’s early days of ministry were marked with contentious and divisive incidents, some with Manly. He withdrew from Furman “after writing insulting letters to one of the professors.” At both Montgomery and Tuscaloosa “DeVotie proved to be a fractious, opinionated man whose pastorates were both stormy and generally successful.” He was dismissed from the pastorate at Montgomery and finally resigned from the Tuscaloosa post in 1839, questioning his call to the pastorate. “Despite his zeal, eloquence, and enterprise (plus two marvelous revivals during his four-year pastorate), some well-educated University of Alabama officials in the congregation criticized his lack of scholarly credentials.”<sup>15</sup> Manly—then president of the University of Alabama—filled in as interim pastor after DeVotie left. Manly likely had helped force DeVotie’s resignation after two years of criticizing the job he did there.<sup>16</sup>

DeVotie’s tenure at Siloam proved in many ways to be the pinnacle of the church’s history. Not only did he oversee the major accomplishments of the church’s influence in the state and national conventions referenced above, he simultaneously led

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<sup>13</sup> “History of Samford University: Biography,” *Samford University Website*, accessed December 31, 2014, <http://www.samford.edu/universityhistory/biography.aspx>. See also “J. H. DeVotie,” in *The Baptist Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of the Doctrines, Ordinances, Usages, Confessions of Faith, Sufferings, Labors, and Successes of the General History of the Baptist Denomination in All Lands*, ed. William Cathcart (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 321.

<sup>14</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 18–19.

<sup>16</sup> A. James Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 208. Fuller feels that Manly’s criticism of DeVotie was unfair as “typically, once convinced of his own position, [Manly] continued to hold fast to it long after his error had become obvious.” At the same time, Manly had just come from the pastorate of one of the oldest and richest churches in the south—First Baptist Charleston. He was accustomed to the Charleston order of things and the young pastor at First Baptist Tuscaloosa, zealous for the revivals of that day but not for building a new building, was not measuring up to Manly’s experience and expectations.

the church during its greatest period of growth, including the building of the brick building in Greek Revival style that still stands today.<sup>17</sup> Flynt writes of this time period,

In 1840 Marion was a flourishing village of twelve hundred inhabitants and an important hub for a substantial agricultural hinterland. As the center of the northwestern edge of the Black Belt, it served as home for numerous wealthy planters, while others gained wealth in mercantile and real estate businesses. Its citizens (many originally from the Northeast) were as highly regarded for their culture and hospitality as for their wealth. So many of the prominent families were Baptist that a writer from Richmond, Virginia, who visited Marion in 1844 called the town “the Baptist Capital of Alabama.”<sup>18</sup>

Though lacking the completion of formal education, DeVotie possessed vision, dynamic leadership skills, and a hearty work ethic. Under his leadership, Siloam reached such prominence that it was said that she was “the strongest Baptist church west of Augusta.”<sup>19</sup> DeVotie left several volumes of his personal journals and hundreds of handwritten sermons, demonstrating his sound theological acumen, thorough hermeneutical skill, deep religious piety, and a remarkably wide acquaintance with devotional literature, including hymnody, from which he often cited.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Windsor estimates that he baptized at least 1,500 in his ministry (“Preaching Up a Storm from 1839 to 1889,” *Alabama Baptist Historian* 29 [January 1993]: 13–20, quoted in Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 18). Membership at Siloam when he arrived in 1840 was 285. When he departed in 1854 it had increased to 676, the largest in Siloam’s history. The building was built and dedicated in 1849 (see Lovelace, *History of Siloam*, 15).

<sup>18</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 55–56. The citation is from January 6, 1844 edition of the *Alabama Baptist*. A great part of the financial backing of these endeavors was from Julia Ann Tarrant Barron, a wealthy widow and prosperous Marion businesswoman and planter. She was cofounder of Judson and Howard Colleges as well as the early benefactor and co-owner of the *Alabama Baptist*. She donated the land upon which Siloam Baptist Church sits. After the Civil War her fortunes declined precipitously. Her son died in 1868 and her daughter-in-law died in 1875, leaving two granddaughters for her to raise alone. She had to sell her house and died in 1890 at age eighty-four, “impoverished and largely forgotten by the Baptists who owed her such a huge debt” (58). During DeVotie’s pastorate, membership increased from 285 in 1840 to 676 in 1854 and the church built a stately brick church building in the Greek Revival Style in 1849 to accommodate the growth. This was the highest membership in Siloam’s history.

<sup>19</sup> Mabel Ponder Wilson, Dorothy Youngblood Woodyerd and Rosa Lee Busy, *Some Early Alabama Churches (Established before 1870)* (Birmingham, AL: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1973), 139.

<sup>20</sup> First Baptist Church of Savannah apparently spent “an hour, or two” on Sunday evenings “agreeably spent in practicing vocal music in all its parts.” It is not clear if this was a select group of singers or the entire church, but the pastor, Henry Holcombe, reported it in the journal he edited. The

## Theology in Practice

Flynt describes the general theology of early Alabama Baptists' in this manner, "Although the expression of their faith was altered in time by the graft of a new frontier culture, the seed they planted was doctrinally ancient and uniform." Specifically, "The principles were straightforward, generally Calvinistic in theology and Baptist in tradition." Though reluctant to adhere to anything called a "creed," they often wrote a statement of principles, confession, articles or abstracts of faith, or constitution to define their local church expression's beliefs. These were essentially uniform and often borrowed from one another. They were unashamedly Trinitarian and stood firmly upon the authority of the word of God, which "constituted their only rule of faith and practice."<sup>21</sup> The gospel formed the central message of the church. They practiced two ordinances of baptism and communion, with controversy in a few places over laying on of hands and foot washing. Communion was closed except to baptized church members in good standing (e.g., not under church discipline).

Given this rather broad generalization of Baptist theology in nineteenth-century Alabama, it is no surprise that closer inspection reveals the results of the dynamic synthesis of competing theologies that came out of the eighteenth century. Holcombe writes in 1840, "We have no doubt, that in a very few years, there were emigrants from more than half the states in the Union; and among those emigrants were Baptists; whose customs, manners, and views . . . were considerably discordant."<sup>22</sup> While the connections

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report is from 1802, so it is not clear if this was still the practice when DeVotie arrived in 1830, but it demonstrates that the congregational singing in his first Baptist church experience was quite involved and potentially advanced. He likely became acquainted with Baptist hymnody here. (See *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1/4 [November/December 1802], 185, quoted in David W. Music and Paul A. Richardson, "I Will Sing the Wondrous Story:" *A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008], 97.)

<sup>21</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 58–59.

to the Calvinistic tradition of Charleston were present through pastors such as Manly, Holcombe, and DeVotie,<sup>23</sup> as at Sandy Creek, the camp meeting revivals tended to push some pastors and churches toward a revivalistic methodology more in line with Arminianism. Holcombe explains,

Some ministers . . . have been too fond, perhaps, of working on the human passions—too anxious to make a noise, and raise a ferment; and then too easily satisfied with the relation of those who profess their faith, in order to baptism. Hence many are received into our churches, who have no correct views whatever of their sins being pardoned through the blood of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Flynt writes, “No biblical dispute shaped early Alabama Baptists so profoundly as Calvinism . . . . Although Baptists were Calvinists in the general sense of the term, they modified the doctrine.”<sup>25</sup> In 1844, Basil Manly wrote the annual circular letter of the Tuscaloosa Association on Article Three of its Abstract of Principles: “We believe in the doctrine of election; and that God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the World.”<sup>26</sup> In doing so, Manly laid out the Scriptural foundations of the doctrine of election, but also added an emphasis upon individual effort and responsibility. “Manly’s emphasis upon human exertion and individual response reflected the powerful influence of revivalism on early Alabama Baptist thought.”<sup>27</sup> Holcombe observes, “With regard to

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<sup>23</sup> DeVotie was baptized at FBC Savannah, A “Charleston Tradition” church under the teaching of Henry O. Wyer who was ordained by William T. Brantly and James Shannon. DeVotie was trained at Furman and referenced both the First and Second London Confessions in his personal journals. (See James DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” Handwritten Journals, vol. 1, Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 183.)

<sup>24</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 47. Holcombe referenced a “Mr. T——,” who while “Mr. H——” was preaching, was very noisy. “For it was a privilege which he allowed himself, to sing, pray, or exhort, while another was engaged in the same exercise” (46–47).

<sup>25</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 47.

<sup>26</sup> Basil Manly, “Circular Letter,” 1844, reprinted, *Alabama Baptist*, June 30, July 3, 1930. Manly’s effort was to develop a compromise between Calvinist and Arminians. Manly’s clarification here enabled Arminians and “strict-Calvinists” to unite in missions work, benevolence, and revivalism. Hyper-Calvinism on the other hand, developed into the Anti-Missions movement among Baptists in Alabama (and other states), particularly Primitive Baptists.

<sup>27</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 27. “If Charleston, South Carolina, provides the clearest ancestry

their doctrinal views, [pastors] have been considerably diverse; in general they have appeared to occupy what is termed the middle ground; or in other words, embraced the system of Dr. Fuller.”<sup>28</sup> DeVotie reflected this type of modified Calvinism, but from the perspective of having experienced revival, rather than simply giving theological ascent to the possibility. One of Manly’s disagreements with DeVotie was the accusation that DeVotie had “thrown himself into revivalism” while in Tuscaloosa.<sup>29</sup>

DeVotie’s sermons were consistently organized and ordered in the same manner. A single verse or brief passage served as the text for the message. An introduction led to an exegetical outline of the body of his sermon. DeVotie derived his sermon outline from the shape of his text. Flynt describes his preaching in this manner:

James DeVotie began sermons with a text, studied every word, determined the central doctrine or truth involved, compared the text to other Scriptures to assure conformity with central biblical teachings, read commentaries and sermons about the passage to eliminate possible errors in his own understanding, selected illustrations, then wrote “pretty full notes.”<sup>30</sup>

He left numerous journals that were essentially examples of the same process of exegetical work as he developed his personal theology and spirituality. Each section was prefaced with a focal Scripture text that he worked through in the following pages. Some of these sections went on for ten or twenty pages as he worked through different angles on a single verse. He also included related verses, quotes from other books, and hymn

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for Calvinism, Sandy Creek, North Carolina, lays firmest claim to the revival tradition. Ardent, charismatic, emotional, independent, Biblicist, the Sandy Creek tradition merged elements of both Calvinism and Arminianism.” Alabama was one of many merging points for both Charleston and Sandy Creek traditions.

<sup>28</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 59. Holcombe lists Antinomianism, Campbellism, Arminianism, Universalism, and Hyper-Calvinism as also being represented among Alabama pastors: “We are firmly of the opinion, that there has been a considerable number of ministers in Alabama, who have in some respect departed from the old Baptist foundation, in fact, from the Scriptures, in their doctrine *views*, and sometimes in their preaching. But in the main, we believe they advance good doctrine” (emphasis Holcombe’s).

<sup>29</sup> Fuller, *Basil Manly*, 208.

<sup>30</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 152.

texts that related to the text. Many times he cut these proof texts out of a spare Bible and pasted them into his journal. He did the same with illustrations with from other sources and hymn texts. There are places in his journal where he breaks into doxological praise upon reflecting on a particular thought or revelation. His journals are a record of his scriptural and theological growth, but also that of his personal piety. He appears to have had a dynamic relationship with God that was as doxological as it was theological.

### **The Practice of Worship**

DeVotie advocated personal and public worship. While unbelievers were present, public worship was primarily for the believer. In his journal he wrote, “How can any one commune [with God] but a regenerate person? Unbelievers cannot discern the Lord’s body.” He stated the need to only permit baptized believers into the membership of the church and to maintain a converted church membership, in attempting to follow the pattern of the apostolic church. He was insistent that church members needed to be in worship on the Lord’s Day. Additionally, preparation for worship was an important part of worship. “The absence of proper preparation on the part of the hearer makes many an interesting discourse to him . . . Who enters God’s house expecting to hear what God the Lord will speak for he will speak peace unto his people.” At the same time he encouraged unsaved attendees to be attentive listeners as well, reflecting shades of revivalism: “A careless listener may loose [*sic*], what saves another man’s soul by his side . . . An inattentive soul may perish of thirst at the very fountainhead of salvation.”<sup>31</sup>

In his instructions regarding seeking God’s presence, he cautioned that worshipers needed to do so “under a full sense of our sinfulness . . . Sin must be seen, felt, and turned from . . . He that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy.” The topic of

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<sup>31</sup> James DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” Handwritten Journals, vol. 1, Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 177, 180, 217–18. He references 1 Pet 2:5–9 regarding worship and the believer.

sin and confession is a prominent one in his journals. One wonders how this was represented in worship outside of his preaching. Clearly he wanted his people to evaluate his or her life for sin and bring that to the cross. He wrote to himself, “God will abundantly pardon . . . Repentance and remission of sins must be preached in the name of Jesus.”<sup>32</sup> A Christ-centered gospel is for everyone present in worship:

His warnings of danger, his threatenings against sin, are for each of us—His promises, his doctrines, his comforting belong to each believing soul. The bread of life spread out before you is prepared for each. He says, eat my friends—in faith spiritually eat of his body, and drink of his blood. For his body is meat, indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Let the sincere honest inquiry of each soul be, Lord is it for me, Lord is it I—The gospel deals with us; our neighbors, and brethren, are hearing for themselves. We may not apply to them, that which belongs to ourselves. Take heed what ye hear. Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me.<sup>33</sup>

He knew where to take his sin and he wanted his people to do the same. Confession led to the cross, which positioned the confessor before Christ. He was the provision and the reward. The gospel was the means. Later in his journal he included a lengthy section regarding the principle of worship: “Give to God the Glory due. Worship Him. Men may give Glory to God. His nature and perfections demand glory and praise from all creation. Perfectness of character even elicits expressions of admiration . . . . But O’ what wonderful perfection in God challenge [sic] our songs of praise.” He listed some of those aspects of God’s perfection: wisdom, power, love, creation, providence, health, authority, and again, ultimately the gospel:

He deserves Glory in the highest for his works of grace and salvation. His love for miserable sinners. The sacrifice of God’s only Son. Wonder angels! Wonder devils! Praise him, praise him ye blood bought ye redeemed of earth. Sin forgiven. Sinners cleansed. Regeneration, justification, the death of the righteous [sic], the resurrection of the just. Communion with God forever—heaven—Glory, Glory, highest glory.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” 1:285, 292.

<sup>33</sup> DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” 1:224–25.

<sup>34</sup> DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” 1:373–78.

He seemed to lose himself in rapturous praise as he delighted in the beauty and worthiness of God revealed by the gospel. The benefit of worship was in reflecting upon the joy of salvation that “excels all joy.” The joy of the gospel was one of knowing God!

Worship needed to be offered in holiness, spirituality, knowledge and feeling. “The mind and heart must be full of the knowledge of God to ‘Give the glory due unto his name.’” DeVotie was characterized as an emotional individual<sup>35</sup> and that emotion was likely on full display in worship. The passion and emotion of the private worshiper certainly overflowed in public. He concluded with a prayer for his church, written on the morning of corporate worship: “Spirit divine help us thus to worship while we stand in thy presence. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit help us to worship in the beauty of holiness today.”<sup>36</sup>

The early Baptist view of the Sabbath was that “it ought to be observed and set apart for the worship of God, and that no work or worldly business ought to be done thereon. Works of pity and necessity only exceptions.”<sup>37</sup> Avery Reid writes of worship around the time Siloam was founded:

Preaching was commonly held only on one Saturday and Sunday in each month, and the people came on foot or horseback for miles around. Following a shorter sermon on Saturday, a church conference was held. In this conference there was a report on the fellowship and conduct of the members. Attempts were made to settle differences between members, and those who had evidenced misconduct were called on to acknowledge their errors and request forgiveness.

This is likely what DeVotie referred to as preparing for worship. The Articles of Faith for Siloam, written in the 1850s, required all male members to attend regular conferences

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<sup>35</sup> Fuller, *Basil Manly*, 208.

<sup>36</sup> DeVotie, “Personal Journal,” 1:379–81.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the Enon Baptist Church of Christ, 1–2, quoted in Avery Hamilton Reid, *Baptists in Alabama: Their Organization and Witness* (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Baptist State Convention, 1967), 14. Enon Baptist Church was established in 1809 as the second Baptist church founded in Alabama. Flint River Baptist Church was founded in 1808 (11–12). This is from Article 7 from the Articles of Faith of Enon Church. The articles also clearly affirm closed communion.

in Article XII. These meetings were to ensure that a pure and repentant church body was prepared for worship in addition to carrying out the business of the church. Membership in the church required a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “giving credible evidence of a change of heart, adopting the views of Faith and Practice held by the church, and baptism.” Transfers from other churches “holding the same Faith may be received by letters of dismissal from their respected churches.” An objection from a current church member could keep someone from being allowed to join the church. “Excluded members may be restored on confession of their errors and giving evidence of their repentance” according to Article X. Article XV outlines the requirements for external conduct and the potential of church discipline as a response to “immoral unscriptural amusements or acts in social business life or characters inconsistent in the judgment of this church with the becoming Christian deportment.”<sup>38</sup>

Reid also describes singing at the time: “The Sunday morning worship service was usually two hours or more in length with much singing and a sermon of an hour or more. Only a few hymnbooks were had, and they contained only the lyrics, which the leader would read one line at a time.” This was the process known as “lining out the hymn.” “Then the congregation would lustily join in singing the old familiar hymns by memory.”<sup>39</sup> Flynt adds, “Worship services in nineteenth-century Alabama Baptist churches were simple and infrequent.” The services and the hymnody were both very casual. Preachers typically carried both a Bible and hymnal to be ready to sing. “Collections of hymns by Watts, Dorsey [*sic*], Rippon, and [Mercer’s] Cluster were favorites,” though Hosea Holcombe and Basil Manly compiled collections. Singing was

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<sup>38</sup> “The Constitution of Siloam Baptist Church,” (typewritten copy), Siloam Baptist Church Parlor Collection of Historical Artifacts, Marion, AL. “Written during the 1850s” is handwritten at the top of the typewritten copy.

<sup>39</sup> Reid, *Baptists in Alabama*, 17–18.

usually animated and loud, although confusion ensued at times resulting from lining out the verses. “Some could not remember the words and mumbled their own version.”<sup>40</sup>

DeVotie quotes numerous hymn texts in his sermons and journals. He often concludes a sermon with a hymn text, probably read but possibly sung. The hymns quoted in DeVotie’s writing potentially give some clues regarding what may have been sung in his church. Isaac Watts, “We’re Marching to Zion,” Timothy Dwight’s, “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord,” Samuel Stennett’s, “How Charming is the Place (The Mercy Seat)” and “Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned,” William Hammond’s, “Awake, and Sing the Song,” Joseph Hart’s “Come, Holy Spirit, Come,” John Newton’s, “Amazing Grace,” Anna Barbould’s “Our Country is Immanuel’s Ground,” Charlotte Elliott’s “Just as I Am,” Joseph’s Grigg’s “Behold a Stranger’s at the Door,” and Michael Bruce’s “Where High the Heavenly Temple Stands” are just a handful of examples from his notes. They represent a broad range of worship songs, representing the synthesis of Charleston and Sandy Creek. The synthesis required songs for both edification and evangelism.

If Siloam was not using Rippon’s collection of Watts<sup>41</sup> before DeVotie’s arrival, they may have used one of two other popular Baptist hymnbooks in the south in the early nineteenth century. Henry S. Burrage believes H. Miller’s *New Selection of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* (1835) and W. C. Buck’s *The Baptist Hymn Book*

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<sup>40</sup> Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 11–12. Should be Dossey’s *Choice* and Mercer’s *Cluster*. “One piece of religious folklore from northwestern Alabama recalls a hapless pastor who announced that he would line out the words to ‘On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand.’ He reached for his glasses, but did not have them. Facing the congregation, he explained, ‘My eyes are dim, I cannot see; I left my specs at home.’ The congregation dutifully sang his words which fit the hymn’s meter” (12–13, Flynt is citing an incident from Russellville First Baptist Church).

<sup>41</sup> Published and recommended by Philadelphia Baptists in 1820 and again with significant improvements in 1827. They may have been using William Dossey’s *The Choice: in Two Parts*, recommended by the North Carolina Baptist Convention in 1834, or Jesse Mercer’s *The Cluster of Spiritual Songs*, popular in Georgia where Mercer was president of the Georgia Baptist Convention. But it is more likely that they were using Hosea Holcombe’s *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* (1815) or some collection of Watts and Rippon before using *The Psalmist* and/or *Baptist Psalmody*.

(1842) were the most frequently used hymnbooks in the south.<sup>42</sup> It is likely that Siloam used *The Psalmist* (1843)<sup>43</sup> after DeVotie's arrival. The *Alabama Baptist* printed numerous ads, endorsements from other papers, and finally a lengthy endorsement of its own after a thorough evaluation of the hymnal: "We earnestly commend *The Psalmist* to the attention of pastor and churches."<sup>44</sup> Given DeVotie's role on the editorial board, the "we" seems to include him, and likely Siloam as well. Later, *Baptist Psalmody* (1850) became a popular hymnal in the south.<sup>45</sup> S. F. Stow, one of the editors of *The Psalmist*, was an outspoken abolitionist, which caused some in the south to reject that hymnal during a time when the slavery issue was a boiling cauldron of controversy. *Baptist Psalmody* was the southern response to *The Psalmist*, which also had left out a number of the most popular hymns for Southern Baptists:

In accordance with a request of the Tuscaloosa Association, at its late session, the undersigned propose to publish a Hymn Book adapted to the use of Baptist Churches in the South. We design it to contain unaltered, the old hymns, precious to the children of God by long use, and familiarized to them in many a season of perplexity and temptation as well as spiritual joy. We shall also add such other hymns of more recent date as seem worthy to be associated with the former, in order

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<sup>42</sup> Henry S. Burrage, *Baptists Hymn Writers and their Hymns* (Portland, ME: Brown Thurston, 1888), 652, 654. It is not apparent that Siloam was using Buck.

<sup>43</sup> Baron Stow and S. F. Smith, eds., *The Psalmist: A New Collection of Hymns for the Use of The Baptist Churches* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1845). First edition was published in 1843.

<sup>44</sup> *The Psalmist*, *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, January 8, 1847. "There are admirable Hymns on all the great Doctrines of the Bible, as depravity, the atonement, repentance, regeneration, by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, election, perseverance of the saints . . . There are also great numbers of Hymns of peculiar excellence adapted to Revivals, Camp Meetings, Protracted Meetings, Prayer Meetings, Conferences, and Family Worship."

<sup>45</sup> Basil Manly and Basil Manly, Jr., eds., *The Baptist Psalmody: A Selection of Hymns for the Worship of God* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1850). Minutes from the Southern Baptist Convention, Tuesday, May 12, 1851: "Whereas, the Southern Baptist Publication Society has published a hymnbook entitled, 'The Baptist Psalmody,' which by its evangelical character and general excellence is eminently adapted to the purpose for which it was prepared; and whereas the extensive circulation of the book will contribute materially to the Treasury of the Society: *Resolved*, That the Baptist Psalmody be recommended to be used in offering their songs of praise to the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost." *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in Nashville, Tennessee, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>* (Richmond, VA, 1851), 16. DeVotie was present at that convention serving as the president of the Board of Domestic Missions (located in Marion, AL) and as a messenger for Siloam.

to make a complete Hymn Book for public and private worship [*sic*].<sup>46</sup> It was edited and published by Basil Manly, Sr. and Basil Manly, Jr. (1825–1892) from nearby Tuscaloosa, making it more likely that it eventually found its way to Marion.<sup>47</sup> Both collections contain a similar organization and categorization of hymns by topical themes as well as by special occasion or service. Both also include a substantial Scripture index, demonstrating the continuing practice of attempting to match a closing hymn to the sermon text of the day. Topical themes and the order of the hymns are arranged in order of doctrinal priority: attributes of God, acts of God, worship of God, Trinity, Christ, and the Holy Spirit make up the first two hundred and eighty-four hymns. There are one hundred and eighty-three hymns related to the gospel and salvation that come soon after. There are also hymns specifically included for baptism and the Lord's Supper. A few hymns listed are for revival, and a number of hymns are intended to be used as the unbeliever's response to the gospel. However, the vast majority of the one thousand two hundred and ninety-five hymns are for believers to sing in worship. There also are a number of doxologies at the end of the hymnal that could be spoken or sung and were often used at the end of sermons or addresses.<sup>48</sup> Certain hymns are clearly suited for opening a service while others are obviously hymns of response and closing. There are also songs of confession and gospel summary in both. These may indicate a pattern of usage and emphasis in congregational singing.

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<sup>46</sup> Basil Manly and Basil Manly, Jr., "A New Hymn Book," *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, 31 (July 1849), text in Donald Clark Measels, "A Catalog of Source Readings in Southern Baptist Church Music: 1828–1890," vol. 2 (D.M.A. project, Louisville, Kentucky: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 152.

<sup>47</sup> While one of the hymns cited above from DeVotie's journals was found in *The Psalmist* and not in *Baptist Psalmody* ("Our Country is Immanuel's Ground"), the rest were found either in both or only in *Baptist Psalmody* (five of eleven were only in the latter). The cutout verses were of the font size and type of *Baptist Psalmody*. The two hymnbooks are structured very similarly and the primary difference is in the content of hymns favored in the South.

<sup>48</sup> *A Dictionary of Hymnology: Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of all Ages and Nations*, s.v. "doxologies," ed. John Julian (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1892), 308.

It appears from the records that remain that a choir was used at Siloam from the earliest days of DeVotie's pastorate—perhaps even before DeVotie arrived. When the new building was opened in September 1849, it included galleries on three sides for the choir. This indicates a prominent use of the choir prior to this time. There was some public debate about the choir at this time so it was not an accepted practice yet, at least not without some contention. The *Alabama Baptist* records a hypothetical argument over the use of the choir specifically at Siloam, revealing the type of disagreement at the time. In this imaginary dialogue, a church member is complaining about the singing going on above his head and not knowing whether or not he should sing along. He equates their being seated above his head in the gallery with his perception of an attitude of them being above him. The paper writes in response to Brother B.,

The members of the choir are servants of the congregation, laboring for the edification and enjoyment—spending their own time and money to make the services of the Sanctuary most pleasant for others . . . [Brother B. threatens to go to another church] Well brother B. if you think you are too good to worship with your brethren here, you should go off to some church where you will find better men—men more worthy of your Christian fellowship.

The quoted response is signed “Asaph.” The article goes on to cite the use of choirs in Baptist churches in Charleston, Richmond and Baltimore, as well as the use of organs to assist in the music at Charleston and Baltimore. It also encourages Brother B. to sing with them: “No one has told you that you cannot sing.”<sup>49</sup> The purpose of the choir was to help worshipers such as Brother B. sing, as congregational singing was very weak in most churches of this time.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Choirs, *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, October 31, 1849, microfilm.

<sup>50</sup> A Choir and Music committee was formed in 1879 to attempt to improve congregational singing by improving an existing choir. “The duty of this Committee shall be to have in view the worship of God in his praises, and to devise and carry out such measures as will result in a more general, prompt, and regular attendance upon the various meetings of our church on the part of the choir, and to use all of their ability and influence to promote congregational singing, and thus improve this much neglected part of the worship of God, in our congregation” “Plan of Church Work, Adopted by Siloam Baptist Church, March 30, 1879,” Siloam Baptist Church Parlor Collection of Historical Artifacts, Marion, AL. Though

Scripture reading may have been a part of the service in more than just reading the sermon text before the sermon. Lee Allen writes of the practice of the day of numerous Alabama churches, “The Scripture reading often taken from both the Old and New Testaments, was a vital part of the service. In an era marked by illiteracy, many knew only those portions of the Bible which were read to them.” Additionally, “Lengthy pastoral prayers were expected.”<sup>51</sup> People did not feel that they were getting their money’s worth—from pew rent—if they were not in church for at least two hours.

The central event of the worship service was preaching. In many instances, if there was no preaching there was no service. Services focused on hearing and speaking the word of God. DeVotie could be fully devoted to Siloam so they met weekly for worship. As mentioned above, DeVotie’s preaching was well prepared. He took for his text a single verse or short passage that he could thoroughly exegete. He does not appear to have preached through books of the Bible, but must have selected a text for the day. The text was probably read formally to begin the sermon and the outline of the sermon was structured around the main points of the text.<sup>52</sup> Doctrine, illustrations, proof texts,

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some choirs eventually took over the singing in the service, the expressly written purpose of Siloam’s choir at the time was to improve congregational singing.

<sup>51</sup> Lee N. Allen, *The First 150 Years: Montgomery’s First Baptist Church, 1829–1979* (Montgomery, AL: First Baptist Church, 1979), 13. Allen also confirms the expectation of a minimum two-hour service with the sermon being at least an hour. Additionally, he confirms the practice of the regular church conference on Saturday to include prayer, Scripture reading, and preaching, as well as the business of church membership. FBC Montgomery adopted *The Psalmist* for congregational singing in 1844 and after Basil Manly, Sr. arrived as pastor, he convinced them to adopt *Baptist Psalmody* in 1861. The Civil War having just begun he described the former as having been “owned and published in a *foreign country*” (43, 76; emphasis Allen’s).

<sup>52</sup> A written account by a Mr. Huntingdon, elder of the Marion Presbyterian Church, describes the nature of the sermon as preached by one of DeVotie’s successors, W. T. Winkler. His experience may give some sense of the decorum and expectations for preaching during DeVotie’s tenure. He attended a service at Siloam on August 25, 1872 because his minister was out of town and Huntingdon was “pleased and gratified.” The sermon was “Fight the Good Fight of Faith,” based upon 1 Timothy 6:12. He describes Winkler as possessing good enunciation and his “quotations and illustrations appropriate and impressive” (“A Tribute to Dr. Edwin T. Winkler, August 25, 1872,” Handwritten note, Siloam Baptist Church Parlor Collection of Historical Artifacts, Marion, AL)

and application were interspersed with each point. His outlines ranged between six and eight pages and he left some room for extemporaneous additions, though the structure and main points of the sermon were prepared in his study. Communion occurred quarterly according to later records.

### **Summary**

The worship at Siloam Baptist Church during DeVotie's pastorate was a remarkable example of what was occurring in Baptist churches all over Alabama and across the country at this time. The synthesis of Sandy Creek revivalism and Charleston order is reflected in a number of different ways. DeVotie was exposed to the Charleston Tradition at FBC Savannah and Furman University. He was also exposed early in his pastoral career to the revivalism of the 1830s at FBC Tuscaloosa. There Manly accused him of being given too much to it. Siloam was founded by Charles Crow in 1822—a Separate Baptist converted in the Second Great Awakening. In 1872 Edwin T. Winkler became the seventh pastor at Siloam, seventeen years after DeVotie.<sup>53</sup> He had been the pastor at FBC Church of Charleston before the Civil War and his tenure probably signals the finalization of Siloam's migration away from its Separate Baptist and revivalistic frontier beginnings to a refined town church in the Charleston Tradition fifty years later. DeVotie's tenure (1840–1855) falls precisely in the middle of this migration.

The church membership grew through the camp meeting revivals that exploded in the 1830s across Alabama. DeVotie arrived at Siloam as revival was settling and he was maturing. His tenure at Siloam provides a fascinating example of the providential

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<sup>53</sup> Siloam's seventh pastor, Edwin T. Winkler (1823–1883), the second pastor after DeVotie, was previously pastor at FBC Charleston where he served from 1864 until the Civil War. He was educated at Brown University, and Newton Theological Institution. During his tenure and after, the services at Siloam were reflected in stately music, eloquent sermons, and as possessing decorum in the ordinances (Lovelace, *History of Siloam*, 23–39). This connection between Charleston and Marion in 1872 strengthens the argument that Marion had become an example of the "Charleston Tradition in the West."

blending of the two as was demonstrated by the significant growth and influence it represents. The church held to the order of regular church conferences and church discipline when necessary. Sermons were planned and some liturgical order was maintained. At the same time, the church was hungry for gospel growth. DeVotie's emotion and passion brought a gospel zeal that resonated through the church to the lost. The *Alabama Baptist* describes DeVotie as "one of the best preachers in the State, and perhaps, the best agent—active, energetic, and persevering."<sup>54</sup> The tireless piety of the man in his study was reflected in his preaching on Sunday to bring fire from light to his people. As a result, Siloam was a pioneer in mission work and education.

While no *ordo* is cited in detail, the worship service focused on a lengthy expository sermon of God's word, perhaps as long as an hour. DeVotie was skilled in his task behind the pulpit and he worked hard to show his people God through the lens of the gospel. Scripture reading certainly preceded the sermon and probably also occurred earlier in the service through related Old Testament and New Testament texts. Congregational singing was a priority and a choir was utilized to improve it. Marion was a town of culture and refinement, serving as host to Howard College where ministers were taught literature and theology, and Judson Institute where women were trained for a life of service by developing the whole person. The colleges brought to Siloam a level of talent and intelligence not often experienced in most areas of Alabama. Music was eventually improved largely due to the students from Judson who provided skilled singers for the choir and a professor skilled to play the organ and direct the choir.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, many educators, denominational personnel, doctors, lawyers, and storeowners filled the pews each Sunday. There was a requisite for order in the service and it eventually

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<sup>54</sup> James DeVotie, *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, April 17, 1849, microfilm.

<sup>55</sup> Lovelace, *Siloam Baptist Church*, 35.

completed the journey to becoming a church of Charleston Order.

In practicing what has been characterized as “modified Calvinism” (sometimes identified with the Calvinism of Andrew Fuller<sup>56</sup>), DeVotie led the church to become a leader in evangelism and missions, and led its growth to its largest attendance mark in history. Under DeVotie’s leadership, the believer at Siloam came to worship first to apply the gospel to himself and then take it to the world outside the church doors. It was a model of balance in the mid-nineteenth century. The hymns were for the saved; the prayers and Scripture readings were for the saved; and the sermon was for the saved. A time of response was also for the saved. However, everything was done mindful of the reality that the unsaved may also be present in the service, and would be present outside the building. Therefore, the gospel was always presented in a manner to which the unsaved could respond. This represented DeVotie’s pietistic and emotional zeal for God, gospel, and growth. The ethos of the service reflected the heart of the young preacher who worked hard on his sermons for his people, but was also accused of being given too much to revivalism. A potential order of service at Siloam may have looked like the worship order in figure 10.<sup>57</sup>

DeVotie’s writing indicates such a passionate zeal for confession of sin and Christ-centered gospel reflection that these acts had to be present in worship in some way, even if simply in his sermons. He delighted in God and wanted his people to do the same. He knew the impedance of sin to this goal so the gospel was needed every week. As his sermons resonate with these themes, it is probable that his worship leadership

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<sup>56</sup> Holcombe, *Baptists in Alabama*, 50. Holcombe writes, “In general they have appeared to occupy what is termed the middle ground; or in other words, embraced the system of Dr. Fuller.” See also Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> This order is an estimate based upon brief descriptions of worship at Siloam, but also two descriptions of other Baptist churches of the time that were recorded in the Alabama Baptist. See “Dedication of the Tremont Temple” and “Thanksgiving Day in Missouri” in *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, June 6, 1844, microfilm.

Call to Worship/Opening Prayer/Opening Song

Congregational Singing/Choir

Prayer

Scripture Reading

Congregational Singing

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon (with gospel invitation)

Song of Response

Closing Prayer

Figure 10. Potential order of worship at Siloam Baptist Church (Marion, Alabama)

reflected the same. The elements of the gospel model proposed in this study are all present in his writings. Revelation and response; mediation and response; and exhortation and response are each represented in his writing and could have all been present in the proposed order of service above. However, it is unclear if he put them together in that order in public worship. It certainly was gospel-centered and the gospel theme was the overriding theme.

### **Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto (1882–1903)**

While Siloam exhibited broad influence among Alabama Baptists; and Charleston has been heralded as the mother of Southern Baptists; Philadelphia continued to fuel the Baptist expansion well into and through the nineteenth century. Interestingly, the Welsh also continued to play a prevalent subplot role of influence among North American Baptists in many geographical locales. They were among the earliest groups of Baptists near Pennepek (1701). Then a group relocated to Delaware to become the Welsh Tract Church (established ca. 1703). A group from this church split off and relocated to South Carolina and eventually became part of the Charleston Association

(established ca. 1738). Though the influence is much greater than that, the purposes of this study now turn to Baptists in the north. It was also a Welshman who left Philadelphia bound for Toronto in 1882 to serve the people of Jarvis Street Baptist Church during a peak time of its own influence among Canadian Baptists.

### **A Brief History**

The Jarvis Street Church is the oldest Baptist church in Toronto.<sup>58</sup> It was founded in 1818 in a house on Young Street and then the congregation worshiped in a schoolhouse in 1826. From 1827–1831 they worshiped in Market Lane Hall before building a small chapel of their own on the corner of March (now Lombard) and Church Streets in 1832—becoming known as the March Street Baptist Church. At the time the area now called Toronto was known as Upper York.<sup>59</sup> The first thirty years were a struggle, but in 1844 Robert Alexander Fyfe (1816–1878) was called as the fourth pastor of the church. Fyfe was a Scottish emigrant, trained at Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, and had pastored a church in Perth, Ontario before coming to what was then also referred to as the Baptist Church at York.<sup>60</sup> He led them through a period of significant growth and a move to Bond Street. Following the previous practice, the

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<sup>58</sup> For a brief summary of the history of church see Glenn V. Tomlinson and Andrew M. Fountains, eds., *From Strength to Strength: A Pictorial History of Jarvis Street Baptist Church 1818–1993* (Toronto, Gospel Witness Publications, 1993). For the story of its origins see Glenn Tomlinson, *From Scotland to Canada: The Life of Pioneer Missionary Alexander Stewart* (Guelph, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2008), chapter 8.

<sup>59</sup> *The Gospel Witness: A History of Jarvis Street Baptist Church*, DVD (Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 2012). It became the city of Toronto in 1834.

<sup>60</sup> R. A. Fyfe is considered part of the “older generation of Regular Baptists.” For years he was viewed as representing the old Calvinistic theology while liberalism and revivalism began to affect Baptist Calvinistic theology. He was an advocate of close communion. Donald Goertz writes, “Preaching the cross in a Haldane context meant a Calvinistic revival, something firmly reinforced by R. A. Fyfe” (Donald Goertz, “Alexander Grant: Pastor, Evangelist, Visionary,” in *Costly Vision: The Baptist Pilgrimage in Canada*, ed. Jarold K. Zeman [Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Company, 1988], 2). See also F. T. Rosser, “Fyfe, Robert Alexander,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2003), accessed January 9, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/fyfe\\_robert\\_alexander\\_10E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/fyfe_robert_alexander_10E.html).

church became known as the Bond Street Baptist Church in 1848 under the leadership of James Pyper (1807–1884) from Michigan. During his tenure the church quadrupled in size to approximately two hundred and seventy members. From 1855–1860, Fyfe returned to Bond Street Baptist Church after pastorates in Perth, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. During this second tenure he, along with a friend, purchased the *Christian Messenger* in 1859 and renamed it *The Canadian Baptist* the following year.<sup>61</sup> In 1860 he also became the first principal at Woodstock College (then Canadian Literary Institute), along with editing the newly renamed paper.

Thomas F. Caldicott (1803–1869) became pastor in 1860. He had been a member and deacon of the church under R. A. Fyfe when it was on March Street. He employed the practice of “systematic beneficent.” In doing so, the pew rent system was abolished and weekly offerings became the church’s means of financial support, declaring every seat free in the church building. The result was the abolishing of a system of seating by financial status.<sup>62</sup> His nine years in this church have been described as “the solid rock foundation upon which is built the present prosperity of the Baptist church in Toronto.”<sup>63</sup> William Boyd Stewart (1835–1912) was hired as an assistant pastor in 1869, but ultimately assumed the pastoral role upon Caldicott’s death the same year. He served a brief pastorate until 1872. John Harvard Castle (1830–1890) became the pastor in 1873 and led the church to build its current historic building on Jarvis Street. In 1875 it relocated and became known by its current name—Jarvis Street Baptist Church.<sup>64</sup> The

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<sup>61</sup> For more information regarding Fyfe’s work with *The Canadian Baptist*, see Harold U. Triner, *A Century of Service: Story of The Canadian Baptist 1854–1954* (Toronto: The Board of Publication of The Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec, 1954), chap. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *The Gospel Witness*, DVD.

<sup>63</sup> Marget H. C. Meikleham, “Caldicott, Thomas Ford,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2003), accessed January 9, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/caldicott\\_thomas\\_ford\\_9E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/caldicott_thomas_ford_9E.html).

<sup>64</sup> William McMaster (1811–1887), a wealthy businessman and member of the church was a

building at the corner of Jarvis and Gerrard Streets was designed in a Neo-Gothic style by Henry Langley (d. 1907), the leading church architect in Ontario at the time. It was designed in a style referred to as “ecclesiastical amphitheatrical,” noted for the close proximity of the people to the speaker. Finally, in 1882 B. D. Thomas (1843–1917) was called to Jarvis Street, possibly by the recommendation of his predecessor Castle, who had also come from Philadelphia where Thomas was serving as pastor until the move to Toronto.<sup>65</sup>

Thomas was born in Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, Wales, where his father was the longstanding pastor of Bethesda Baptist Church.<sup>66</sup> The senior Thomas had been called there in 1823 and served the church faithfully for thirty-nine years. The junior Thomas and his family emigrated in the fall of 1868 to Pittston, Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania being a common destination for Welsh Baptists. He pastored the Baptist church there for three years before moving again to serve the Fifth Baptist Church in Philadelphia. This church had been founded in 1824 by renowned Baptist pastor, John L. Dagg (1794–1884).<sup>67</sup> This was one of the largest Baptist churches in the state and eleven years of

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significant benefactor of the building project. He also was instrumental in having Woodstock College relocated to Toronto, which was eventually named after him after merging with Toronto Baptist College in 1887, the year of his death—McMaster University. In collaboration, “McMaster, William,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2003), accessed January 9, 2015, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mcmaster\\_william\\_11E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mcmaster_william_11E.html). For more information about McMaster University see G. A. Rawlyk, “A. L. McCrimmon, H. P. Whidden, T. T. Shields, Christian Education, and McMaster University,” in *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), 31–62.

<sup>65</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘Dr. Thomas of Toronto:’ The Life and Ministry of Benjamin Daniel Thomas (1843–1917)” (June 2008), accessed December 28, 2014, <http://www.andrewfullercenter.org/files/bd-thomas-for-gw-june-2008.pdf>, 5–6.

<sup>66</sup> For a history of this church, see W. H. Williams, “History of Bethesda, Narbeth,” in *Bethesda Baptist Church, Narbeth, 1808–1958* (Narbeth, England: H.G. Walters, 1958), 13–20.

<sup>67</sup> John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609–1884* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1884), 1310. William Staughton (1770–1829) also served as pastor, during which time it was “noted for its fine musical talent.” Tom Nettles calls John L. Dagg “one of the most respected men in Baptist life and remains one of the most profound thinkers produced by his denomination.” Dagg’s theology has been classified as “moderate Calvinistic Augustinianism.” Nettles

faithful service there demonstrated this young pastor's significant strengths and capabilities.<sup>68</sup> Written during his tenure at Fifth Baptist Church, *The Baptist*

*Encyclopedia* describes him in the following way:

He is a man of fine personal appearance, of a modest and retiring disposition, and of unaffected simplicity of manners. As a preacher he brings forth things new and old from Bible treasures, and presents them to his hearers in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." He has contributed occasionally to religious journals, and has recently published a little volume of rare merit entitled "Popular Excuses of the Unconverted." He labors earnestly to win souls to the Saviour, and has greatly endeared himself to an appreciative and devoted people.<sup>69</sup>

Of his preaching at Philadelphia Michael Haykin writes, "A defining mark of his ministry during this period was evangelistic preaching, preaching that made a point of seeking the conversion of unbelievers."<sup>70</sup> This was his hallmark at Jarvis Street as well.

One of Thomas' earliest sermons at Jarvis Street was entitled, "The Glory of the Church," written around 1886. In many ways this single sermon demonstrates the pattern begun in Philadelphia and the codification of his vision for the local church in Toronto. Standing in the center of the stately building and before his congregation of influential citizens he proclaims,

A church (I care not what her wealth or influence or numbers) is a failure unless souls are born in her, unless she walk the earth, so to speak, under the profound impulse of a divine unction and in the enthusiasm of conscious power, unless she can cast out the demons that infest society and quicken dead souls into an immortal being by the supernatural energies of her God-given life. This is her glory and her praise, that "this and that man was born in her."<sup>71</sup>

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writes: "Such nomenclature should not leave the impression that the soteriological or theological doctrines of Calvin were rejected or hidden in any way. Properly understood, the phrase paints Dagg as an experiential Calvinist, not simply a scholastic theologian" (Tom Nettles, "Biographical Sketch of John L. Dagg," *Founders.org*, accessed January 8, 2015, [http://founders.org/library/dagg\\_sketch/](http://founders.org/library/dagg_sketch/)).

<sup>68</sup> Haykin, "Dr. Thomas of Toronto," 4.

<sup>69</sup> *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Rev. B. D. Thomas" (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 1147.

<sup>70</sup> Haykin, "Dr. Thomas," 4.

<sup>71</sup> B. D. Thomas, "The Glory of the Church," in *Sermons Preached in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto* (Toronto, William Briggs, 1911), 81–82. His main point in this sermon is that every

It was no small matter for him to leave Philadelphia. Thomas wrote to the Toronto Baptists that leaving his church in Philadelphia—who had been so kind and who were “the most earnest and united” in not wanting him to go—made the transition “one of the most painful ordeals” he had ever experienced.<sup>72</sup> However, the receptivity that met him in Toronto was overwhelming. Thomas kept the newspaper report of his service of induction, which reported, the reception that Thomas received from the members of his flock and Baptists of Toronto was “enthusiastic to the extreme.” There were twelve hundred present for his induction service.<sup>73</sup> That enthusiasm continued unabated for twenty years. Thomas expressed the genuine affection between a pastor and his flock at his seventeenth anniversary when he preached from Philippians 3:13–14. The Minute Book for October 8, 1899 records, “The Pastor today commenced the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his Pastorate preaching a very appropriate sermon in which he briefly referred to the cordial relations which had always existed during all the years between him and the people of his charge.”<sup>74</sup> There does not seem to have been a major conflict or disagreement between Thomas and his church at any point of his tenure. The minute book perfunctorily reflects, almost without exception, simply the addition and dismissal of membership numbers through the years of Thomas’ pastorate. There is no evidence of a crisis or significant disagreement with the pastor or the deacons. It is a remarkably lengthy and

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nation is known by, and indeed boasts in, those who were born there. So it is with the church when Christ returns with the armies of the redeemed: “Then shall the golden gates be opened wide and the eternal city thrill with the enthusiasm of victory. Then as those who distinguished themselves above the rest, with stripes of honor on their breasts and a heavenly radiance on their brows, pass on in the grand procession, angelic voices shall indulge in exultant shouts of recognition, ‘This and that man was born in her’” (96).

<sup>72</sup> “Letter to Jarvis Street Baptist Church, August 9, 1882,” in “August 13, 1882,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book* (Toronto: Jarvis St. Baptist Church, n.d.), quoted in Haykin, “Dr. Thomas,” 6. This was Thomas’ letter of acceptance after receiving the call to come to Jarvis Street.

<sup>73</sup> Newspaper clipping in B. D. Thomas, “My Pastorate in Toronto:” *A Souvenir of the Tenth Anniversary of the Settlement of B. D. Thomas with the Jarvis Street Baptist Church* (Toronto: Davis and Henderson, 1892), 9, quoted in Haykin, “Dr. Thomas,” 7.

<sup>74</sup> “October 8, 1899,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 166.

peaceful time, though always demanding upon the pastor due to the burden of the church's size and growth.

At his tenth anniversary, though reluctant to speak of the arithmetic of church growth, he celebrated the “music” of “hundreds of souls having made a profession of Jesus Christ; and of thousands of dollars that have been given to further the interests of Christianity in this and other lands.”<sup>75</sup> In the next decade hundreds more joined the church and thousands more were given. Thomas' passion for the unsaved to be born again at Jarvis Street was realized and the church under his leadership grew steadily.<sup>76</sup> During his pastorate the average attendance on Sunday morning was nine hundred and the Sunday evening service often saw a full auditorium with twelve to fifteen hundred people attending.<sup>77</sup>

The demands of a church the size of Jarvis Street could take their toll on any man. Most would not be up for the task and even with lengthy vacations granted during the summer for Thomas to visit his family and homeland in Wales, the years certainly were a drain. A twenty-year pastorate is a lengthy investment of energy and Thomas must have been growing weary by the turn of the century, if not before. In 1902, the minute book records the business of finding a pastoral assistant for Thomas. The records

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas, “My Pastorate,” 9.

<sup>76</sup> The membership at the church was 612 when he arrived. This was an adjusted number after an initial stated membership of 718. In the first ten years of his ministry, 432 were added by baptism and 518 by letter or experience, making a total of 956 added in that time period. In the same period 727 were either dismissed or dropped, leaving a total enrollment at the ten-year mark of 841 (B. D. Thomas, “The Harp of Ten Strings” in *A Souvenir of the Tenth Anniversary of the Settlement of B. D. Thomas with the Jarvis Street Baptist Church* [Toronto: Davis and Henderson, 1892], 9–10). The membership total in 1892 is listed as beginning at 843. 48 were added by baptism; 32 by letter; and 2 by experience, making the total membership before dismissal 925. 43 were granted letters of dismission; 2 were dropped from the rolls and 14 died leaving the balance of membership at 866 (“1892 Annual Meeting,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 35).

<sup>77</sup> John Ross Robertson, ed., *Sketches in City Churches* (Toronto: J. Ross Robertson, 1886), 26–28, quoted in Haykin, “Dr. Thomas,” 5. Up to thirteen hundred could be accommodated in the building seated in the pews and gallery. Adding seats could accommodate another seven hundred.

state, “After a season of prayer and praise, the pastor introduced the matter by stating what had been done by the Trustees and the Deacons.” The minutes outline a two-month process that had preceded the meeting, in which a graduate of Toronto University and current student at McMaster University—Mr. R. A. Mode—had been identified. The discussion appears to have been heavily in favor of hiring this assistant for their beloved pastor and the vote was in the affirmative.<sup>78</sup> October 5, 1902 marked Thomas’ twentieth anniversary. It passed almost unnoticed: “In consequences of a very severe storm of thunder, lightening, and rain, the congregation numbered only 250.” Thomas preached from Isaiah 53:1: “Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.” That was his last sermon before revealing the decision that he had no doubt been considering for some time. He resigned from the pastorate the following week.

In a letter dated October 9, 1902 he explained his decision was based upon the increasing demands of a large church upon his health.<sup>79</sup> In his absence, Rev. Elmore Harris (1854–1911) read the letter to the church on his behalf. The vast majority of the letter was his expression of delight at his reflection upon the time with his flock:

My reasons for taking this step are not to be attributed to any unpleasantness that has occurred between us. I have received nothing but kindness and consideration at your hands. You have graven yourselves upon my heart by your love and your loyalty. You have been blind to my faults and considerate of my frailties. Your magnanimity of judgment, both as respects my character and my ministry, will ever remain with me as a grateful reminiscence. You have not only been more and better to me than my deserts, but your kindness has surpassed my most sanguine dreams. I have lived and worked among you as flowers bloom amid the genialities of summer. Through all the years there has not been so much as a ripple on the waters. There has been nothing in your conduct toward me that I could justly reflect upon with

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<sup>78</sup> “April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1902,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 217–218. The tasks of this assistant were “pastoral work and [to] preach on Sunday evenings of [the] Church’s missions and visit amongst the entire membership of the church under the direction of the pastor and to assist as far as possible in keeping an oversight of them.” Mode was to begin as soon as possible. Thomas resigned the next year.

<sup>79</sup> In his appearance before the church on October 22, 1902, to confirm his resignation, he reports, “Though he did not feel so young as he did some years ago that his health was good.” It is unclear if there were actual health issues or just the concern that health issues were going to arise from the obvious demand of the job (“October 22, 1902,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 238).

discomfort. If anything has ever been done or said by any of you that was intended to be discourteous or unfriendly, I have been happily oblivious of it. You are enshrined in my affections without a single embittering recollection arising from personal considerations. That this could have been possible in a pastorate of twenty years is something for which we may together feel proud and grateful.<sup>80</sup>

He went on to express his only regret was that some did not receive the “moral and spiritual uplift from [his] ministry which [he] devoutly sought for them.” His reason for leaving was that the “ever increasing responsibilities [had] become oppressive.” He continues, “The consciousness that I have not been doing all that might and ought to be accomplished in the conservation and development of so large and scattered a membership, has been an increasing sense of discomfort and irritation.” He felt that another man with different gifts and in the “maturity of his powers” was needed to move the church forward.<sup>81</sup> The church’s response was equally gracious: “We desire to express our undiminished confidence and affection in and for him. It is impossible that any pastor could be more beloved by his people than Dr. Thomas is by us, and we deeply regret the conclusion to which he has arrived.”<sup>82</sup>

One newspaper clipping stated that the church membership stood at eight

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<sup>80</sup> “B. D. Thomas’ Letter of Resignation,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 232.

<sup>81</sup> “B. D. Thomas’ Letter of Resignation,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 233. This came as quite a surprise to the congregation. “The occasion being the twentieth anniversary of his settlement and a review of a lengthened ministry helpful to all, favored in no small measure by all the blessings that can come to a church, with an outlook of confident expectation for the near future was uppermost in the minds and hearts of all, except the few to whom the step had officially been made known and the disappointment was visible, grievous, and painful, and formed expression in a silence that was more significant than words or action could have been” (234).

<sup>82</sup> “October 14, 1902 Special Meeting Resolution,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 234. “We recognize with great [humility is crossed out with the word “humiliation” written in its place] that the reason that greater results have not been obtained is, humanly speaking, from our failures, not his.” They proceeded to counter each of Thomas’ reasons for his resignation with the confidence that he was more than capable and appealed that he might reconsider his decision. He appeared in person at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> business meeting to reaffirm his decision. However, the week had brought such an outpouring of affection that he explained that he had “never felt such trying circumstances in all his life. He had never realized until during the past week how dearly he and Mrs. Thomas was beloved nor how dearly they loved this church.” In spite of this, he had to “decline to reconsider his resignation” (October 22, 1902, *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 238).

hundred and ninety-six.<sup>83</sup> The *Canadian Baptist* reported the following numbers from Thomas' pastorate:

It will be interesting to learn that 768 have been received in baptism, 984 by letter and experience; 1,431 have been dismissed by letter, etc. (including deaths) leaving the present membership at 933. The total amount raised for all purposes during his pastorate has been \$294,532.07.<sup>84</sup>

The man who had declared a church "a failure unless souls were born in her," certainly must have gratefully declared Jarvis Street Baptist Church a resounding success to the glory of God.

### **Theology in Practice**

Jarvis Street was established as a Regular Baptist Church, holding to the doctrines of Calvinism. Thomas' church in Philadelphia was founded under the preaching of John Dagg's "moderate Calvinistic Augustinianism," or "experiential Calvinism." This Calvinistic foundation can be heard in one of Thomas' earliest sermons preached in Philadelphia. In a memorial service sermon he proclaims, "There is not one so low, so ignorant, so unfavorably circumstanced, if brought beneath the regenerating

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<sup>83</sup> "Rev. Dr. Thomas Resigns," Newspaper clipping in Thomas, "My Pastorate in Toronto," quoted in Haykin, "Dr. Thomas," 7. Perhaps even more remarkable is that his mid-week prayer service averaged 400 to 500 people each week during his pastorate (Robertson, *Sketches in City Churches*, 28). Unlike many other Baptist churches, church attendance typically ran higher than the actual membership of the church. The church under Thomas' leadership kept a close eye on the membership. The *Jarvis St. Minute Book: 1892-1910* is essentially the documentation of the week in and week out monitoring of a regenerate church membership. Believers became members through either profession of faith and baptism (most often), letter from another Baptist church (less often), or by an investigation of their experience (least often). Each of these required the close evaluation of the Committee on Candidates for Baptism and Membership before being extended the hand of fellowship and access to the Lord's Table. (For an example see "Entries for 1892," *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 12 and "Committee on Candidates for Baptism and Membership," *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 92.) The committee met with candidates for baptism and membership and when they were considered authentic, they were presented to the church business meeting for acceptance. When accepted by the business meeting they were pronounced members at the next celebration of the Lord's Table by the pastor as he extended the "hand of fellowship" to join the church at the Table.

<sup>84</sup> "Canadian Baptist Clipping," *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 271.

influences of God's saving grace, but shall one day shine in burnished beauty."<sup>85</sup> The balance of his remarks demonstrates how he merges man's responsibility in response to God's sovereign work. His verbs in this sequence of sentences are passive, though as past participles:

Those who *have yielded* most readily to the great Artist's chisel; those who *have expanded* most joyfully to the inflowing light and warmth of heaven's refulgence; those who *have been* most true and faithful to their sacred trusts; and those who *have been* most unselfish and sincere in their activities, shall have the greater prominence and distinction.<sup>86</sup>

This sermon was in Philadelphia, early in his career, under the influence of the Baptists there. Later, in Toronto, he reveals a slightly different influence and potentially a greater moderation of Calvinistic thought. At Jarvis Street, he seems to attribute election to the foreknowledge, rather than predestination of God.<sup>87</sup> "Mere knowledge is based on evidence. We know that spring has come by the almanac or by the outbursting forms of life and beauty that greet us in field and forest. We could not dream of associating spring and summer with the cold, bleak days of December or of January." Yet with God, in his work of salvation, his view is different. "But to the eye of God from which nothing is hidden, May nestles in the bosom of December and June smiles and blooms and sings

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<sup>85</sup> B. D. Thomas, "Memorial Sermon on William Mann of Philadelphia" (Philadelphia, 1881), 6.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas, "Memorial Sermon," 6–7; emphasis mine.

<sup>87</sup> The doctrinal position of "election by foreknowledge" was the prevailing position among Baptists in Ontario in the nineteenth century according to William Gillespie. "The pre-1840 constitutions of Ontario's Baptists derived ultimately from the British Baptists but usually arrived in Ontario via Baptists in the United States. By the end of the 1840s, the majority (76.5%) of Ontario's Baptists had adopted a version of the 1833 constitution which the Niagara Baptist Association of New York state had developed. The Grand River Association illustrates the constitution's adoption and modification." The second article of the 1844 Grand River Association constitution includes: "the election of grace according to the foreknowledge of God." It also delineates closed communion (e.g., "the Lord's supper, a privilege peculiar to immersed believers, regularly admitted to Church fellowship"). "The only changes from the Niagara Baptist Association constitution of 1833 are stylistic ones" (William Gillespie, "The Recovery of Ontario's Baptist Tradition," in *Memory and Hope: Strands of Canadian Baptist History*, ed. David T. Priestley [Waterloo, ON: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1996], 30).

beneath the leaden skies and snow-clad desolations of January.”<sup>88</sup> He summarizes this passage in a more direct manner: “When infinite love sees the perfect in the incomplete, the saint in the sinner, it is no mere illusion.”<sup>89</sup> The result is that God then saves this individual. This distinction in soteriology also seems reflected in Thomas’ remarks of the untimely death of a fellow preacher and friend, Alexander Grant (1854–1897). He speaks affirming words regarding “the doctrines of grace” that his friend, possessed in his life, as if he did not embrace them in the same way. He speaks of them admirably, as if they stand out as unique among his contemporaries, rather than representative of the theological ethos of the Baptist culture.<sup>90</sup>

R. A. Fyfe wrote in 1851, “The peculiar affliction of the Baptists in Canada has been foreign interference and influence—at one end, too English—at the other, too American. Society in Canada is neither like that of England, nor that of America.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Thomas, “The Far-Sightedness of Love,” in *Sermons Preached*, 44.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas, “The Far-sightedness of Love,” in *Sermons Preached*, 50.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas, “The Strong Staff, The Beautiful Rod,” in *Sermons Preached*, 70. “The doctrines of grace so buttressed him that he stood four-square to every wind that blew. His convictions went down to the granite foundations of the faith and entwined themselves around the adamantine boulders of the everlasting covenant. He despised the preaching that was sentimental and apologetic. It was a tonic to weak faith and a rebuke to all skeptical and rationalistic tendencies to come beneath his influence and ministry.” Donald Goertz explains: “Dominated by a strong Calvinism, Grant’s roots lay in the Haldane movement and in Fyfe. This background provided the framework with which to judge all new ideas, and its central theme was a focus on God as the source of everything, including every element in salvation. Grant preached this strongly enough to be charged with robbing humanity of all responsibility.” Later he writes: “Yet Grant, like Spurgeon, was also profoundly influenced by revivalism, particularly by the pragmatism inherent within it. It is very likely that Spurgeon helped shape Grant here, for he did not find it incongruous to preach complete predestination and a rejection of free will while at the same time making a direct appeal to the sinners” (Goertz, “Alexander Grant,” in *Costly Vision*, 6–7). It is not clear if Thomas affirmed Grant’s Calvinistic position in like-minded agreement, or simply admired it with some moderation on his own part. It clearly is an aspect of Grant that stood out rather than as part of the prevailing Baptist conviction of the time. Thomas writes that upon meeting Grant for the first time—“I had wont to regard him as an egotist and a cynic. I had no desire to court intimacy with him.” Yet, after spending time together, “[our] hearts were thenceforward welded into a brotherhood which death has only glorified” (Thomas, “The Strong Staff, The Beautiful Rod, in *Sermons Preached*, 72–73).

<sup>91</sup> William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 467.

William Brackney elucidates Fyfe's reflection with his own observations: "Baptist life in [Canada] was sufficiently developed to produce its own theological mosaic. The resulting Canadian Baptist character is eclectic, revealing both British and American Baptist genes." These two sources of theological thought have synthesized in four unique influential factors: "the Maritime revivalistic experience, British Baptist classical theology, American Baptist schools, and a unique form of Canadian Prairie fundamentalism."<sup>92</sup> In 1878, four years before Thomas arrived, Calvin Goodspeed (1842–1912) wrote *The Peculiar Principles of the Baptists*.<sup>93</sup> In this work he puts Baptist principles into three categories: (1) those that relate to the Scriptures; (2) those that relate to the ordinances; and (3) those that relate to the church. In summarizing the Canadian Baptist theology in each category he advocates the authority of Scripture foundationally; that there is no efficacy in the ordinances and that only believers should be baptized; and the church as a spiritual body should only consist of regenerate church members. It is in this last section that he affirms the New Hampshire Confession with the added statement—"which is generally adopted by our churches."<sup>94</sup> It appears that the attempt to associate so many different types of Baptists in Ontario and Quebec in particular required a more general confession for agreement. The New Hampshire Confession was the result of similar eclectic circumstances elsewhere and served the same purpose here.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Brackney, *A Genetic History*, 467.

<sup>93</sup> Calvin Goodspeed, *The Peculiar Principles of Baptists* (Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1878). For more information about Calvin Goodspeed see Allison A. Trites, "A Forgotten Scholar: Professor Calvin Goodspeed," in *An Abiding Conviction: Maritime Baptists and Their World*, ed. Robert S. Wilson (Hantsport: Lancelot Press, 1988) and Allison A. Trites, "Calvin Goodspeed: An Assessment of his Theological Contribution," in *Costly Vision*, 23–39.

<sup>94</sup> Goodspeed, *The Peculiar Principles*, 4–5, 8, 14, and 17. His handling of the section on Scripture advocates initially the regulative principle of Calvin before acknowledging the normative principle of Luther. "Hence, Baptists have ever insisted, in reference to ordinances as well as doctrine, on the rule first announced by Tertullian, that 'the Scriptures forbid what they do not mention.'" This seems to be Goodspeed's position (5–6).

<sup>95</sup> Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 360. Lumpkin explains: "The theological views of

Specifically, the language of predestination is absent and election is undefined. It seems that Thomas adjusted his Calvinism from that of the Philadelphia Baptists, which was also moderating, to that of the Ontario and Quebec Baptists.

Thomas was concerned about the Calvinist-Arminian debate in his day and its potential to keep men from hearing the gospel. “They rack their brains about divine sovereignty and human free agency with their seeming antagonisms, and permit a thousand other polemical mysteries to keep their starving souls outside the home of warmth and plenty . . . . My friend, what have you to do with religious controversy if your soul is not saved?”<sup>96</sup> His concern regarding men’s souls and the intellectual debate of the day may have pushed Thomas farther away from his and the church’s more Calvinistic beginnings. This was the trend among Baptists as a whole at the turn of the twentieth century. It likely serves as a clarifying backdrop to statements such as the following by Thomas regarding the preaching of God’s Word unto salvation: “Not a little of the authoritative teaching of the inspired Word is set aside because it does not exactly chime in with human taste or notion . . . . The only rational way of dealing with

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Calvinistic Baptists in the New Hampshire area had been considerably modified after 1780 by the rise of the Free Will Baptists . . . . The New Hampshire convention thus sought to restate its Calvinism in very moderate tones.” J. Newton Brown, in 1853, added two articles to the original sixteen, one on “Repentance and Faith” and one on “Sanctification.” “In various church manuals this Confession became the most widely disseminated creedal declaration of American Baptists.” It became the confession of Landmarkism beginning in 1867, the General Association of Baptist Churches in 1902, the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925 (with ten new sections added), and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in 1933 (360–361). Article IX “Of God’s Purpose of Grace” likely identifies the doctrinal position of B. D. Thomas: “That Election is the gracious\* purpose of God, according to which he [graciously] regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, being infinitely [free,] wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, [love,] prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it is\*\* ascertained by its effect in all who [truly] believe the gospel; [that it] is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.” Brackets ([ ]) indicate the changes made by Brown. \*Brown used the word “eternal” in the place of “gracious.” \*\*Brown used the words “may be” in the place of “is” (364).

<sup>96</sup> Thomas, “The Wordy Egotist,” in *Sermons Preached*, 27.

the Word of God is to put it to the test of experience—do what it says.” This seems to be equally an appeal to man’s will as confidence in the word that does not return void. His final appeal in this particular message is, as always, to the unbeliever: “Whatever you do, do not invalidate His great message to your soul by words without knowledge.”<sup>97</sup>

H. H. Walsh offers this description of the trend of Calvinism among Canadian Baptists:

[Alexander] Grant seems to hold a very important position in the history of Canadian Baptist theology. The older generation of Regular Baptists, led by R. A. Fyfe, had been strongly Calvinistic. In the twentieth century, thorough-going Calvinism ceased to be a major factor. Grant represents the pivotal period by being open to revivalism and mediating it into Baptist circles. Yet, unlike his successors, he was serious about his Calvinism.<sup>98</sup>

Calvinism as a whole was being tempered at least, and set aside for revivalistic Arminianism in many places. As a contemporary and friend of Grant, Thomas certainly observed his Calvinistic theology merged with revivalism. As a contemporary he could not be considered one of the successors as referenced by Walsh. Nevertheless, he does seem to be a forerunner, or possibly frontrunner, of a generation of Canadian Baptists that was not as committed to Calvinism.

This is not to say that Thomas did not point his people to God’s grandeur. Thomas urged his hearers to study the things of God and seek to understand them. “To study the mighty and magnificent achievements of the Eternal . . . is our privilege and obligation. We should also inquire diligently into God’s law and government both in Nature and in grace. We cannot know too much in these exalted realms.” Simultaneously, he also warned those in his day who purported to have understood God through their rationalist skepticism: “It is a superlative folly to attempt by searching to find out God, or to propound a philosophy by which He shall be understood. He is too

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<sup>97</sup> Thomas, “The Wordy Egotist,” in *Sermons Preached*, 28–29.

<sup>98</sup> H. H. Walsh, *The Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1956), 282.

infinitely great to come within the grasp of finite comprehension.”<sup>99</sup> Thomas was not opposed to human learning and the pursuit of knowledge. He lived in an intellectual age and among a cultured metropolitan society. He was acquainted with a wide body of literature. He was obviously familiar with theological and devotional sources, but also those of philosophy and poetry.<sup>100</sup> In the end, he wanted his people to know that whatever their learning, God was infinitely higher and greater. “There is nothing that men more need to know than their limitations.”<sup>101</sup> In contrast to all human authors, it was the word of God that was the source of truth and power:

The question paramount to me is, Is it true? Does it do what it says it would? Does it speak to my soul’s need as no other book ever did or could? Do its prescriptions for the maladies of life meet the emergencies to which they are applied? These are the questions that I want to be sure about. Has the Bible come with regenerative potency into human life? Has it changed the face of society? Has it done for men and women in every degree of moral helplessness and degradation what it said it would? This is the crux of the whole argument—the final word in the controversy.<sup>102</sup>

These theological principles informed and inspired worship for Thomas: God’s greatness and splendor; the trustworthy nature of his word; and the need to appeal evangelistically to man to respond to the gospel’s solution for sin.

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<sup>99</sup> Thomas, “The Wordy Egotist,” in *Sermons Preached*, 22–23. One of the means by which he wanted his people to know God better was through the systematic study of Scripture on Wednesday nights. Apparently this had been done with the Gospel of Luke previously and in 1897 Thomas proposed the same with the book of Acts at the Annual Meeting. There was significant discussion and it was proposed somewhat reluctantly that if such a study would not interfere with the efficiency of the Wednesday night meetings, and if it would not take more than one Wednesday per month, this could be attempted. The motion was appointed to a committee and the deacons to resolve (“June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1897,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 23).

<sup>100</sup> Among the eighteen sermons published in *Sermons Preached*, he cites or references no fewer than fourteen philosophers, poets and thinkers outside of the church. At times he quotes their writing in a manner that likely engaged those of the world as Paul did with the Greek poets in Acts.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas, “The Wordy Egotist,” in *Sermons Preached*, 24.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas, “The Wordy Egotist,” in *Sermons Preached*, 26.

## Practice of Worship

On the tenth anniversary of Thomas' pastorate, a worship service was held in recognition of the event:

The services on the Lord's Day were grand and impressive, and as the vast congregation gave forth the inspiring strains of "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," accompanied by the magnificent organ, the occasion was one which will be long remembered. The Doctor took as his text Psalm 144,9. He likened the ten years of his pastorate to a ten-stringed instrument, and for forty minutes, in eloquent and graphic language, the music of these ten years produced a harmony which was listened to with eager attention.<sup>103</sup>

Thomas taught his people that all of life should be worship and he utilized the analogy of music in doing so. "The meaning of ['pray without ceasing'] is not that men should do nothing but pray, but that everything done should be enveloped in an atmosphere of devotion."<sup>104</sup> The Christian's life should be a life of rejoicing evermore, even when sad. "The great thing is to have the life attuned to melody. The soul is a musical instrument and 'to rejoice evermore' it must be strung to concert pitch; it must be set to the key of heaven's own harmony." He clarifies, "When the life is attuned to melody there may be strains of sadness; there may be notes burdened with mournfulness, but there will be no discord."<sup>105</sup> Thomas references music and instruments often as symbolic of the Christian life. He certainly loved music, was acquainted with it as more than a listener, and enjoyed its employment in worship.

In advocating for the cause of the Sunday gathering, Thomas warns those who would stay at home to read the Sunday paper: "No reading, not even that of the Bible, can take the place of the sanctuary services . . . . What God has instituted is not to be

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<sup>103</sup> Thomas, "The Harp of Ten Strings:" *A Souvenir*, 18–19. This was a description of the service that appeared in the *Canadian Baptist* that was appended to this published message in recognition of Thomas' tenth anniversary.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas, "Habitual Temper of the Christian Life," *Sermons Preached*, 213.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas, "Habitual Temper of the Christian Life," *Sermons Preached*, 210.

treated with irreverent disregard without incalculable moral injury.”<sup>106</sup> Borrowing a music analogy once again, he describes worship in the gathered assembly as “sit[ting] beneath the Gospel’s joyful sound.”<sup>107</sup> Elsewhere he writes,

Thousands upon thousands who believe in Him, meet week after week in temples built for worship and the burden of their adoration is, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” etc. To every assumption of supremacy, to every claim of power, to every exercise of authority, to His assertion of equality with God, the Christian consciousness replies, “Master, thou has said the truth.”<sup>108</sup>

The desire in worship is for God himself. That desire can only be met in Christ. Thomas explains, “There are times in every earnest human life when the soul cries out for a revelation of God . . . . Stupid, indeed, must be the mind and cold the heart which have never longed to draw back the veil that intervenes between them and that Great Being who is the inspiration of all life.”<sup>109</sup> There is a great desire within each person, part of the image of God that longs deeply to “gaze into the face of the Great Artist.” Thomas confesses, “I have felt His presence, I have seen His works, I have caught glimpses of His passing shadow, but Himself has never passed before mine eyes. I want to see *Him*—Him who stands behind the veil of all this visible grandeur around me—Him who inbreathes life, infuses energy and imparts beauty into all I see.” He

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<sup>106</sup> Thomas, “Where is Zebedee?” in *Sermons Preached*, 156.

<sup>107</sup> Thomas, “The Strong Staff, The Beautiful Rod,” in *Sermons Preached*, 67.

<sup>108</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 106. This is the closest sermon in this collection devoted to the topic of worship. After establishing the fundamental relationship between Christ’s teaching and man’s deepest need; and the innate nature of Christ’s deity and the command upon the world to worship him; Thomas outlines the teaching of Christ in the gospel shape proposed in this study: (1) God; (2) The Soul; (3) Sin; (4) Forgiveness; (5) Immortality; (6) Hell; and (7) Heaven. Once again, the shape can be outlined as Revelation and Response (God and soul); Mediation and Response (Sin and Forgiveness); and Exhortation and Response (Immortality, Heaven and Hell being the weightiness and outcome of our following Christ’s commands). This is the gospel: the harmonization of Christ’s teaching and man’s deepest need. This is the need for the gospel: the reality that Christ is Lord and the world is commanded to acknowledge this and respond.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 108. Earlier in this sermon he spoke of Isaiah’s revelation of God in Isaiah 6 and the disciples revelation of the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (103).

represents the longing of every true Christian in worship when he prays fervently, “O God, bow the heavens and come down. Show me, I pray thee, thy face. Assume before me some form that mine eyes can gaze upon.” What is God’s response? The answer to this longing of the heart is Jesus Christ. “He is the expression of Divinity . . . in Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”<sup>110</sup>

Thomas knew that the problem of worship was in man’s heart and no one understood it better than Christ. Christ spoke to this as none other. “Christ in his exposition of the law goes down beneath the surface and looks at the germinant principles of evil. Ah, no one ever understood sin as Christ did . . . . He spoke not of the gilded life of the drawing-room and of the Church, but of the inner life of the heart. And it was a startling revelation.”<sup>111</sup> Man, who had been created in the image of God and made a little lower than the angels has rejected his Creator and sold his birthright. He has thrown off his place of high standing before God for self-worship. Thomas writes, “The dark lines of guilt; the deep furrows of discontent; and the terrible storm clouds of unrighteous passion” have marred the image. “Corruption, frivolity, cruelty, meanness; every form and variety of degrading exhibition deface the glory of the human countenance.”<sup>112</sup> The nature of sin creates competing interests and objects of passion in competition for the delight he is to have in God. In his pursuit of sin’s pleasure he has enslaved himself. Thomas counters man’s waywardness: “His rightful place is not in slavery but in sovereignty, ruling his passions, his appetites, his circumstances, and his environment with an absolute and benignant sway. This was God’s intention when He laid the stamp

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<sup>110</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 108; emphasis Thomas’.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 110.

<sup>112</sup> Thomas, “God’s Purpose in Man’s Creation,” in *Sermons Preached*, 35. Thomas continues in contrast to his focal text in Hebrews 2:7–9 which quotes Psalm 8:5–6: “The crown has fallen from the brow of humanity and men have become, instead of sovereigns, slaves; instead of masters, serfs; instead of princes, beggars.”

of His image upon him.”<sup>113</sup>

This is not just Thomas’ evaluation of the world, but he sees it most tragically in the church. He writes in the aforementioned sermon, “The Glory of the Church,” “What we have most to lament is not the worldliness of the world, but the worldliness of the Church; not the wickedness without, but the heartlessness within; not the skepticism of the masses, but the skepticism of our own hearts.” His appeal is that the church be “emancipated from the thrall and bondage of the world and sin—a pure church, a living church, an aggressive church, a church baptized in the spirit and power of the Master’s consecration.”<sup>114</sup> Man may deny that he has sin. He may even argue that there is such a thing as sin. “But when the light of spiritual illumination flashes in upon their souls, when men see themselves as they really are, when their eyes are opened and their sensibilities aroused, they no longer say [Christ] is speaking in parables.” Thomas relates the power the presence of God in worship to shine light upon the dark places: “Oh, no, no! They then realize that they are what He represents them to be—sinners of the deepest dye.”<sup>115</sup>

The solution for worship is the gospel. Nowhere is the centrality of Christ more evident in worship than in the gospel theme that resonates there. To go to church on Sunday; to sing the songs and to read the Scriptures; to hear the word preached; indeed to be in worship is to “sit beneath the Gospel’s joyful sound.”<sup>116</sup> Thomas references the emerging waves of thinking in his day: “Men talk about a new theology. There can be no new theology so far as Christ’s death and resurrection are concerned. What these great facts were at the first they must ever continue to be . . . . The old Gospel

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<sup>113</sup> Thomas, “God’s Purpose in Man’s Creation,” in *Sermons Preached*, 37.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas, “The Glory of the Church,” in *Sermons Preached*, 84.

<sup>115</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 110–11.

<sup>116</sup> Thomas, “The Strong Staff, The Beautiful Rod,” in *Sermons Preached*, 67.

of life through the atoning sacrifice of Christ cannot be superseded.”<sup>117</sup> Thomas called forgiveness “the keynote of [Christ’s] blessed ministry.” It was the “ineffable burden of His ministry.” “He assumed our nature, placing Himself voluntarily under the vengeance of a violated law—laying open His very heart to the envenomed darts of death and hell that He might present to a fallen and guilty world ‘an eternal redemption.’”<sup>118</sup> There is a correlation between Christ and his gospel. Thomas utilizes the terminology employed in worship: “To the apostle Paul, Jesus Christ Himself was the Gospel, the converging and radiating centre of all truth and life . . . . That one transcendent personality gathered into Himself all the effulgences of illumination and all the sufficiencies of being.”<sup>119</sup> He concludes with the gospel appeal that marked the end of every sermon: “My last word to you this morning is, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.’ May God grant us all, by faith in the one sacrifice and mediation of the man Christ Jesus, to rise out of defeat into victory—out of limitation into liberty—out of weakness into power—out of serfdom into sovereignty.”<sup>120</sup>

Finally, the benefit of worship is putting man in touch with his source of strength. This once again emphasizes Christ’s centrality in worship. “Sympathy with God is the secret of abiding strength. The immortal nature cannot live on bread alone. The man of faith touches the hidden springs of the God life in Jesus Christ, and is supernaturalized.”<sup>121</sup> In another sermon he explains the process: “You must have the Christ nature before you can have the Christ character; you must have the Christ character before you can have the Christ likeness; and you must have the Christ likeness

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas, “Uniqueness and Sufficiency of Christ,” in *Sermons Preached*, 142–43.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas, “Response of Consciousness,” in *Sermons Preached*, 111–12.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, “Uniqueness and Sufficiency of Christ,” in *Sermons Preached*, 143.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas, “God’s Purpose in Man’s Creation,” in *Sermons Preached*, 41.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas, “Memorial Sermon,” 8.

before you can be an inhabitant of the world of light.”<sup>122</sup> This process of putting man in touch with Christ could only occur in worship and through the gospel. “A great deal depends upon the warmth and glow of [the church’s] spiritual experiences as to the existence and perpetuity of the highest forms of life.” A cold and formal spiritual life will not lead to spiritual fruit. “But if, on the other hand, she dwell beneath the perennial glow of heaven’s effulgent beams, her very paths will drop fatness and all her gardens and orchards will be abounding with celestial fruitage.”<sup>123</sup> Elsewhere he writes similarly using the analogy of agriculture: “If you get *into Him* there will be no difficulty about the unfolding. The best and the sweetest that are in you will be called forth. He is both warmth and sunlight.” He is not just the source of that life; he is the archetype of that life. “Not merely are you to grow up in Him as an environment, but into Him as an ideal.”<sup>124</sup>

The only way that any of this can be accomplished is to behold Christ in worship. In “The Church in Simon’s House,” Thomas utilizes the various people in Simon’s house—Simon, Lazarus, Martha, Mary, and Judas—to point out different types of people in the church. In particular, he references Martha’s serving and Mary’s sitting at Jesus’ feet to describe two types of worship in the church. He is not critical of Martha’s service. Her type of administration, organization, and work is required in the church. However, he is critical of her lack of devotion while doing what she was doing. She was watching Mary and criticizing rather than watching Christ and delighting in him. “The Marthas are as honorable as the Marys if they are inspired by affection for their Lord.” In his eyes, this is the issue at hand. Is Christ the focus of worship? Of course,

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<sup>122</sup> Thomas, “The Secret of the Divine Silence,” in *Sermons Preached*, 17.

<sup>123</sup> Thomas, “The Glory of the Church,” in *Sermons Preached*, 84.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas, “Uniqueness and Sufficiency of Christ,” in *Sermons Preached*, 147–48; emphasis Thomas’.

Mary portrays the antithesis to Martha's lack of devotion. Thomas elaborates on her model for the church's worship and service:

Mary was unconscious of everything but Christ. Moses, when he descended from the mount, wist not that his face shone. The greatest danger of our religious lives is a looking at our shining faces. What we need still more and more is to be so absorbed in the contemplation of Christ's character and so receptive of His holy influence that our whole being shall shine with celestial brilliance and we remain unconscious of the fact.<sup>125</sup>

Her response of liberality is also a model for the appropriate response in worship. She gave the most costly thing she had. "The greater the love the greater the liberality." He describes the reaction,

Even so the love of Christ enters into the human heart, lays open its inmost affections and aspirations to the light, melts the icebound fountains of its activities and joys, and so interpenetrates it with genial inspirations that, instead of barrenness and sterility, there grow in clustering affluence the fruits of righteousness and bloom in rich profusion the flowers of paradise . . . . Mary, in her spontaneous liberality, breaking upon the person of her Lord the costly ointment, is the most suggestive type of the spirit and genius of Christianity that this book affords.<sup>126</sup>

Thomas describes Mary's response in worship as being like the sun and its rays. Love is the source of warmth and beneficence (e.g., the pouring out of goodness) shines out from the source like the sun's rays. This is the way the response of worship should be. Out of gospel-formed and increasing affection, the rays of this "pouring out" in worship should be of the costliest treasure of the believer's life and devotion.

As with Baptist worship elsewhere, preaching is the main element of worship. Thomas' preaching often employs the use of symbolism or allegory. The memorial sermon in Philadelphia referenced above uses the imagery of a pillar of polished brass in Solomon's temple to describe the spiritual character of a departed church member. He creates an elaborate demonstration of the potential for the strength and beauty of a man's

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<sup>125</sup> Thomas, "The Church in Simon's House," in *Sermons Preached*, 195, 200. It appears that Thomas mixed the accounts of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet in Luke 10:38-42 and Mary Magdalene washing Jesus' feet in Luke 7:36-51.

<sup>126</sup> Thomas, "The Church in Simon's House," in *Sermons Preached*, 201-02.

life by imagining the columns in the temple.<sup>127</sup> As mentioned above, he often uses music (e.g., melody, harmony, tune, etc.) as an analogy for the presence of God in one's life. "There is no mission more exalted and sublime than that of filling the dark and solitary scenes of life, with a brightness and music which men cannot create for themselves."<sup>128</sup> He also quotes widely beyond theological sources. The analogy of music above is followed by a quote from an anonymous poet of the late nineteenth century as he describes the Christian's capacity to bring joy to others: "To so hold the royal gifts of the soul that they be music to some, fragrance to others, and life to all."<sup>129</sup> This also exemplifies his competency to use the poets of the age in his preaching.

He does not preach exegetically, but topically and systematically from a focal text. This text unified the sermon as he often returns to it at the end of each point. For example, his sermon "The Secret of the Divine Silence" is based upon part of 1 Cor 15:51: "We shall all be changed." It is a sermon based upon heaven and our inability to comprehend very much about it, because it requires us to be changed into a spiritual body to engage it. He addresses four points about heaven that we do not know due to the "divine silence" of Scripture. At the end of each point he reminds the listener that the problem is that we all need to be changed.<sup>130</sup> In the sermon he incorporates no less than ten direct quotations from Scripture passages related to heaven, and possibly as many

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<sup>127</sup> Thomas, "Memorial Sermon," 6.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas, "Memorial Sermon," 13.

<sup>129</sup> Thomas, "Memorial Sermon," 13. This quote is found in numerous places including Joseph F. Smith, ed., *The Latter Day Saints Memorial Star*, vol. 39 (London: Joseph F. Smith, 1877), 823, and Henry Ward Beecher and Truman Jeremiah Ellinwood, *The Original Plymouth Pulpit*, vol. 5 (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1871), 311. He also quoted from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's, "Excelsior" in this sermon: "He pressed upward often with lacerated limbs and bleeding feet, but waving ever 'the banner with the strange device, Excelsior'" (14).

<sup>130</sup> The four points are: (1) in regard to the life of heaven; (2) in regard to the pursuits of heaven; (3) in regard to the society of heaven; and (4) in regard to the joys of heaven; we really know very little about because Scripture says very little (Thomas, "The Secret of the Divine Silence," in *Sermons Preached*, 9–16).

allusions to other passages without directly quoting them, demonstrating his knowledge of and reliance upon God's word. This is similar to Spurgeon's use of Scripture as a motto in preaching. A focal text holds together his thoughts, which are drawn from various places of Scripture rather than preaching the verse in its context.

He ends this sermon, as he does all sermons, with a gospel call to salvation. Though his message was structured for the saved, his final application is always an invitation to the unsaved:

There are two great changes which are absolutely essential to spiritual knowledge and attainment. The one is at the entrance into the divine life, the other is at the entrance into the eternal state. The one is regeneration, the other is glorification. Without the former we cannot enter into the kingdom of God; without the latter we cannot enter into heaven . . . . We shall "see as we are seen," and "know as we are known," and dwell in the effulgence of God's all-revealing presence when we "shall have been changed."<sup>131</sup>

This evangelistic practice in preaching is unsurprising given his deep conviction regarding the church as a "birthplace of souls." His demonstrative use of the pulpit for evangelism and the making of disciples is clearly outlined in "The Glory of the Church:"

To prostitute the pulpit to any other end than this, to make it the Thermopylæ for intellectual display or rhetorical effect, to use it for mercenary or ambitious designs, or to employ it as an arena for personal exhibition, must be an impertinence for which a parallel could scarcely be produced. To have no higher aim in our ministrations than to gratify and amuse, or to seek to have the interest of our audiences culminate in admiration of ourselves, is an exhibition at which angels well might weep . . . . The one dominating, controlling, all-subduing purpose of the ministerial life should be the *salvation of souls*.<sup>132</sup>

This quote provides two mandatory emphases for his sermons. They should be "full of Christ" and "burdened with solicitude for souls."<sup>133</sup>

Thomas' description of the prayer of his friend and fellow pastor, Alexander

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<sup>131</sup> Thomas, "The Secret of the Divine Silence," in *Sermons Preached*, 16–18.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas, "The Glory of the Church," in *Sermons Preached*, 82–83; emphasis Thomas'.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas, "The Glory of the Church," in *Sermons Preached*, 83. "The supreme object of the Gospel ministry is . . . to reach the hearts and influence the lives of men for God and heaven."

Grant, is most compelling regarding Grant's view of prayer. Grant drowned tragically and the news of his premature death was a blow to Thomas and the church. His immediate reflections upon the memory of his friend were of his voice: "I heard him shout and laugh and sing and pray . . . I remembered his prayers, or, I might say, his prolonged agonizings, at the throne of grace for souls, and for the glory of the one great name."<sup>134</sup> The orientation for the priority and necessity of prayer is like that of his sermons—the birth of souls.

He references singing and music often in his sermons. In a sermon on heaven he writes, "The thought of singing without cessation is not a pleasant anticipation, nor is it scripturally well founded, save only as symbolizing a condition of exalted blessedness."<sup>135</sup> In another sermon he characterizes it more fully: "How [heaven's] music, even in anticipation, soothes our pain and makes even our very solitude delightful."<sup>136</sup> His concept of music in worship was undergirded by a very high level of music quality at Jarvis Street that was unparalleled in most churches—especially Baptists.

What is known today as the highly acclaimed "Toronto Mendelssohn Choir" was originally founded in 1894, as an extension of the already existing Jarvis Street Baptist Church choir.<sup>137</sup> Renowned musician and organist, William Horatio Clarke (1840–1913) had been appointed the first organist-choirmaster in 1880, two years before

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<sup>134</sup> Thomas, "The Strong Staff and the Beautiful Rod," in *Sermons Preached*, 65. Alexander Grant was pastor of the FBC in Winnipeg and in 1884 was appointed to the Superintendency of Home Missions. Baptist historian Titus Fitch writes: "Few men have come to the front so rapidly as Alexander Grant, and yet few men have left such a large impress upon our denominational life" (Titus Fitch, *The Baptists in Canada* [Toronto: Standard Publishing, 1911], 163). For more information see, Goertz, "Alexander Grant" in *Costly Vision*.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas, "The Secret of the Divine Silence," in *Sermons' Preached*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas, "Response of Consciousness," in *Sermons Preached*, 115.

<sup>137</sup> "Toronto Mendelssohn Choir," *Historica Canada*, accessed January 9, 2015, <http://thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/toronto-mendelssohn-choir-emc/>.

Thomas arrived.<sup>138</sup> Prior to this, Susan Moulton McMaster, the second wife of William McMaster, had donated an elaborate organ at a cost of \$8,000 when the building was built in 1875. There was no shortage of controversy in music as the initial introduction of an organ at Bond Street in 1857 so outraged some members that they set up an entirely different service in another building.<sup>139</sup> Not only was there the issue of the extravagance of the instrument itself, but that of the donor. One former member characterized her donation as hateful and self-serving. The perception among some was that of a wealthy Jarvis Street businessman and his wife displaying their commitment to effect change that would make their church socially respectable, “at the expense of pure spiritual piety.”<sup>140</sup> The introduction of an “unofficial songbook” was another step by the wealthy patron to advance the cause of music in the church. Geoffrey Booth explains, While the step to publish this specifically for Baptist services did temper some of the criticism, “Nevertheless, it took a while to cool things off.”<sup>141</sup> Thomas likely arrived about the time things had cooled off, but the foundation for music in worship, and the potential for its controversy, was firmly established years before.

The church sanctuary was furnished with Bibles and hymnals when it was built

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<sup>138</sup> “Herbert L. Clarke,” *Historica Canada*, accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/herbert-l-clarke-emc/>. His son was Herbert L. Clarke (1867–1945), the famed trumpeter and bandmaster of the turn of the century. He played in numerous groups including John Philip Sousa’s band. Herbert L. Clarke built the organ in his organ factory in Indianapolis and subsequently became the first organist-choirmaster (Robertson, *Sketches in City Churches*, 26).

<sup>139</sup> Paul R. Wilson, “Baptists and Business: Central Canadian Baptists and the Secularization of the Businessman at Toronto’s Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 1848–1921” (Ph.D. diss., University of Western Ontario, 1996), 308. Initially the debate was over the power of music to help or hinder devotion. Later it became an issue of worldliness and materialism. “The spirituality of those Baptists who accepted musical innovation was questioned by other counter-cultural Baptists who condemned new forms of musical expression as worldly ‘atrocities.’” On the other hand, “cultural liberals, who desired social integration and respectability, remained convinced that musical innovation brought spiritual and temporal rewards that Canadian Baptists could ill-afford to miss” (307–308).

<sup>140</sup> Wilson, “Baptists and Business,” 310.

<sup>141</sup> Geoffrey James Booth, “‘Managing the Muses:’ Musical Performance and Modernity in Public Schools of Late-Nineteenth Century Toronto” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2012), 171.

in 1875. The hymnal used before Thomas' tenure was *The Canadian Baptist Hymn Book* (1873). R. A. Fyfe was on the committee for this hymnal "prepared for the use of the Baptist Churches of Canada" by "the Baptist Home Missionary Convention of Ontario."<sup>142</sup> The unofficial hymnbook referenced above was H. E. Buchan's *Our Service in Song* (1875), which was published for the Jarvis Street church.<sup>143</sup> It is unclear which hymnbook the church was using while singing "Holy, Holy, Holy" on Thomas' Tenth Anniversary in 1892 (referenced above). It is not present in either *The Canadian Hymn Book* or *Our Service in Song*.<sup>144</sup> The Deacons Meeting Minutes from November 12, 1888 record the beginning of the investigation into securing a new hymnal: "The secretary was requested to ascertain the price of one containing 150 hymns and of [a] list [of] more than [approximately] 10–12 . . . subject to the approval of the pastor as to hymns selected and also as to arrangement."<sup>145</sup> It appears that the deacons planned to look over numerous hymnals in order to pick one to submit to the pastor for his approval regarding the content and arrangement of its hymns. However, a December 17, 1889 entry reads,

It was on consideration decided that the new hymnal should be named our Prayer

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<sup>142</sup> Baptist Home Missionary Convention of Ontario, *The Canadian Baptist Hymn Book* (Toronto: Copp, Clark & Col, 1873), Prefatory Note.

<sup>143</sup> H. E. Buchan, *Our Service in Song: A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship* (Toronto: Globe Printing Company, 1875.) Buchan was a senior deacon of the church (Robertson, *Sketches in City Churches*, 28).

<sup>144</sup> It is hymn 241 in *The Canadian Baptist Hymnal for the Use of Churches and Families* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Baptist Book and Tract Society, 1889). It is not present in any of the other Canadian Baptist hymnals of the nineteenth century. It is certainly possible that Thomas brought a hymnal from Philadelphia that he persuaded the church to use. Jarvis Street hosted The Baptist Congress in 1889 and each hymn listed in the minutes is in the 1883 American Baptist Publication *The Baptist Hymn, for Use in Church and Home*, compiled by W. H. Doane and E. H. Johnson. A variety of hymnals seem to have been used as some hymn numbers are from different hymnals. However, the overwhelming majority of hymns sung are from this hymnal, some by hymn number. It seems logical that this may have been the hymnal in the church.

<sup>145</sup> "November 12, 1888," *Jarvis Street Baptist Church Deacon's Book* (Toronto: Jarvis St. Baptist Church), [p. lii]. Some of the handwriting is indiscernible.

Meeting Hymnal, that it should be alphabetically arranged with an index to subjects and printed on type not smaller than long primer and that a book of music be made by placing the music set to the hymns selected in a scrap book and numbering its time with the numbers corresponding to those in the hymnal.<sup>146</sup>

It appears that rather than selecting a new hymnal from a publisher, the church published their own hymnal, at least for prayer meetings. This leaves the question about a new hymnal for use in worship services on Sunday.

A few years earlier, a hymnal committee had presented six potential hymnal options to the deacons in 1886. The church was currently using *Our Service of Song* (1875) that had been printed for it with funding from the McMasters and under the oversight of the deacons. The minutes record, “A somewhat informative and lengthy discussion as the merits and demerits of various hymn books then ensued.” The hymnals presented were “The English Publication named the [left blank]; the hymnal published in Philadelphia; [Our] Service of Song; [A hymnal published] by Sheldon and Co.; The Calvary Selection, [and] the Century Co[llection].” There were three requirements for the new hymnal: (1) that it contain hymns and music; (2) irrespective of price, authorship or publication, it must contain the most appropriate hymns and the best music, and (3) that “without discarding [Our] *Service of Song*, the choice seems to be between the *Calvary Selection* and *The Hymnal*.”<sup>147</sup> “Holy, Holy, Holy” is found in both of these

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<sup>146</sup> “December 17, 1888,” *Jarvis Street Deacon’s Book*, [p. liii].

<sup>147</sup> “May 11, 1886,” *Jarvis Street Deacon’s Book*, [p. xxxvii]. H. E. Buchan, *Our Service of Song: A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship* (Toronto, Globe Printing Company: 1875) was the hymnal printed for Jarvis Street that was funded by Susan McMaster. H. E. Buchan was one of the senior deacons of the church. It is unclear what “the English Publication” may have been but it was not being seriously considered. The hymnal published by “Sheldon and Co.” could have been one of the Manly hymnals (*Baptist Psalmody* or *Baptist Chorals*). “The Century Collection” was probably *The Centennial Collection* (1876), which was selected from *The Service of Song*. *The Calvary Selection of Spiritual Songs* (1883) was published by the Presbyterian compiler, Charles Seymour Robinson (1829–1899) with Robert S. MacArthur (1841–1923), a Baptist pastor in New York City. “The hymnal published in Philadelphia” was *The Baptist Hymnal: for Use in the Church and Home* (1883). The committee and deacons were supposed to meet the next Tuesday to hear some of the hymns played. The pages after this entry have been torn out of the minute book. It seems clear that they selected *The Baptist Hymnal* published in 1883. In October of 1886, later that year, they were working on hymnbook cards for the new hymnal (“October 18, 1886,” *Jarvis Street Deacon’s Book*, [p. xl]).

hymnals so either of these could have been in use on Thomas' tenth anniversary in 1892. It seems likely that one of these two hymnals was purchased for use in worship around this time, to be used alongside *Our Service of Song*. The later entry from above may have been simply to provide a different hymnbook for prayer meetings. All of this effort to secure hymnbooks after Thomas arrived does reflect an avid interest in hymnody and congregational song by the pastor and church.

The music program at Jarvis Street continued to grow after Thomas arrived. With the financial support of advocates such as the McMasters, new musical vistas continued to be expanded and new concepts gathered strength. Some of these bolstered the effect of the worship services, such as on his tenth anniversary, and some distracted. Booth writes of a seemingly good thing getting out of hand, especially with regard to the choir that was pursuing goals outside of congregational worship:

More attention was being paid to its secular and professional aspects. Proof of this lay in the appointment at Jarvis in 1888 of Augustus Stephen Vogt, who replaced J. F. W. Harrison as organist-choirmaster. Vogt not only significantly improved the choir, but used many of its members to assemble what eventually became the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Such was Vogt's reputation that when he retired in 1906, music had, in the opinion of some, literally overwhelmed other elements of the service. His replacement, Edward Broome, followed Vogt's musical program, eventually drawing the ire of the church's pastor.<sup>148</sup>

The pastor at the time was Thomas Todhunter Shields (1873–1955) who in 1910 noted the proportion of music to sermon time and complained: “What was designed to be an ‘opening sentence’ sometimes turned out to be an anthem that required ten minutes to complete. The result was that, do as one would, the Jarvis Street preacher would begin to

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<sup>148</sup> William Rowland Lock, *Ontario Church Choirs and Choral Societies, 1818–1918* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1973), 158. Outside of church, Vogt taught piano and organ at the Toronto College of Music, and after 1892, at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. On the evening of June 1, 1902, word had been received that the war in South Africa was over. Thomas took the opportunity to discuss the outcome and reflections upon the painful event. The service was concluded with the singing of the national anthem and Mr. Vogt led the choir in singing the “Hallelujah Chorus” (Excerpt of the Toronto Daily Globe of June 2, 1902, *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 226).

preach about the time other congregations were hearing the benediction.”<sup>149</sup> A sign of the choir trying to serve two masters appeared in the form of a matter that had to be addressed during Thomas’ time. There was a growing concern with the spiritual condition of the choir members. The deacons passed a resolution on March 21, 1895, to appoint a committee with whom the choirmaster could “consult on any matter connected with the choir.” This likely was also an attempt of the deacons to have more input into what was going on with the choir. The minutes then include the following nuanced declaration: “For the guidance of the choirmaster and congregation, it be declared that the church deems is advisable that as far as possible the choir should be composed of persons professing to be Christians.”<sup>150</sup> It does not require much imagination to presume that musical talent had become a greater criterion for participation in the choir than spiritual orientation.

The choir initially sang an anthem while the offering was being collected. Giving by the church was collected by passing the plate during Thomas’ tenure. It took approximately twenty ushers to collect the offering and a list of twelve substitutes also appeared in the minute book.<sup>151</sup> There were also eight special offerings taken at different times of the year. These were typically for special needs or missions emphasis.<sup>152</sup> This gave plenty of opportunities for the choir to sing, but as will be shown below, this had to be changed due to the choir’s musical independence in the service. Baptisms were performed at the end of a Sunday school sessions, morning services, and evening

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<sup>149</sup> T. T. Shields, quoted in Wilson, “Baptists in Business,” 311–12.

<sup>150</sup> “March 21, 1895,” *Jarvis Street Deacon’s Book*, [p. cxiii].

<sup>151</sup> “Plate Collections,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 200.

<sup>152</sup> “Report of the 1899 Annual Meeting,” *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 159. This included home missions, foreign missions, ministerial education, the Sunday School, the church edifice, etc.

services.<sup>153</sup> The regular need for them reflected the growth of the church at the time.

The Lord's Supper was a special time for Thomas. This was the time that new members were introduced and welcomed to the table at Jarvis Street. Nevertheless, it was a challenge to get some members to attend the ordinance. Soon after Thomas' arrival, the Deacon's Meeting minutes of June 15, 1883 record his concern that "many of our members are habitually neglecting to ordinance of the Lord's Supper." As a result, he "expressed a decided wish that [some] method be adopted by which it could be ascertained definitely who of our members attend to their duty and privilege in this respect, at least once in each month."<sup>154</sup> This may have led to the more careful monitoring of church membership that characterized Thomas' tenure. The only solution noted in the minutes was to make sure that the time of communion was communicated more clearly, assuming that people did not attend because they may not have known. Though with the ordinance taking place at the end of regular worship services, it may have been that they were actually leaving early. The minutes record the same discussion still going on in November 1885, noting that a proposed plan was unanimously approved for presentation to the church. Apparently, the plan was secured from someone (Thomas?) having written Spurgeon "and having [received] from him a copy of the plan used by his church." This is apparently the plan put in place at Jarvis Street. The plan is not included in the minutes.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Various entries, *Jarvis St. Minute Book*, 133, 215, etc. This is one of the most frequent entries in the minute book.

<sup>154</sup> "June 15, 1883," *Jarvis Street Deacon's Book: May 1882–June 1899*, [p. x]. The Lord's Supper was celebrated at least monthly, and possibly more often than that at times.

<sup>155</sup> "November 16, 1885," *Jarvis Street Baptist Church Deacon's Book*, [p. xxx]. On March 4, 1892, the deacons encouraged Thomas to write a circular letter to those church members who lived in the city, but had not attended recently, "in hope of leading them to attend and to see their duty in this respect" ("March 4, 1892," *Jarvis Street Deacon's Book* [p. cliii]). Apparently, they were still having trouble getting people to attend communion.

## Summary

The blazing center of worship at Jarvis Street was Christ and his gospel. To sit in worship was to “sit under the gospel’s joyful sound.” A great part of that sound at Jarvis Street was the music, when it was focused appropriately. The church became renowned for its majestic organ and great choir. A reporter from the *Toronto Evening Telegram* attended an evening service in the first decade of Thomas’ pastorate. An account of the visit is recorded in *Sketches in City Churches*:

“Do you wish a seat?” asked an usher on the Sunday evening in question, as a *Telegram* reporter stepped into the gallery of this church—at the same time critically inspecting his appearance as if to procure a seat accordingly; it was not a front seat but it served the purpose of the visit. Mr. Harrison, recently of Ottawa, and a very fine organist, favoured the incoming congregation with a well-executed prelude, although, when the anthem was sung and when, after prayer, Mr. Sims Richards sang a tenor solo, the organ had too much on an orchestral effect and overpowered the singers, as is too frequently the case with accompaniments. The members of the choir sit in pews built at right angles to the pulpit rostrum and immediately below it, while the keyboard of the organ is placed still lower and in front of the choir. The people stand while the hymns are sung, and every one is politely handed a book. Although the evening was rather unpleasant fully 1,000 people were present, and when a good, substantial, familiar tune was sung the effect of it was dignified and massive. During prayer the congregation sits, the large majority leaning upon the hand or the pew in front.

The congregation was made up mostly of young people that were “attentive listeners and reverent in conduct.” The writer also commented on the baptismal service that evening, which was “very impressive, and evidently created a good effect; the entire method of worship was simple and plain, such as in usually observed in non-liturgical churches.”<sup>156</sup>

The description also includes the baptismal service.<sup>157</sup>

Michel R. Belzile surveyed the worship of Canadian Baptist Churches in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec for his D.Min. project for McMaster

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<sup>156</sup> Robertson, *Sketches in City Churches*, 28.

<sup>157</sup> A description of the baptismal portion of the service is also provided in Robertson, *Sketches in City Churches*, 25. The phrase Thomas used to baptize was, “On profession of your repentance towards God and your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you my child, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.” The organ played “an appropriate refrain” after each person was baptized.

University in 1998. The second half of the nineteenth century was a post-revivalistic period for worship practices among Canadian Baptist churches as churches got away from the revivalistic patterns of the camp meetings and the awakenings earlier in the century. The focus of worship in many churches began to shift back toward the believer in education and teaching rather than the unbeliever for salvation. Of the two styles Belzile analyzes from this time period, the “Formal Evangelical Pattern” fits best what Jarvis Street likely did on a Sunday morning. It was a style popular among Baptists who “sought a more formal and reverent expression of worship.” The Sunday morning service at Jarvis Street may have looked like the worship order in figure 11.<sup>158</sup>

Organ Prelude

Choir Anthem

Scripture Reading<sup>159</sup>

Opening Prayer

Solo

Hymn

Prayer

Choir Anthem<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Michel R. Belzile, “Canadian Baptists at Worship: A Survey of Congregational Worship within the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec” (D.Min. Project, McMaster University, 1998), 45. Belzile provides a worship order from nearby James Street Baptist Church in Hamilton, ON from 1895. This is his example of the “Formal Evangelical Pattern.” The other pattern is the “Post-Revivalistic Order,” characterized by less formality, less evangelistic, and much more didactic (42). This order contained a “quartette” and a “lesson” but it is not clear that Jarvis Street had either in their service. The choir was so prominent that it likely did all of the non-congregational singing other than solos. Other excerpts from deacon’s meeting notes and the report from the *Toronto Evening Telegram* above have been combined to formulate this proposed order of worship.

<sup>159</sup> The Deacon’s Meeting minutes discuss a concern regarding seating late arriving “strangers and others” after the Scripture reading and prayer at the beginning of the service, “so that if possible there be less confusion during the reading of Scripture and prayer” “June 15, 1883,” *Jarvis Street Deacon’s Book: May 1882–June 1899*, [p. x].

Offertory<sup>161</sup>

Hymn

Sermon

Hymn

Baptism

Doxology<sup>162</sup>

Benediction

Postlude

Figure 11. Potential order of worship at Jarvis Street Baptist Church (Toronto)

There are clear opportunities in this service order to advance the themes of revelation and response, and exhortation and response. The beginning of the service is highlighted by the majestic organ and choir to point worshipers to a majestic God. Their response is through hymns and prayer as they gather for worship. Preaching and its

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<sup>160</sup> The Deacon's Meeting minutes record a discussion in October 1885 regarding "the fact that there was considerable disinformation in regard to some of the anthems sung, especially after the sermon. The matter was discussed at some length when it was decided to recommend to the church that the order of service be so changed that the collection should taken up before instead of after the sermon and that those who have charge of the singing be requested to sing more appropriate and shorter pieces and also to shorten the interludes between the hymns. Reference was also made to the quality of [wind?] lately used and the secretary was requested to ascertain the whether a better quality could not be provided" ("October 13, 1885," *Jarvis Street Deacon's Book*, [p. xxviii]). This may be in reference to the bellows for the organ. A proposal was made soon after for an electronic system to provide wind for the organ. The minutes from March 15, 1886 record a follow up of the matter of shortening the interludes between the hymns and to write to the publishers of hymnbooks for the most recent copies of hymnbooks. This latter item was to prepare for a Hymnbook committee to consider a new hymnal for the church ("March, 15, 1886," *Jarvis Street Deacon's Book*, [p. xxxv]).

<sup>161</sup> On September 30, 1892, the deacons decided to take the offering up after anthem rather than at the same time as had been done since 1885. "After consideration it was decided that in [the] future the plate collection on the Lord's Day be taken up after singing the anthem and in a more formal and orderly manner, the collection going up with the plates at one time" ("September 30, 1892," *Jarvis Street Deacon's Book*, [p. cxvii]).

<sup>162</sup> Jarvis Street may have sung this at the end of their worship services. They sang the Doxology at the end of every business meeting and other gatherings as reflected in the minute book.

related Scripture readings remained the main aspects of exhortation. Some musical elements also contributed to this. The final worship elements of a hymn response, the Lord's Supper, baptism, and the benediction served as response to exhortation. As has been pointed out above, the pastor described the entire service as "sitting under the gospel's joyful sound." This provides the overriding theme of mediation and response, as Christ and his cross were central to worship at Jarvis Street. The specific response at Jarvis Street, and where the service may have looked most revivalistic, was at the close of every sermon. The culmination of a B. D. Thomas sermon, and thus every service, was a gospel call to salvation. No matter the text, Thomas was going to end with a call for the unsaved to respond to the gospel. It seems quite likely that a formal altar call was part of the service as the theme at the end of his message was consistently an invitation to the unsaved to respond to the gospel. This was birthed in Thomas' conviction regarding the church: "If the greatest glory of the church consists in her being the birthplace of souls, then this should be the supreme aim of the gospel ministry."<sup>163</sup> The words of the sermon he delivered on behalf of his tragically deceased friend seem also to be the motive of his ministry. "*The time is short! If you mean to do anything that is to tell beneficently on human destinies, do it, do it quickly, do it now . . . . A single instant may place you beyond the possibility of aught that can follow you with grateful benedictions into the eternal future.*"<sup>164</sup> This sense of urgency went with him every time he entered the pulpit and followed him out of it.

### **Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky (1881–1907)**

Walnut Street Baptist Church was founded in 1849 by the merging of First

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<sup>163</sup> Thomas, "The Glory of the Church," in *Sermons Preached*, 82.

<sup>164</sup> Thomas, "The Strong Staff, the Beautiful Rod," in *Sermons Preached*, 76; emphasis Thomas'.

Baptist Church<sup>165</sup> and Second Baptist Church<sup>166</sup> of Louisville, Kentucky. Unlike many historic churches that have lost their records due to calamity, time, or both, Walnut Street has its record book from its first meeting and has maintained it faithfully every year since its founding. The first entry in the book is the account of its organizational meeting:

Resolved by the First and Second Baptist Churches of the city of Louisville, Ky., now in session, That said churches do now unite together and form one church, and that the entire list of members now in fellowship in both churches be considered members of the church now formed, and from and after the adoption of this resolution the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Churches of Louisville cease to exist as separate organizations.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> First Baptist Church was formed in 1815 in the house of Mark Lampton. The church joined the Long Run Association in September 1815 and the church was constituted upon the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, upon which fellowship in the Association was also based. The church was the forty-ninth Baptist church in the association, but the first in the town of Louisville. Louisville had been founded in 1778. B. T. Kimbrough, *The History of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky* (Louisville: Press of Western Recorder, 1949), 9. Kimbrough's history of the church was written for the one hundredth anniversary of the church is considered the largest and most thorough of the three historical accounts of the church (Eaton and Leonard are the other two). The first Baptist church in Jefferson County was Beargrass Baptist Church, which was one of four churches disfellowshipped by the Long Run Association during the Campbellite Controversy due to their refusal to support the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Beargrass subsequently became a Christian church, associated with Thomas Campbell (1763–1854) and Alexander Campbell's (1788–1866) Disciples of Christ movement (Benjamin Allen, "Benjamin Allen's 1832 Report," Beargrass Christian Church, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://beargrass.org/about-beargrass/history/benjamin-allens-1832-report>). Alexander Campbell preached at First Baptist in 1825 and the church subsequently split over the matter of the Philadelphia Confession. A similar schism later took place in the Second Baptist Church as well as other Baptist churches in the area (Bill Leonard, ed., *Community in Diversity: A History of Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1815–1990* [Louisville: Simons-Neely Publishing, 1990], 24). A. H. Newman claims that up until that time, the Campbellite Controversy was "by far the most important schism suffered by the Baptist body in the United States" (A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* [New York: Christian Literature, 1894], 487).

<sup>166</sup> Second Baptist Church was formed in 1838 with Rev. Reuben Morey as their first pastor. In the first sixty years of Louisville's existence, only two Baptist churches had been formed (Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 49–51).

<sup>167</sup> *Business Meeting Minutes: June 15, 1849–November 28, 1858* (Louisville: Walnut Street Baptist Church), 1. Both churches had become pastorless around the same time and both extended a call to Thomas Smith, Jr., a recent graduate of Princeton Seminary who had attended Georgetown College previously. Neither church was aware initially that they had each extended a call to the same man simultaneously. When it was realized, the decision was made to merge the churches, dispose of their property, and unite in an entirely new church. When the churches merged, there were three hundred and ninety-nine on the combined membership rolls (Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist*, 70, 74). Eaton writes: "Both the First and Second Churches were without pastors, and the eyes of both were turned to a rarely-gifted young man, the Rev. Thomas Smith, Jr. He visited both churches, delighted both, and was unanimously called by both . . . Elder Smith accepted both calls, and led in the union of the two churches (Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 10). The church voted on the name "Walnut Street Baptist Church" and identified itself as cooperating with the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky and the Southern

At that moment, Walnut Street Baptist Church was formed and the First and Second Baptist Churches in Louisville, Kentucky ceased to exist. At the time of its founding, Louisville was growing rapidly as the population from 1840 to 1850 more than doubled.<sup>168</sup> Growth of the city was quickly outpacing that of the capacity of Baptists to minister to it. Walnut Street was emblematic of the fierce effort of Baptists to catch up. B. T. Kimbrough proclaimed Walnut Street “The mother of churches” in his 1949 history of the church. He listed nineteen churches started by Walnut Street to reach the city.<sup>169</sup>

### **A Brief History**

After having secured Thomas Smith, Jr. (1827–1851) as their first pastor, the church immediately began construction on a building to hold the newly combined congregation. T. T. Eaton writes in his history of the church: “Under the leadership of their young, brilliant and consecrated pastor, they began to erect a house of worship which was the wonder and the pride of the city.”<sup>170</sup> Tragically, Smith grew gravely ill and died unexpectedly at the age of twenty-three, having served his church for barely a year and a half. His funeral was the first meeting held in the new building—though unfinished—it was held in the basement. William W. Everts (1814–1890) moved from Mumfordsville, New York to pastor the church in 1853. The two years between Smith’s death and Everts’ arrival saw the church almost come to an end. “When [Everts] arrived at

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Baptist Convention in the minutes of November 30, 1849 (*Business Meeting Minutes*, 7–8).

<sup>168</sup> The population in 1840 was 21,210 and in 1850 it had grown to 43,194. Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist*, 69. Thomas Smith, the first pastor, comments on a meeting of Kentucky Baptists and their concern to reach Louisville: “They said that if the Baptists did not take possession of Louisville now, they never would nor could; that it must be now or never; meanwhile detailing the many great efforts being made by all denominations and particularly the Catholics and pursuits to gain the ascendancy in that city. Nothing was done on the subject” (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 28).

<sup>169</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist*, 233.

<sup>170</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 11. “Nothing to compare with it had been known in Kentucky, and pictures of the building were published in periodicals and in books on architecture all over the land.”

Louisville, he found nothing encouraging except the field. The building was standing half finished. The meetings in the basement were reduced to an attendance of [fifty].”<sup>171</sup> Everts, a prominent preacher and revivalist who had served numerous churches in New York, threw himself into the work and the church immediately began to grow. In 1854 the new building, seating eight hundred, was completed and a pew rent system was employed, setting apart a reasonable number for free pews. The first baptism was administered in the new baptistery on January 27, 1854.<sup>172</sup> Later that year the Portland Avenue, Chestnut Street (later Jefferson Street), and German Baptist Churches were planted from Walnut Street. The General Association of Baptists of Kentucky was also formed that year.<sup>173</sup>

The Southern Baptist Convention met in Walnut Street’s magnificent new building in 1857. It was at this meeting that James P. Boyce (1827–1888) offered the proposition to raise \$100,000 in South Carolina to establish a seminary at Greenville, provided that \$100,000 more was raised elsewhere. This is the same seminary that, after the Civil War, was relocated to Louisville; the history of which became intertwined with that of Walnut Street. Two years later in 1859, the year the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was established in Greenville, Everts resigned to accept the call of the First

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<sup>171</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 81.

<sup>172</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 14.

<sup>173</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 15. See also, Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 29. Kimbrough asserts that it was the Campbellite controversy that inspired the formation of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 148. “Campbellism” was a claim to primitivism that became very attractive to many Baptists in an increasingly pluralistic America. Bill Leonard explains: “[Alexander] Campbell was a Baptist but was highly critical of certain Baptist practices which he viewed as contrary to the teaching of the Scripture. He rejected the use of creeds or confessions of faith with the watchword, ‘no creed but Christ!’ He denounced mission boards, Sunday Schools and the use of the ministerial title, reverend, as unknown to the New Testament church. Through simple faith, baptism ‘for the remission of sins,’ weekly communion, and the repudiation of denominational labels, Campbell and his followers believed that they had restored the true church as it was in the first century. This church, he believed, was composed of Christians who needed no other distinction” (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 24).

Baptist Church of Chicago, leaving the church pastorless once again. Four hundred and eighty-five people had been added to the church in addition to the three new Baptist churches planted in Evert's six years. Eaton explains, "The Walnut Street Church had so little of the service of the Rev. Thomas Smith as pastor, his health so soon failing him so as to unfit him for service . . . that it was Dr. Everts' pastorate that gave shape and direction to the church."<sup>174</sup> The years between pastors once again proved to be greatly problematic for the church. The church leadership enacted a series of resolutions during this time in an effort to unify the church through a reaffirmation to their founding declaration of faith. The following preamble reveals the troubled state of the church:

Whereas, we are in a distressed condition as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ which we most deeply implore; we feel it to be our imperative duty to our divine Lord and Master and to each other to attempt the restoration of peace among ourselves, that we may again be happy and useful as the children of God. And in order that this much desired object may be attained, we solemnly enter upon the following resolves.<sup>175</sup>

George C. Lorimer (1834–1904) began his pastorate in 1862, after six months of filling in as pulpit supply. His tenure also lasted approximately six years and the church saw much growth once again. He resigned in 1868 with the membership at seven hundred and sixty-one. A. T. Spalding (1831–1921) pastored from 1868 until 1871. The Southern Baptist Convention met again at Walnut Street in 1870, during which plans were discussed to move the Southern Seminary to Louisville. M. B. Wharton (1839–1908) served the church as its fifth pastor from 1872 to 1875. He was instrumental in bringing the seminary to Louisville and helped raise \$45,000 towards that end. In March 1873, James P. Boyce addressed the church on the matter and subsequently raised more funds for the relocation. Boyce stayed in Louisville to continue raising the subscription for the

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<sup>174</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 13.

<sup>175</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 13. Members during this time were advised, "to cease evil speaking and surmising in regard to the grievances one with another." (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 33).

required endowment to relocate the seminary from Greenville and subsequently became the supply pastor at Walnut Street after Wharton resigned. This began the close relationship between Walnut Street and Southern Seminary that was enjoyed for many years. Joseph W. Warder (b. 1825) was installed as pastor in 1875. At this time the church membership had grown to over seven hundred, though a committee in 1876 reported that between two and three hundred were “absent from the city.”<sup>176</sup> In 1877, the seminary moved to Louisville to the corner of Firth and Broadway, very near the Walnut Street location at Fourth and Walnut. This brought many students and faculty to Louisville and Walnut Street, including John A. Broadus (1827–1895) and soon after, Basil Manly, Jr. (1825–1892) from nearby Georgetown College in 1880. Both became faithful members of the church and both took turns filling the pulpit when Warder resigned in 1880. Warder resigned and became the missionary secretary for the state convention of Kentucky.

Thomas Treadwell Eaton (1845–1907) came to Louisville in 1881 from Petersburg, Virginia and served until his death in 1907. During his tenure he also served as the editor of the *Western Recorder*, the state periodical of Kentucky Baptists. Leonard calls him “one of the most colorful and controversial pastors in Walnut Street’s history.”<sup>177</sup> His was also the longest pastorate in its history.<sup>178</sup> While most pastors

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<sup>176</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 29. Accurate membership records were consistently a challenge as many names were on the role that did not attend worship services.

<sup>177</sup> Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 41. “He was one of the chief protagonists in the controversy surrounding seminary president William H. Whitsitt. He also presided over the church’s jubilee celebration, wrote its first history, and moved the congregation to its present location of Third and St. Catherine Streets” (41–42).

<sup>178</sup> Eaton was the first to benefit from an Assistant to the Pastor. James H. Wright was hired in 1883 as a part-time assistant to the pastor. “The purpose of the position was to share pastoral responsibilities and to work with mission churches in the city of Louisville. This position continued in this manner until Robert Young was called as full-time Associate Pastor upon his graduation from Southern Seminary in 1956.” This was during the pastorate of W. R. Pettigrew (Andrew Pratt, “A Community of Ministers: Pastors and Staff” in *Community in Diversity: A History of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1815–1990*, ed. Bill J. Leonard [Louisville: Simons-Neely Publishing, 1990], 82).

eventually succumbed to the demands of such a large church with health issues (six of the previous seven pastors) or simply the desire to go elsewhere, Eaton led the church through one of its greatest periods of growth and expansion. Broadus had an influential role in his coming as he accepted a call without first even visiting the church. One of his first acts as pastor was to organize a protracted series of revival meetings in October 1881, establishing his commitment to revivalism and evangelism. These meetings lasted for almost a month from November 13 to December 11.<sup>179</sup> William H. Whitsitt (1841–1911), a church history professor and later president of the seminary, was granted membership December 18, 1881 and Mrs. Whitsitt was baptized that same evening. Jamie Broome writes, “By this time, Walnut Street was considered the church of the Seminary community.”<sup>180</sup>

Giving, along with membership, increased dramatically during this time as the church abandoned the pew rent system and employed a weekly contribution through envelopes.<sup>181</sup> During the first ten years of Eaton’s pastorate there were one thousand and sixty-one baptisms, and total contributions in giving of \$427,122.62. In addition, twenty men were set apart for the ministry and three new churches started.<sup>182</sup> The most

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<sup>179</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 125.

<sup>180</sup> Jamie Broome, “A Community of Faith: The Baptist Connection” in *Community in Diversity: A History of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1815–1990*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Louisville: Simons-Neely Publishing, 1990), 116. “Students joined the church and assumed responsibilities in mission Sunday Schools. They also filled preaching points across the city. The church offered its sanctuary to the Seminary for commencement exercises and special lecture series. Basil Manly, professor, joined the church and was allowed to use one room of the church for his library. Members prepared holiday dinners, inviting the Seminary students to attend.”

<sup>181</sup> Walnut Street started out depending upon pew rents for current expenses, and special offerings for designated needs or projects. The weekly contributions on the Lord’s Day supplemented these main avenues of giving. Kimbrough writes, “Now the weekly giving through the envelope had been accepted as the scriptural plan, and was bearing fruit in the increased liberality of the members” (Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 130).

<sup>182</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 138. The three churches were Parkland, Twenty-second and Walnut, and McFerran Memorial.

significant of these was the granting of seven hundred and eleven members to form the Twenty-Second and Walnut Street Baptist Church in 1887. A new building had been built and dedicated for them by the Walnut Street church. Even with this significant dismissal, the Walnut Street church still reported a church membership of one thousand, five hundred and forty-nine the following year in 1888.<sup>183</sup>

In 1889, Eaton received an offer to come to Nashville, Tennessee, but declined the call. Basil Manly offered the following resolution passed by the church celebrating the opportunity to retain Eaton and describing the great satisfaction with Eaton as pastor:

*Resolved*, That we, the Walnut Street Baptist Church, of Louisville, Ky., have heard with profound gratification the decision of our pastor, the Rev. T. T. Eaton, to decline the call to Nashville, Tenn., and remain with us; that we trust we recognize in this the good hand of the Lord our God guiding him as well as us; and that we pledge him cordially our renewed co-operation in all the work of the church, and pray God's blessing in all the work of the church, and pray God's blessing on our united labors.<sup>184</sup>

On February 7, 1892, the church held a joint memorial service for Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) and Basil Manly, Jr. (1825–1892), both of whom had died on January 31<sup>st</sup> of that year. This year also saw the church recognize the centennial of the start of modern missions in October. This was a convention-wide celebration that involved the likes of Eaton, H. H. Harris from Richmond, F. M. Ellis from Baltimore, R. H. Harris from Columbus, GA, W. Pope Yeaman from Columbia, B. H. Carroll from Waco, TX and J. B. Hawthorne from Atlanta. In 1895, John A. Broadus died, prompting

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<sup>183</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 34–35. This church eventually moved to 23<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway, taking that name as their church and existed for almost a century. In 1985, the church disbanded. At times Walnut Street's membership numbers were significantly higher than church attendance and in many places the church records show adjustments to the member list, especially after a new pastor arrived. In 1864, the church approved two membership classifications: (1) "members of whom we have knowledge"; (2) "members of whose whereabouts and religious condition we have no knowledge." (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 34). Though the sanctuary dedicated in 1901 could seat approximately 1,000–1,600, the church did not have two morning worship services until March 26, 1967. This is in spite of reported membership numbers of 1,244 in 1915, 2,148 in 1925, 3,363 in 1929, and 4,000 in 1945. The recorded membership in 1967 was 5,020 (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 53).

<sup>184</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 36; emphasis Eaton's.

the largest funeral in the church's history. Eaton reflects, "That was the world event of that year. The great Christian, the great scholar, the great teacher, the great writer, the great preacher, the great man, in dying, bereaved the world and enriched heaven."<sup>185</sup>

In 1899, the fiftieth anniversary of the church was recognized in an event drawing one thousand, seven hundred and fifty church members. When Eaton first arrived the church had five hundred and seventy-three members, making this a three-fold increase in eighteen years. At this point in his pastorate there had been a total of one thousand, four hundred and forty-four baptisms and total contributions of \$604,426.23. Forty-three men in all had been set apart for ministry and a total of six new churches started.<sup>186</sup> The Southern Baptist Convention was held in the city during this year, making its third trip to Louisville (previously in 1857 and 1870). During this time period the city of Louisville had grown substantially. Barely forty thousand lived in the city when Walnut Street was formed. By the turn of the century there were two hundred thousand citizens. The church determined, after a day of prayer and fasting, that the existing building should be sold and a new building erected. The final service in the historic gothic building was April 1, 1900. A report was prepared for the service indicating that Walnut Street had grown from her small beginning to "perhaps the largest of any Baptist church in this country, or any other, with the possible exception of the Tabernacle of London."<sup>187</sup> Later reflection on this time period also attributed to Walnut Street "one of the largest Sunday-schools in the South, staffed by a corps of qualified teachers."<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 144.

<sup>186</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 157. The additional churches to those listed above were Meadow Home, Third Avenue, and Hopewell.

<sup>187</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 158. The theme of the morning service "in the old church house" was "my joy," from John 3:29. Hymns included: "Oh Could I Speak the Matchless Worth," "All Hail the Power," and "Rock of Ages" (Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 43).

<sup>188</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 53. The May 10, 1900 edition of the *Western Recorder*: "Tearing down the building has revealed a condition of which no man dreamed. The building was utterly

On May 1, 1901, the cornerstone was laid for a new building on Third and St. Catherine Streets. The ceremony for the event happened to coincide with Eaton's twentieth anniversary as the church's pastor. Previous pastorates had never exceeded more than six or seven years and most were substantially less. A temporary worship facility was secured in a vacant Presbyterian church at Second and College for almost a year before the church held its first service in the new building on March 9, 1902. A formal dedication service was held on November 16, 1902 in which morning, afternoon, and evening services were held. The *Western Recorder* describes the building as "the finest house of worship belonging to any church in the Convention."<sup>189</sup> Additional baptisms, increased giving, and new ministry and mission efforts marked almost five years of service under Eaton in the new location. Again, more men were set apart for ministry. On June 29, 1907, while en route for additional ministry efforts himself, T. T. Eaton died of a sudden heart attack at a train station in Grand Junction, Tennessee. Kimbrough writes, "He collapsed in the railroad station, asking, 'Are there any Baptists here?'"<sup>190</sup> Under his leadership, the church had become the most influential Baptist church in Louisville with close ties to Southern Seminary and its faculty and students, giving it an influence that reached around the world.

### **Theology in Practice**

The Articles of Faith adopted by the church on October 12, 1849 include nine articles upon which the church was founded. The first article states that the Scriptures are "the only infallible rule of Faith and Practice." The second article is a statement on the

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unsafe and every time the congregation gathered, it was at the peril of their lives . . . . To have continued to use the old building for church purposes would have involved a serious disaster with appalling loss of life" (55).

<sup>189</sup> Editorial, *The Western Recorder*, November 20, 1902, microfilm.

<sup>190</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 167.

Trinitarian nature of God while articles three through six contain the various elements of the gospel. There is no statement regarding election or predestination, even though the church had been founded on the Calvinistic principles found in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Article Six is a statement regarding the perseverance of the saints—“they will be kept by his power through faith unto salvation.” Article Seven establishes immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as the only true baptism and “that immersed believers only are entitled to partake of the Lord’s Supper.” Article Eight is related to the final resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment while Article Nine regards the ministry of spreading the gospel through the Christian ministry of all its members.<sup>191</sup> Leonard describes Walnut Street’s Articles of Faith as “much briefer than the elaborate Philadelphia Confession of faith” and that it represents a more modified Calvinism.<sup>192</sup>

A. H. Newman writes in his late nineteenth century history of the Baptists, “T. T. Eaton . . . represent[ed] the Baptist conservatism of the South.”<sup>193</sup> In an age of theological pluralism, Eaton intended to stand and fight for biblical truth as held by Baptists. Karen E. Smith writes, “He was convinced that Baptist beliefs were worth fighting over, and he stopped at nothing to make his views known.”<sup>194</sup> Eaton was a strong proponent of Landmarkism<sup>195</sup> and wrote many books, articles, and pamphlets on

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<sup>191</sup> Walnut Street Baptist Church, “Articles of Faith, October 12, 1849,” in *Manual of Operations and Policies* (Louisville: Walnut Street Baptist Church, n.d.), 2.

<sup>192</sup> Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 31.

<sup>193</sup> Newman, *History*, 425.

<sup>194</sup> Karen E. Smith, “Community and Conflict: Theological Issues,” in *Community in Diversity: A History of Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1815–1990* (Louisville: Simons-Neely Publishing, 1990), 162.

<sup>195</sup> Weaver writes: “The most explicit manifestation of gospel primitivism in Baptist life was the spread of Landmarkism throughout Southern Baptist ranks in the nineteenth century. The intense denominational competition of the frontier provided the context. Alexander Campbell claimed the restoration of the New Testament church; Methodists cited the apostolic poverty (and often celibacy) of

the subject, which is why Whitsitt's beliefs on baptism drew Eaton's ire. He felt that he must contend for the convictions of the Baptist faith even if it seemed no one else would. He writes in one sermon later published as a pamphlet:

Others who hold different beliefs will not advocate our doctrines, you may be sure, hence their advocacy depends upon us, and if we fail, what we believe to be true will perish from the earth. If those who believe error advocate it, while those who believe truth will not advocate it, then truth will perish and error will prevail.<sup>196</sup>

In *The Faith of Baptists*, Eaton outlines his advocacy for historic Baptist beliefs on three essential matters of faith and practice related to worship. This pamphlet was published in 1895, just over halfway through his tenure as Walnut Street's pastor. They are the thoughts of a seasoned pastor who had determined upon which truths he and his church must stand. He introduces the pamphlet in this manner, "Baptists rejoice to hold in common with many others the doctrines of grace and the great principles that make up the Evangelical faith. They lay special emphasis, however, on the importance of strict conformity to Bible teaching."<sup>197</sup> The purpose of this publication is to elucidate where Baptist belief is different from other denominations. He highlights three areas: (1) the church, (2) baptism, and (3) the Lord's Supper. "Baptist doctrines on these subjects follow as corollaries to their fundamental doctrines of direct and personal responsibility to God and of absolute submission to Scripture teaching."<sup>198</sup> Regarding the church he

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their evangelistic itinerant ministers. Baptists did not simply suggest they were restoring the New Testament, but that they *were* the New Testament church." Its inception regarded the nature of valid baptism and "alien immersion"—immersion administered by non-Baptists (Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 153). See James E. Tull, *High-Church Baptists in the South: The Origin, Nature, and Influence of Landmarkism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000). Tull calls Eaton "one of Landmark's most forceful personalities and most trenchant minds" (122).

<sup>196</sup> T. T. Eaton, *How to Behave as a Church Member* (Louisville, 1898), 10. This was originally a sermon given in 1891.

<sup>197</sup> T. T. Eaton, *The Faith of Baptists* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1895), 3. Eaton wrote a defense of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith in 1900. (See T. T. Eaton, "Defense of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith" in *Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith*, ed. Ben M. Bogard [Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1900], 194–97.)

<sup>198</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 4.

advocates local autonomy with a distinction between the local church and the churches that make up a denomination. Speaking of the New Testament example, “These churches, the only kind known to the New Testament, were independent bodies and were subject to no central authority . . . All that is said to the churches and about them assumes their entire independence.”<sup>199</sup> He is consistent with historic Baptist faith and practice in his view of the ordinances. Baptism is by immersion for those who have professed faith in Christ only, thus advocating “regenerated church membership.”<sup>200</sup> Communion was open only to those who have made this profession and had subsequently been baptized upon this profession, and been joined to a local church.<sup>201</sup> In all of these arguments he asserts “no Baptist scholar has been quoted, not for any lack of them, since they are abundant, but to show that the positions taken are sustained by the scholarship of other denominations.”<sup>202</sup> His support for each of these points is from Scripture, but also a broad array of theologians. He summarizes, “A New Testament church is then a local congregation of baptized believers—or ‘saints,’ as Paul calls them—banded together on their profession of faith for the maintenance of the ministry of the word and of the

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<sup>199</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 7. In this passage he also condemns the practice of any distinction between ruling elders and teaching elders, as well as the concept of a priest. “Christ is the one and only priest who once for all made the offering for sin, of which all the offerings of the Levitical priests were but types and symbols . . . To bring in any other sin bearer or intercessor is to declare that the work of Christ is insufficient” (12–13). He also rejects the Church of England’s concept of any proposed Apostolic succession of their church (14). Later he writes regarding the distinction of role while maintaining the equality of rank: “No one man can outrank any other man in a New Testament church” (16).

<sup>200</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 17. “Baptists affirm that New Testament baptism is the immersion in water in the name of the Trinity of a believer on a profession of faith by one duly set apart by a church for such service” (20). Eaton also writes of baptism in his article, “What is Baptism?” (See T. T. Eaton, “What is Baptism?” in *Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith*, 176–193.)

<sup>201</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 75–76. “Turning to the New Testament we find three prerequisites laid down for participation in the Lord’s Supper: first, a credible profession of faith; second, baptism; third, an orderly church membership.”

<sup>202</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 42. He quotes and cites Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists; as well as from the Reformers and Puritans.

ordinances of the gospel, and to win the world to Christ.”<sup>203</sup>

The matter of baptism, in this case “alien-immersion,” especially in light of the controversy with the Campbellites’ view of baptism for the remission of sins, was of great importance to Eaton. When H. P. Fudge, who had joined the church by letter, applied for ordination in 1897, the question of his baptism was inquired upon. Eaton explains, “In his examination he told how he had been baptized by a Disciple preacher, and was received into a Baptist church in Indiana on that baptism. The presbytery were [sic] unanimous in recommending that he be baptized before being ordained.”<sup>204</sup> He was baptized and ordained on the same day—October 5, 1897. Eaton had written in *The Faith of the Baptists* just two years earlier,

The Disciples teach that baptism is in order to procure the remission of sins. They have cut themselves off from our Baptist churches, which Baptists are bound to believe are according to New Testament order, and therefore the Disciples have so far forth, been guilty of schism, and have turned their backs upon New Testament order. From the Baptist standpoint, therefore, they have not an orderly church membership.<sup>205</sup>

Baptism by immersion according to profession of faith and scriptural truth is what makes Baptists who they are. There is no more Baptist distinctive than this.

The “Whitsitt Controversy” was in large part also over the matter of baptism. Whitsitt, a church historian and then president of Southern Seminary, published his controversial claim that Baptists did not begin to practice immersion until 1641.<sup>206</sup> This called into the question the practice of baptism by immersion in Baptist churches since the New Testament era, refuting the argument of Landmarkism. Eaton used his role as

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<sup>203</sup> Eaton, *Faith of Baptists*, 15. He warns: “No man should join a church to be saved. He must not join until he is saved, and ready to go forward in obedience to Christ’s commands. Just the word place in the world for an unsaved man is in a church.”

<sup>204</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 48.

<sup>205</sup> T. T. Eaton, *The Faith of Baptists* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1895), 81.

<sup>206</sup> See William H. Whitsitt, *A Question in Baptist History: Whether the Anabaptists in England Practiced Immersion Before the Year 1641* (Louisville: Charles T. Dearing, 1896).

editor of the *Western Recorder* to support a movement requiring the removal of Whitsitt as president of the seminary. Pratt explains, “As a result of the controversy, Whitsitt was forced not only to resign the presidency of the Seminary but to move his membership from Walnut Street Baptist Church as well.” Whitsitt was to write the history of the church for its jubilee celebration. The resulting schism required Eaton to write it himself and “tarnished what had been a generally positive relationship between Walnut Street and the Seminary.”<sup>207</sup> This was a price that Eaton was willing to pay. Smith writes, “He was a man driven by his desire to hold fast to what he believed to be true Baptist doctrine.” Later she summarizes Eaton’s pastorate in this manner,

While his years as pastor were difficult ones for the church, he is remembered for his strong and forceful leadership, evangelistic witness, and his seemingly tireless, if not sometimes vitriolic, pen . . . . He did not hesitate to attack what he believed to be doctrinal heresy and in doing so he often spoke in terms which were not only uncompromising, but often less than charitable.”<sup>208</sup>

### **Practice of Worship**

Andrew Pratt writes of Walnut Street’s worship, “Worship is not only central to Walnut Street, it is vital. The ability of the church to find unity amid diversity rests to some extent on the pastor’s leadership in worship. In addition, worship at Walnut Street sets the tone for all the various ministries performed by the church.”<sup>209</sup> The vast diversity

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<sup>207</sup> Pratt, “A Community of Ministers,” 68. Under fire from his pastor, Whitsitt felt he had to withdraw his membership from the church. With the close ties between the seminary and the church the controversy created division within the church.

<sup>208</sup> Smith, “Community and Conflict,” 165. “Even after Whitsitt resigned . . . Eaton continued his attack on him and on others at the seminary who in his opinion were straying from what he believed to be the true principles of the faith. In 1907, Eaton launched an attack on W. O. Carver (1868–1954), Professor at Southern Seminary, who was member of Walnut Street. Eaton claimed that Carver was trying to unite Baptists and Campbellites (now known as Disciples) . . . Carver denied the charges, claiming Eaton had left a wrong impression and misrepresented him in the *Western Recorder*.”

<sup>209</sup> Pratt, “A Community of Ministers,” 61. For a treatise on the principles of worship among Landmark Baptists such as Eaton at the turn of the century, see Samuel H. Ford, *Baptist Waymarks* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 66–80, accessed December 14, 2004, [http://geocitiessites.com/baptist\\_documents/waymarks.ford.contents.html](http://geocitiessites.com/baptist_documents/waymarks.ford.contents.html).

of a burgeoning inner-city church led by an evangelistic-minded pastor is most on display in worship. This likely explains why there was such a consistent thread of challenge and difficulty woven into the church's history with regard to worship. Pastors who were itinerant evangelists and camp meeting speakers led the earliest days of First and Second Baptist Churches. The establishment of the church as Walnut Street included a transition of the church's identity to that of a more formal downtown church, especially as the city of Louisville began to grow. This transition was most evident under Eaton's leadership, which saw the city grow dramatically and the church refine its image, especially musically, as a downtown Baptist church.

The church covenant describes the pattern of behavior required of all members with regard to its worship. It includes the following:

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together nor omit the great duty of prayer both for ourselves and for others . . . that we will seek divine aid to enable us to walk circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying ungodliness and every worldly lust; that we will strive together for the support of a faithful evangelical ministry among us. That we will endeavor by example, and effort to win souls to Christ. And through life amidst evil report and good report seek to live to the glory of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.<sup>210</sup>

Church discipline was initially very strict and monthly business meetings were held one Friday night a month to bring public charges of inappropriate behavior of church members before the church. However, after the merging of the congregations into the Walnut Street congregation in 1849, this process was undertaken by a committee:

Instead of "inquiring for fellowship of the church," and making that the signal for the presentation of charges, a committee on discipline was appointed. Still charges were sometimes made in open meeting by individual members . . . Generally, however, the discipline was left in the hands of the committee, and action was taken simply on their reports.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Walnut Street Baptist Church, "Church Covenant," quoted in Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 32.

<sup>211</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 17. The role of the committee was "to look after all the members of the church who are living in fragrant violation of their covenant obligations to the church" (21).

The most common charge for discipline was the lack of attendance at worship services, though there was a general concern that discipline was not consistently upheld for this or other transgressions. The motive for discipline was not as much out of concern for purity for corporate worship as was more often the case with Baptist churches in the past. This was partially the case, but more so it was that the congregation should “purify itself before in can hope to work . . . for the purification of the world.”<sup>212</sup> This represents the shift in primary orientation from the purity of the gathered church before God in worship, to a greater concern for the purity of the scattered church in evangelism and witness. This revivalistic shift is also reflected in the preparation for worship in a manner that was more in line with preparation for evangelistic revival, but also in the orientation of the worship services, which had become more cognizant of the unbelievers gathering on Sunday. This is not to say that there was no benefit intended for the believers who attended corporate worship. Eaton lists five reasons in a sermon based on Hebrews 10:25: (1) to become more devotional (he uses the illustration of a musician not practicing); (2) to maintain and cultivate fellowship (he uses the illustration of a stalk of wheat standing alone); (3) to enable us to resist temptation against backsliding; (4) to learn of God; and (5) for the sake of others. “Where two or three are gathered . . . [there is a] special promise to meeting.”<sup>213</sup> The promise included the salvation of the unsaved.

Eaton presented a paper to the Baptist World Congress in 1884 in Philadelphia, PA on the topic of the appropriate use of word of God in worship. He writes, “Of all places and times, the Bible should be treated reverently in the pulpit and in public

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<sup>212</sup> Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 40. In 1875, the business meeting was moved to Wednesday nights and prayer meetings were held on the Wednesday nights that were not business meetings (40). However, in July 1894, it was recommended to reestablish a monthly “covenant meeting” held before communion Sunday when members “reaffirmed their covenant relationship” (43).

<sup>213</sup> T. T. Eaton, “Hebrews 10:25,” box 10, Thomas Treadwell Eaton Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

worship.”<sup>214</sup> He continues with his description of worship’s priority: “The aims of public worship being to awaken sinners and build up the saints who are present, such parts of Scripture should be used as are best suited to these ends.”<sup>215</sup> Here again, the priority in worship seems to be first, the sinner’s conversion and second, the edification of the saints. It is not exclusively for the unsaved as a revival service might be, but the prioritized emphasis has shifted toward evangelism and away from edification in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Baptist worship. The appropriate worship of God is not referenced in this paper at all, much less advocated as the primary aim. The worship gathering seems to have become a revivalistic meeting with secondary benefits for believers. Wednesday night meetings were seen as directed toward believers through Bible lectures while the events of Sunday emphasized an evangelistic theme.

Eaton’s concern for preparation for worship is reflected in an unknown excerpt simply labeled as page “3.” The first two pages are missing, but it appears to be a sermon about worship and the worship attender’s concern for outward appearance versus inward focus. He writes, “In how many instances do undue care and anxiety about external things, rob the mind of spirituality and withdraw us from communion with God, and hinder our growth in grace!” He warns that there are “here, even in this house of God, this holy Sabbath morning” those who did not enter “this holy place” properly, since they “bestowed more thought and attention upon their external appearance . . . than they did upon the preparation of their hearts to enter this sanctuary and worship him acceptably.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> T. T. Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible in Public Worship,” in *The Third Annual Baptist Autumnal Conference for the Discussion of Current Questions, Held at Philadelphia, PA, November 11, 12, 13, 1884* (Boston, MA: Baptist Missionary Rooms, 1885), 84.

<sup>215</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 86. In this paper Eaton castigates a common practice of preachers in the day of “using Scripture as a motto.” Eaton’s preaching method is discussed below.

<sup>216</sup> T. T. Eaton, “Worship Excerpt,” box 2, folder 2, Thomas Treadwell Eaton Papers, Archives

Eaton addresses the topic of acceptable worship in a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments relate to the subject of worship. While the first commandment deals with the subject of idolatry, “the second forbids the worship of the true one in any way save that which he hath appointed.”<sup>217</sup> Though he assumes that Protestants have less error here than the Catholics and others who use icons and statues, he acknowledges some concern. The bulk of his concern is the propensity of man to “add to his requirements” and worship God in any mode, save that which he has commanded.”<sup>218</sup> He explains,

But in all these things Baptists in the past have been innocent, they have borne a testimony through all their history, against any addition or changes, in spiritual worship, which is today our noblest earthly heritage. They have scorned all pleas of expediency, refused to make religion attractive to the senses by glitter and tinsel, rejec [sic] all innocent addition to God’s way, and through persecution and danger and death, maintained unshaken their obedience to this second commandment.<sup>219</sup>

Eaton describes Baptist worship in contrast to that of the Catholics or similar practices. “Our religion was never intended to be attractive to the senses and imagination; its only appeals are to the reason and the conscience . . . you seek to increase its attractiveness, so surely with [Jereboam] will you cause Israel to sin. It will be to the end of time to the self righteous Jew a stumbling block, and to the learned Greek foolishness; but to those who believe, the power of God unto salvation.”<sup>220</sup> His concern is that by adding human additions to worship that God has not required, the gospel will be obscured and God will

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and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

<sup>217</sup> T. T. Eaton, “2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment,” box 8, Thomas Treadwell Eaton Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1.

<sup>218</sup> Eaton, “2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment,” 3.

<sup>219</sup> Eaton, “2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment,” 4. He has referenced such things as required bowing/kneeling in the service, sprinkling for baptism, and other added ceremonies often associated with Catholicism.

<sup>220</sup> Eaton, “2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment,” 4–5.

not acknowledge and bless the worship. Eaton is speaking to the regulative principle in worship in a similar way to that of his Baptist forbears from the same second commandment. He is seeking to protect the purity of the gospel in worship:

This second commandment forbids all reverence for places as sacred, or use of relics for devotion. It forbids all dependence for protection on charms or lucky signs, all looking for salvation to baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, good works or anything save the grace of God, converting the soul. Whenever you let any of these things occupy Christ's place in the scheme of salvation, you are bowing down to an image, as truly as the Israelites to Aaron's calf. It forbids hypocrisy and formality,—the latter ever a growing sin among churches which are at rest from persecution.<sup>221</sup>

In Walnut Street's new building dedication service on November 16, 1902, George B. Eager, a seminary professor, provides a similar description of Baptist worship in his sermon, "What a Baptist Church Should Stand For." He proclaims, "The corollaries to [living stones] are simple loyalty to Christ and to the Word, simplicity in worship, ordinances and policy. No gorgeous ritual in worship, baptism as the formal initiation . . . [And] the Lord's Supper a memorial ordinance symbolizing nourishment."<sup>222</sup>

Eaton was not a proponent of responsive readings in worship. In fact, he suggests responsive singing as an equally demeaning treatment of a text, with the difference being that it was God's word being handled carelessly in the reading rather than hymns of human composure. He also was not an advocate of the unison reading of Scripture, though he does not object to an individual reading Scripture other than the pastor. "But there should not be reading aloud in concert; all the analogies are against it."<sup>223</sup> When the preacher reads Scripture, he explains that some explanation may be

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<sup>221</sup> Eaton, "2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment," 5–6.

<sup>222</sup> The Dedication, *The Western Recorder*, November 20, 1902, microfilm.

<sup>223</sup> Eaton, "Right Use of the Bible," 88. "We are God's soldiers." The soldiers don't read the orders from the Commander-in-chief aloud together. "We are God's children." The family does not read the letter from the loving father aloud together. "God is a king." How does one deal with the proclamation of monarchs? "Can any passage of Scripture be cited in favor of all the people reading aloud in public worship?" He then cites 1 Corinthians 14:31 as support for one person reading at a time. This part of Eaton's presentation is at the end. When he concludes George Dana Boardman (1828–1903) stands to

given as a common practice of the day, but common sense should prevail: “If the comments are short, pointed, and instructive, they will be useful; but if they are commonplace and really explain nothing they had better be omitted and the words of Scripture be left in their simple grandeur to make their own impression.”<sup>224</sup> As to the choice of the Scripture reading, in most instances the context of the main text is to be preferred. However, he feels that “if the sermon is to be expository, and the text is to be brought out at length in the discourse, it may be best to read other passages of Scripture bearing on the same subject. In general, however, the preacher should read the context.”<sup>225</sup> Eaton’s practice appears to have been to employ Scripture readings of related texts to the context of his sermon text, and not the sermon text itself.

He cautions against the criticism of a particular translation from the pulpit by highlighting the original language word and scrutinizing the particular English word choice.<sup>226</sup> He feels that preaching illustrations are best derived from other places in the Scripture rather than a common practice of the day of borrowing from science. “There is

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contest the last portion in particular. His argument is that by placing so much emphasis on the preacher in worship that the pulpit has replaced the altar and the Baptist liturgy is as rigid as that of the Episcopalians. “The preacher conducts almost every part of the service, except occasionally of the singing; he takes the place of all the old worship. It is his voice that is heard from the beginning to the end. What he says in his sermon is accounted of more worth than the prayer, that the Scripture. Many a person will not hesitate to come into the house of God during the singing or even during the reading of the Scripture or the delivery of the prayer, who does hesitate to come in when the preacher is preaching. More respect is paid to the preacher than to the word of God.” His argument is for more liturgical worship that gives the congregation its voice in worship back: “Moreover, and I say it deliberately, unless you recognize more than you have this instinct of liturgical worship, you will find that the churches that do foster it will steal away your people, and especially your young people” (89).

<sup>224</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 86.

<sup>225</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 86. He does condemn a trite handling of Scripture in preaching: “If the text is to be used as a motto—and with due deference to the high authority to the contrary, I see no objection to such use occasionally, provided it be done openly and honestly—then it may be best to read passages elsewhere which illustrate or enforce the truths or the duties the sermon is designed chiefly to urge.”

<sup>226</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 85. His specific example is that of the word “charity” from 1 Corinthians 13 use of *agapē*.

danger that science will change, and so the illustration will lose its force.”<sup>227</sup> In general, his strong urge is to rely upon the power of the word of God in worship:

Let us *use* the Bible, for that is the weapon by which all spiritual conquests are to be won. The news of the day, the most recent science, the latest philosophy, the newest theology, these may make up very interesting and attractive discourses, but they will convert no souls and build up no characters.<sup>228</sup>

Once again, the use of preaching here seems first for evangelistic goals and secondarily for edification. The zeal for conversion and to see the lost saved, the regular practice of protracted revival meetings each year, and the nineteenth-century emphasis on revival have slowly broadened the dialogue in worship and directed its concluding impetus to be for the unsaved.

Eaton reports in his historical account that issues regarding the use of music in worship began before the merging of First and Second Baptist churches to form Walnut Street. Apparently the choir of the First Baptist Church was accustomed to, or desirous of, using a bass viol in worship. The use of instruments in worship was still a matter of contentious debate. A resolution was submitted on February 17, 1844: “That no instrumental music be allowed in this church, without the consent of the church.” Two days later there was another entry due to a violation of the resolution. The leader of the choir is reported to have responded, “[I was] directed by the choir to bring the instrument to the church, and did so supposing the objections to its introduction had been removed.” This division between the choir and the church seems to have been resolved though it is unclear how this was accomplished. The report of the committee soon after indicates that the choir was invited to “resume their place in the gallery.”<sup>229</sup> It is unclear whether or not they continued the use of the bass viol in worship.

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<sup>227</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 86.

<sup>228</sup> Eaton, “Right Use of the Bible,” 87; emphasis Eaton’s.

<sup>229</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 8–9.

Controversy revolving around the use of music continued in Walnut Street's history as Everts, the second pastor of the church, had to appoint a committee to "help solve the church music problem." Everts introduced the subject and "was followed by interesting and forcible remarks." The task of the special committee was "to confer together upon the subject and mature a plan for the promotion of this important part of divine worship (said consideration to be based upon the real merits of the subject, free, if possible, from educational bias or prejudice" and report to the church.<sup>230</sup> It is clear from the financial records that money for an organ was spent in 1859 as construction costs included a line item for "organ" at a cost of \$3,087.28.<sup>231</sup> Leonard records that the organ was present when the building opened in 1854 and it was valued at \$10,000.<sup>232</sup> If so, this expense in 1859 might have been repair cost, enhancement, or merely the reflection of a portion of the earlier costs. It is possible that the choice of music and the use of instruments remained a source of contention as the following guideline was put into place for a non-church group that wanted to rent the building for usage in 1865: "No instrumental music [may] be used except the organ, and no singing except sacred hymns."<sup>233</sup> The quality and balance of singing seems to have also been an issue. In 1867, the controversy was related to the singing of certain hymns. Leonard explains:

The deacons "investigated" the matter and concluded that "the difficulty" related more to the use of numerous hymnbooks "than any indisposition of the choir to select familiar music." Noting the difficulty of defining familiar music the deacons recommended that the church elect an organist and a "leader of music." The latter's duty involved leading music for all "public and social meetings" and in Sunday School. They also encouraged the church to increase the size of the choir, to hold singing classes, and to purchase "a hymnbook with notes, with which the members of the choir can supply themselves." Most 19<sup>th</sup> century congregations used

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<sup>230</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 16.

<sup>231</sup> Kimbrough, *Walnut Street Baptist Church*, 85. The total construction cost of the building, was \$81,299.98.

<sup>232</sup> Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 29.

<sup>233</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 22.

hymnbooks in which only words were printed. “Note books” with tunes and melodies were separate. Thus the Walnut Street Church began to expand its music ministry toward greater congregational participation.<sup>234</sup>

The church approved the recommendation. In March 1868, a committee was appointed to “make such arrangements as they can to develop the best church music, having an eye to combining choir and congregational singing.”<sup>235</sup> A singing school was established in 1873 to attempt to improve congregational singing.<sup>236</sup>

*The Psalmist* was the first hymnal used by the Walnut Street congregation and it appears to have been the primary hymnal for almost forty years. The 1849 meeting that formed the Walnut Street Church and dissolved First and Second Baptist churches also voted on this hymnal as the regular hymnal.<sup>237</sup> While some controversy erupted later over an inconsistency of hymnal usage and the use of unfamiliar hymns as relayed above, it was recommended again in 1869 that *The Psalmist* “or a selection from it by the Pastor and church be used both in our Social and Sabbath meetings.”<sup>238</sup> Apparently other hymnals were in use at other functions or at least by the choir at times. In 1872, this was changed to *The Baptist Praise Book: For Congregational Singing*.<sup>239</sup> Finally, just after Eaton’s arrival, the recommendation was made to purchase the hymnal for which he sat

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<sup>234</sup> Leonard, *Community in Diversity*, 37.

<sup>235</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 23.

<sup>236</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 26.

<sup>237</sup> “November 30, 1849” in *Business Meeting Minutes*, 8. “Recommended the use of *The Psalmist* in the Public Worship of the Church.”

<sup>238</sup> “January 15, 1869” in *Business Meeting Minutes*, 266. This same report also recommended a thirty-minute rehearsal for the congregation on Wednesdays after the evening lecture and the hiring of a song leader and an organist.

<sup>239</sup> “April 12, 1872,” in *Business Meeting Minutes*, 236. See Richard Fuller, et al, *The Baptist Praise Book: For Congregational Singing* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1871). Two of Walnut Street’s former pastors were on the editorial board of this hymnal—W. W. Everts and George C. Lorimer.

on the editorial board: *The Baptist Hymnal, For Use in the Church and Home* (1883).<sup>240</sup> Congregational singing was aided by a group of singers (likely a quartet as had become popular elsewhere), in addition to the choir. A cornet was also used to accompany singing for a while and this person was paid. In 1887 the cornet was dispensed with and a precenter—A. Smyth—was hired in January 1888 to lead the singing.<sup>241</sup> There was a paid choir for at least one year and the quartet seems to have been paid for several years.<sup>242</sup>

In 1893, after Eaton's arrival, and upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, the paid choir was dispensed with "to save expenses." This was followed by instructions to the pastor to "appoint a committee on music, with power to act." The committee recommended the formation of a volunteer choir, and formally thanked Mr. and Mrs. George P. Weller for leading the choir. A children's singing class was started in 1894.<sup>243</sup> Again, in 1896, "the church was still wrestling with the music problem, the record telling us 'the music committee reported progress and asked further time.'"<sup>244</sup>

The quartet was dispensed with in 1901 due to a budget deficit. A volunteer choir was utilized in its place.<sup>245</sup> The use of the organ in congregational singing

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<sup>240</sup> "July 9, 1884," in *Business Meeting Minutes*, 260. John A. Broadus and Basil Manly, Jr. were also on this editorial board.

<sup>241</sup> "January 4, 1888," in *Business Meetings Minutes*, 154.

<sup>242</sup> Robert Gary Walker, "The Walnut Street Music Reader: A Documentary History of the Music Program of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 1844–1954 (M.C.M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971), 139–40. Walker derives this impression from looking at financial expenditures related to the music ministry.

<sup>243</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 43–44.

<sup>244</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 46.

<sup>245</sup> "June 8, 1902," in *Business Meeting Minutes*, 478. The motion was to dispense with the quartette until the church moved into the new building. The church vacillated between a paid choir and a volunteer choir. Immediately after moving into the new building a "first class choir had been secured." The choir being "on hand each Sunday," the congregation was encouraged to "pass judgment themselves" (491).

continued steadily since the first one was installed in the original building when it was built. The organist was also the music director during most of Eaton's tenure. Eaton writes of the choir's function at the new building dedication in 1902: "That choir, directed by Brother Fillison Speiden [organist], won high praise as it participated in a week's celebration initiating the new church home."<sup>246</sup>

Robert Walker explains in his study of music at Walnut Street: "There were several recorded instances where singing classes were given permission to use the church, and also on occasion the church sponsored classes in music." He concludes, "During the period the church was located at Fourth and Walnut Streets, interest in music and music programs seems to have continually grown." After the move to Third and Catherine during Eaton's tenure, "The musical life of the church seems to have been very active during the early years at the new location."<sup>247</sup> This may have been due to the strong emphasis Eaton himself placed upon singing. In some notes he recorded on singing hymns, he outlines his view that "Christianity [is] a religion of song." First, he describes his interpretation of Colossians 3:16: Psalms are "musical accompanied;" hymns are "simple praise to God;" and spiritual songs are "religious aspirations [and] emotions." He also includes five thoughts regarding singing in worship: "Church music should be (1) Good music—give God the best; (2) real praise to God, not [a] concert to man; (3) spirited, yet dignified and reverential; (4) expression of Christian emotion [and] experience; [and] (5) all should sing."<sup>248</sup> In a sermon based on Colossians 3:16 he writes,

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<sup>246</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 57.

<sup>247</sup> Walker, "Walnut Street Music Reader," 140.

<sup>248</sup> T. T. Eaton, "Some Hymns," box 10, Thomas Treadwell Eaton Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, n.p. Eaton also sketches out the background of the following hymns and hymn writers in these notes: Henry Francis Lyte's "Abide with Me," Ray Palmer's "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," William Cowper's "There is a Fountain," Augustus Toplady's "Rock of Ages," Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and George Keith's "How Firm a Foundation." Each is listed with its hymn number as found in *The Baptist Hymnal, for Use in Church and Home* (1883).

“Singing must be spirited, not in such haste—as if [to] race to [the] end—not so slow as to be somber and heavy.” He adds his pervasive evangelistic emphasis here as well. “Congregational singing reaches [the] unconverted. This is [a] great power in Spurgeon’s ch[urch].” As above, he prioritizes the need for congregational participation in singing as well. “Each of us [is] responsible to see that church music [is] as good as possible—not [a] concert—but praise.”<sup>249</sup>

As with Baptist churches elsewhere, preaching was the main element of worship. Eaton’s earlier sermons were outlines written by hand and generally consisted of the main points and some shorthand notes. His later sermons were seemingly fully scripted by hand, and even later typed. It is likely that he added to these notes extemporaneously, but his later sermons were far more scripted than his earlier notes represent. These later sermons were essentially word for word transcripts from which he preached. It is unclear why he became more thorough in his later preaching preparation. Perhaps this is due to his age, or a mature desire to be better prepared, as he was nearing and his sixties by this time. The form is generally based upon a single verse or short passage. It appears to be a form of topical exposition, drawing from the context of the passage, though not full expository preaching.<sup>250</sup> It was not using Scripture as a motto, as Eaton demeaned in his paper before the Baptist World Congress, but seeking to preach a topic from a verse in context and elaborating upon that topic from illustrations and

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<sup>249</sup> T. T. Eaton, “Colossians 3:16,” box 10, Thomas Treadwell Eaton Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, n.p. Eaton preached this message several times in various places, but twice at Walnut Street—November 1890 and October 1899. The bulk of the sermon is filled with illustrations of how singing has been used in history and the impact of hymns on the church.

<sup>250</sup> Timothy S. Warren defines topical exposition as: “Preaching . . . that is centered in a biblical text that is authoritative . . . and focus[ed] on relevance for particular listeners (Timothy S. Warren, “Can Topical Preaching also be Expository?” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 419).

examples. Eaton's preaching was described as "strong evangelistic preaching" and this set a standard for preaching that Walnut Street would maintain.<sup>251</sup>

## Summary

The order of the funeral service held for T. T. Eaton in 1907 is given in helpful detail. It was opened with one of his favorite hymns, "How Firm a Foundation." This was followed by Scripture reading, prayer, resolutions, and eulogies. The main sermon followed and then two hymns were read ("My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and "Jesus Lover of My Soul") before the benediction.<sup>252</sup> The same core sequence of elements of hymn, Scripture reading, prayer and sermon are found in the building dedication services of November 16, 1902. From these can be derived the likely form of a Sunday morning worship service in 1902, as shown in figure 12.<sup>253</sup>

The general Baptist worship pattern of Scripture reading, prayer, and sermon interspersed with hymns is very clear here. Though each service has some unique qualities (the use of a choir, solo, or male chorus; the order of some elements; the presence of an offering or baptism), they each followed a similar contour, but apparently never a precise liturgy. What is more instructive are the titles of these elements from the building dedication services, informing the contour of theme and worship dialogue. All three services begin with the doxology either first or second, and end with a spoken benediction. Various hymns ("Hark, Hark my Soul"), an invocation, or the choir ("Oh Come Let Us Worship") provide the other opening service element facilitating the theme

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<sup>251</sup> Pratt, "A Community of Ministers," 69.

<sup>252</sup> Eaton, *History of Walnut Street*, 64. The practice of reading hymns rather than singing them was also a part of the building dedication services in 1902 (59). These hymns were certainly also among Eaton's favorites as each of these appear in his notes on hymns referenced above.

<sup>253</sup> This is based upon a synthesis of the three building dedication services held on November 16, 1902 for Walnut Street's new house of worship (The Dedication, *The Western Recorder*, November 20, 1902, microfilm.).

of gathering for worship. Scripture Reading and another hymn (“How Firm a Foundation” or “I Love to Tell the Story”) typically follow. The Scripture reading is related to the sermon text, but not the same as the sermon text. Prayer consistently follows these opening elements. This prayer is followed by music in the form of a hymn

Organ Prelude

Choir (at times) or Opening Hymn

Doxology (if not before the choir/opening hymn)

Invocation

Hymn

Scripture Reading

Prayer

Choir (when not at the beginning)

Hymn

Sermon

Offering

Prayer

Solo or Quartet

Hymn

Baptism (usually practiced in the evening)

Benediction

Figure 12. Potential order of worship at Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky)

(“Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken”), a male chorus (“Lead Kindly Light”) or the choir (“The Day is Past and Over” followed by the hymn “There is a Fountain”). The sermon is then presented and a hymn of response (“Coronation,” “O, Safe to the Rock,” or “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”) provides the final congregational response to the

message. Every service is closed with a spoken benediction to send the church out.

What seems to be clear is that the initial worship elements consistently seek to point the believer to God in worship and allow the congregation to respond to his presence (e.g., revelation and response). The sermon is always towards the end of the service, in typical Baptist form, and emphasized as the main element of worship. This part of the service contains the most evident evangelistic themes. A song of response regularly follows the theme of the sermon (e.g., exhortation and response). The gospel theme is prevalent throughout various service elements (e.g., mediation and response). It is most often emphasized at the end of the sermon, but is also present elsewhere in the service. In many ways, the gospel becomes the overarching theme from beginning to end. The interspersed hymns give the congregation the opportunity to respond to other worship elements such as the Scripture reading, prayer, and sermon. The gospel theme seems to be emphasized more towards the unsaved at the end of the meeting, as do the other nineteenth-century churches in this study. However, the gospel theme is still the predominant theme throughout. Response to the worship elements is very important at Walnut Street as Eaton was very opposed to the concept of worship becoming a concert for the people. He wanted their engagement and participation throughout the service. In doing so, he intended they engage and participate with the gospel throughout the service.

CHAPTER 6  
CONCLUSION

**The Gospel as Liturgical Hermeneutic**

The primary question under consideration in this study has been, “How did Baptists in North America take the gospel initially brought from England and *re-present* it in worship for successive generations of Baptist worship?” The priority of worship as a *re-presentation* of the gospel has been informed by the work of Bryan Chapell, Christopher Ellis, and Matthew Ward. Additionally, the work of Alexander Schmemmann and others in the field of liturgical theology has served to elucidate the value of informed liturgy in worship, even when that liturgy is part of a worship tradition that is considered non-liturgical. Finally, the liturgical anthropology of James K. A. Smith has been utilized to demonstrate how corporate worship works in the individual worship lives of believers to form faith. In coalescing these streams of thought, a picture of the gospel’s role in worship becomes much clearer.

According to Chapell, the gospel controls its forms.<sup>1</sup> This means when the gospel is kept in theological practice, it will of necessity imprint itself upon the liturgy of the worship service. When the gospel is lost in theological practice, it is also lost in the practice of worship.<sup>2</sup> It has not been within the scope of this study to identify the specific causes of the loss of the gospel in the worship of a particular church or movement, but in

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 85.

<sup>2</sup> Each church considered in this study has been represented in three sections: (1) a brief history, (2) theology in practice, and (3) practice of worship, to show this relationship.

general, theological errors lie at the crumbling foundation of gospel-less worship. When the gospel is regained in faith and belief, worship reflects this recovery, and subsequently reinforces it. The model proposed in this study to identify the gospel's form in Baptist worship is threefold: (1) revelation and response, (2) mediation and response, and (3) exhortation and response. These elements in worship's dialogue between God and man in a corporate worship service help reflect the presence and practice of the gospel. The intentional highlighting of these dialogical movements in worship reinforces the presence and practice of the gospel. This effect in corporate worship serves the people of God by instilling in them the "rhythms of grace" for a lifestyle of worship.<sup>3</sup> It also provides the opportunity for sinners to be converted as a result of the worship service.

The earliest Baptists came from England to North America with pure and authentic worship as a priority. Matthew Ward has argued that this was their primary distinctive in England. Even if one does not fully embrace all of his conclusions regarding the English Baptists, this is a compelling argument for those who left England to come to North America. The first Baptists in Providence and Philadelphia had the opportunity to establish worship practices unhindered by persecution or coercion. The Baptists in Boston were persecuted and had less freedom, but still managed to break away over the conviction of the worship ordinances of believer's baptism and communion as baptized believers. With Boston under persecution and Providence unstable during its early decades, Philadelphia (e.g., Pennepek) served as the starting point of this study. The gospel content was clear there, and as much as could be reconstructed regarding worship order also reflected a gospel *ordo*. One of the best Baptist examples of gospel-shaped worship in found among these earliest Baptists in the Philadelphia Association.

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<sup>3</sup> See also, Mike Cosper in *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

Charleston has become famous as the mother of southern Baptists and the Charleston tradition of worship. While accurately reconstructing a full-orbed depiction of the worship order at Charleston is problematic, the gospel content is clear in the preaching of Oliver Hart and the most likely hymn choices of the time period. Hart was trained in the Philadelphia Association, which makes it likely that this influence was also reflected in the *ordo* of what became known as the Charleston order. Morgan Edwards provided a depiction of worship in *The Customs of Primitive Churches* (1768) that may serve as the best aid to recovering the Charleston worship service, though it is a depiction of a Philadelphia Association church.<sup>4</sup> Richard Furman's pastorate is generally regarded as the highpoint of the Charleston worship tradition, but Oliver Hart is its founder. This also serves as a strong example of gospel-shaped worship; as much as can be discerned.

Sandy Creek is one of the most difficult church services to reconstruct. Very little written material exists to examine the tradition that some have considered the counterpart to the Charleston tradition. The extreme evangelistic emphasis and semi-charismatic practices of worship are the greatest distinctions in this camp meeting tradition. The gospel theme for evangelism is clear in this practice, even if a worship order or sermon cannot be recovered. What remains unclear is what type of worship order existed. Broadly, the services seemed to contain three main sections: (1) preliminaries of singing, praying and exhortations; (2) sermon(s); and (3) evangelistic response to the gospel. It is not a stretch to believe that some form of the threefold model presented in this study was present. The opening portion of worship certainly intended to reveal the greatness of God, if in the manner of 1 Corinthians 14:24–25.<sup>5</sup> The subject of

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<sup>4</sup> Morgan Edwards, *The Customs of Primitive Churches* (Philadelphia: Andrew Steuart, 1768).

<sup>5</sup> “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you” (1 Cor 14:24-25)

the atonement of Christ was the main message and a call for a response to the gospel was the main reason for gathering. However, the radical spontaneity of the services, and the lack of historical accounts and written records, makes such a conclusion irresponsible.

Three churches have been presented in this study as examples of Charleston and Sandy Creek worship tradition synthesis in the nineteenth century. None of these fits either tradition exclusively, and all three reflect aspects of both. The synthesis of these traditions is quick and thorough. Siloam, Jarvis Street, and Walnut Street Baptist Churches are each marked by certain worship decorum as downtown churches in the Charleston tradition, but also a zeal for evangelism and revival that seems more rooted in the Sandy Creek tradition. DeVotie, pastor at Siloam, was accused by Basil Manly of having “thrown himself into revivalism.”<sup>6</sup> B. D. Thomas considered the Jarvis Street church “a failure unless souls are born in her.”<sup>7</sup> T. T. Eaton’s preaching at Walnut Street was considered “strongly evangelistic” and set a standard for his successors.<sup>8</sup> All were intentional about the gospel and congregational participation in worship. Each of these churches represent a facet of the nineteenth-century worship practice of gospel content and form that is exemplary among Baptists. Though the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave way to a wide variety of practices, these three churches represent some of the best examples of gospel-shaped worship. They exemplify a Baptist trend in worship that seems prevalent at mid-century, but less so as the end of the century neared. This practice of gospel-shaped worship for the believer, with zeal for the conversion of the

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<sup>6</sup> Hosea Holcombe, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Alabama* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1840), 59.

<sup>7</sup> B. D. Thomas, “The Glory of the Church,” in *Sermons Preached in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), 81–82.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Pratt, “A Community of Ministers: Pastors and Staff” in *Community in Diversity: A History of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1815–1990*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Louisville: Simons-Neely Publishing, 1990), 69.

unbeliever, is typical of the best examples of Baptist worship that ushered in the twentieth century.

### **Baptist Worship and the Gospel**

What Bryan Chapell refers to as “letting the gospel shape our practice,” has been characterized in a variety of different ways, but all point to worship’s function as a *re-presentation* of the gospel in worship.<sup>9</sup> Constance Cherry writes, “The Christ Event now drives worship, for the object of our worship is Jesus Christ, the content of our worship is the story of Jesus Christ, the word proclaimed in Christian worship is the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”<sup>10</sup> Bruce Leafblad writes,

An evangelical church celebrates and enacts the Evangel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—in its worship. Worship centers in Christ. The good news of redemption in Christ brings rejoicing, thanksgiving, and celebration in the “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” of worship. Sermons declare the manifold blessings and glories of salvation. The Lord’s Table reenacts and proclaims the heart of the good news.<sup>11</sup>

Matthew Ward referred to this practice among Baptists as “us[ing] the gospel as the liturgical hermeneutic.”<sup>12</sup> This has been reflected in the story of Baptist worship because it has been the intention of Baptists to advance the gospel and allow it to shape their practice.

Christopher Ellis’ study of Baptists in England concludes that the confession “Jesus is Lord” is the “presiding conviction” in Baptist worship. He identified the priorities of Baptist worship as having been attention to Scripture, devotion and openness to the Spirit, concern for the community, and an eschatological orientation in worship.

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<sup>9</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 85.

<sup>10</sup> Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Leafblad, “Evangelical Worship: A Biblical Model for the Twenty-First Century,” in *Experience God in Worship*, ed. Michael D. Warden (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2000), 93.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Ward, *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 143.

Finally, the central actions of worship identified in his study have been praying, preaching, singing and the ordinances.<sup>13</sup> Some very similar statements can be made resulting from this study regarding the nature of Baptist worship in North America, as those who came from these English beginnings.

The central act of worship among Baptists is preaching. Other consistent elements of worship include praying, singing, Scripture reading, and later giving (which does not become a consistent element of worship until the mid to late nineteenth century). Baptists celebrate the Lord's Supper intermittently (e.g., once a month or less frequently) and baptism as needed. Choral participation has been quite common among Baptist churches since the mid-nineteenth century and, to a lesser degree, the use of a quartet or soloists during the same time period. Franklin Segler and Randall Bradley have characterized Baptist worship in the following manner: "The general pattern of Baptist worship in England has remained about the same to the present, consisting of Scripture reading, prayers and sermons, interspersed with hymns by the congregation and the choir."<sup>14</sup> This is an apt description of Baptist worship in North America as well. The more that the Baptist worship service evolved in the time period in view in this study, it did so by adding more elements of worship interspersed with more congregational and choral singing. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century orders of worship could have five or more singing elements in the service with the other elements of Scripture reading and prayer filling in between them. This highlights a priority in Baptist worship in America—that of congregational participation, but more precisely—response.

The interspersion of singing among these elements might have been done just

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<sup>13</sup> Christopher J. Ellis, *Gathering: A Theology and Spirituality of Worship in the Free Church Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 74, 99, 229–32.

<sup>14</sup> Franklin M. Segler and C. Randall Bradley, *Christian Worship: Its Theology and its Practice* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006), 40.

to keep the congregation engaged periodically in its basic form. However, it seems more likely that this was done to give the congregation the opportunity to respond to the preceding element. This facilitates the dialogue of worship as God's voice in the dialogue is heard through the call to worship or Scripture reading, to which the people respond in song. Another manner in which this is done is to have the choir or a prayer represent an aspect of the worship dialogue, to which the congregation may also respond through singing. The most obvious aspect of this potential is the very common practice of having the congregation respond to the sermon through song. At times, and in some places, this took on the feel of an altar call, especially entering the twentieth century. However, whether it consisted of the words of an unsaved person responding to the gospel, or the saved person responding to the teaching of the word of God, most pastors and worship leaders worked hard to have the right words to put in the people's mouths at that strategic moment. These were the words that the worshiper carried into the rest of the week to inform lifestyle worship.

Revelation, mediation, and exhortation are representative of God's part of the dialogue in Baptist worship. Opening worship elements such as the call to worship, opening hymns and anthems, and opening prayers almost always represent this aspect of entering into corporate worship. The gathering nature of opening a worship service reflects the nature of a holy God who has revealed himself to his people and called them to worship through Jesus Christ. Baptist worship is clearly contoured to aim toward the preaching of God's word as the main point of instruction. While other elements of Scripture reading, congregational and choral singing, and written liturgies often include instruction from God's word, it is the sermon that worshipers expect to be the message from God, through the preacher, to speak to their lives. As has been mentioned above, the gospel content of mediation can take many forms and be placed in various places in the service. Elements throughout the service can reflect this part of the gospel shape, but

many times the middle section of a service draws people to these aspects of the gospel. This seems especially true of the eighteenth-century examples at Philadelphia and Charleston. The end of the service also often points people to this aspect of the gospel, especially if there is a gospel presentation to unbelievers, or the Lord's Supper is celebrated. This is true of all of the examples in this study. The emphasis of the proposed model for Baptist worship is not that Baptist worship services should rigidly follow this order. Baptist worship will not follow rigidly any order. The point of the model is to show that these movements of the gospel shape the service. God reveals himself and worshipers respond through worship's dialogue. Jesus is identified as the Savior by whom worship is made possible and worshipers (and unbelievers) respond through the words of worship. The Spirit instructs in the ways of following Christ through the word of God and worshipers (and unbelievers) respond verbally in song, prayer, and life. There is a converging of these themes throughout the service, but where the gospel is embraced, its identifying markers are present in some way in worship. The variety of examples represents the myriad of potential approaches to gospel-shaped worship. This is reflective of a multi-faceted, yet consistent, gospel shape.

Another aspect of this study has been the demonstration of how worship liturgy works. The concept of liturgy is somewhat foreign to Baptist worship practitioners. The last thing Baptists want to be is conformed to formal liturgy. Yet, for all of this, Baptists are famous for their ruts of tradition. It is the nature of the church, and of people in general, to carve out patterns of routine and practice that seem to work best. This is not simply a drive for efficiency, though that has impacted worship in both positive and negative ways. In tradition's more beneficent examples, it has been the result of worship leaders seeking to lead people through a contour of worship that highlights what is most important and eliminates what is not. The desire to keep Christ and his gospel central and the word of God foundational has persistently driven Baptist

worship. These are the patterns that have historically shaped the Baptist worship service and therefore the Baptist worshiper.

Three questions were introduced in chap. 4 as necessary criteria for evaluating gospel-centered worship in this study of North American Baptists: (1) Is Christ central to worship? (2) Is the gospel content present in worship? (3) Is the gospel faithfully “re-presented” in worship?” The evidence presented above is conclusive in the affirmative to each of these criteria. As a result, a gospel-shaped approach to Baptist worship has formed gospel-shaped people who have been being conformed to the image of Christ—the one that they have held in view.

### **Characteristics of Baptist Worship in North America**

Baptist worship in North America can be broadly characterized by five worship characteristics. First, the preaching of God’s word is the main worship element and is often seen as the main reason for gathering for worship. The sermon often takes up to half, and in some cases even more, of the total service time. The aim of the first portion of the service is to point toward the sermon as the climax of worship. This has led to the unfortunate habit of some referring to Baptist worship as having two services: the song service and the preaching service. It is a much more appropriate perspective to see all worship elements as part of the same worship service, as the examples in this study reflect. Proper response to the sermon was one of the earliest concerns of Baptists in North America. This emphasizes the importance of the word of God and the pulpit in Baptist worship within the context of the service as a whole.

Second, singing is an important part of worship to Baptists and it is often interspersed throughout the service as the primary means by which the congregation responds in worship’s dialogue. God’s portion of the dialogue is represented by the various means of employing his word (e.g., Scripture reading, songs, readings, etc.) and worshipers are given the opportunity to respond through song to what God *says* in

worship. Even unbelievers have hymns written for them to verbalize their response to the gospel. The human response to God and his gospel is an important part of Baptist worship and singing is used throughout the service as the vehicle to facilitate response. This is how the correct words are put in the worshipers' mouths and this is as much a part of the conforming process as the *ordo*.<sup>15</sup>

Third, while worship is primarily for believers, the presence of unbelievers has always been a consideration in worship planning and practice in North America. Initially it prevented some congregations from singing out of a fear of “conjoined” worship. However, this concern quickly gave way to the reality that unbelievers were always going to present in Baptist worship and the worship commands of Scripture including singing. The appeal to unbelievers to respond to the gospel is a prevalent theme in Baptist worship history beginning in the nineteenth century. A deliberate altar call is an emerging element of worship as Baptist worship enters the twentieth century. It seems likely the ethos for this stems from influence of the great awakenings, Sandy Creek, and camp meetings. Jarvis Street almost certainly employed one during Thomas’ pastorate and Walnut Street probably did the same. However, gospel presentation in a manner that unbelievers could hear and respond to has been a consistent aspect of Baptist worship since the earliest days in Philadelphia. This is reflected in their holding separate services for communion that were for only for church members (e.g., believers). Even those churches that did not include a formal altar call presented the gospel in a manner that the unbeliever could hear and understand, and from which he or she could potentially be

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<sup>15</sup> For the importance of these words in worship see Debra Rienstra and Ron Rienstra, *Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2009). Rienstra and Rienstra write: “The words we hear, sing, and speak in worship help form: our images of God; our understanding of what the church is and does; our understanding of human brokenness and healing; our sense of purpose as individuals and as a church; our religious affections: awe, humility, delight, contrition, hope; our vision of wholeness for ourselves and all creation; and our practices of engage with God, with each other, and with the world” (28).

converted.

A fourth observation has to do with giving in Baptist worship. This is marked by a change in practice from a pew rent system that was a common practice in the eighteenth century, to beneficent giving which became predominant in the nineteenth century (see Jarvis Street Baptist Church above). In some churches this was done with collection boxes at the rear of the meeting place. However, it became increasingly more common to have a worship element in the service order for the purpose of collecting the tithes and offerings as a congregation. This was often associated with a musical component known as the offering or offertory. This movement away from the pew rent system is a gospel change among Baptist churches. The pew rent system led to seating by socioeconomic status. Those who could afford it sat closest to the pulpit, which was often also the location of the source of heat in the winter. Those who could not sat farther away or did not have designated pews. Visitors could only sit in those pews designated as “free” pews for such a purpose. This created a class system in the church, which was supposed to be devoid of such segregating elements (see Gal 3:28). The system of beneficent giving not only obscured some of the pretense and favoritism associated with the pew rent system (see Jam 2:1–13), it also emphasized the gospel truth that all were equally needy for Christ and his word. It declared every seat in the sanctuary “free.”

Finally, the fifth observation is the main characteristic of Baptist worship and of this study. The theme of the gospel has been prevalent in Baptist worship since the first Baptists arrived on this continent. The gospel they brought from England was the gospel they intended to pass on to subsequent generations through their worship. When Baptists pressed on to frontier areas they immediately employed worship elements that could convey the gospel as clearly as possible. It has been the *main thing* in Baptist worship since the churches in Providence, Boston, and Philadelphia held their first

worship services. In the words of B. D. Thomas, pastor at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, to come to worship is to “sit under the gospel’s joyful sound.” This is the main theme of Baptist worship in North America. If North American Baptists have a “presiding conviction” to parallel that of Christopher Ellis’ study of Baptists in England, it is that worship is “sitting under the gospel’s joyful sound.”

In other words, it has been the Baptist conviction in worship that it is by the gospel that sinners are called out of darkness to be joined to the body of Christ. It is therefore by the gospel that the church can gather for worship. This makes the worship gathering both a celebration and expression of the gospel. It is in the ordinances and elements of worship that the gospel is rehearsed and its effects of grace applied and employed. This is this paradigm of worship that the Baptists brought to the North America and one of the primary reasons they came. It is the conviction that they, and subsequent generations, have maintained. Baptist worship is intentionally, and unintentionally (by the Spirit’s power), a *re-presentation* of the gospel.

### **Areas for Future Study**

While it is believed that this dissertation has provided an analysis of Baptist worship service order and content that is deeper than any before it, there is a vast horizon for future study that is untouched. Due to the relatively late advent of the worship bulletin, discerning the elements and order of worship in Baptist churches can be a seemingly impossible task. Piecing together a worship service of a given congregation at a set point in time is akin to assembling a puzzle without the box top and most of the pieces missing. The historical pieces that can be found are in some of the most unpredictable places. Primary source materials such as journals, diaries, newspaper accounts, hymnal prefaces, sermon texts, and miscellaneous writings provide voluminous haystacks from which the few needles to be found are hidden. Much work remains to be done on this topic of worship order and content prior to the mid-twentieth century.

Another area in great need of research is anything related to the worship and practice of the Sandy Creek tradition. There are such scant materials available, and the practice being historically undocumented, that there is significant room for study if the materials can be assembled. This tradition has influenced Baptist worship quite heavily and more needs to be understood about their early practice of worship. Another aspect of this consideration is whether or not there was such disparity between this practice and that of Charleston. Certainly there were differences, but the synthesis was so thorough in the nineteenth century that it seems they were not as disparate as some have indicated.

The role of the regulative principle in Baptist worship in North America also needs more study. This study has addressed the topic and established that it was a concern in England that was brought to the new world. However, it is difficult to discern how heavily they were concerned with the principle as Jeremiah Burroughs codified it. There are references to what is appropriate in worship, but it is not always clear what this statement means, or if this was a consistent concern. This could have been a reference to the regulative principle, but it also could have been a reference to a sense of worship decorum, especially in response to camp meeting revivalism. A more thorough analysis of the source materials is required to understand when and where the regulative principle was a primary concern in worship.

Finally, the role of the gospel and liturgical theology in Baptist worship deserves more attention. This is a relatively new field of study and the attention is building. There are gaping holes in this study and the field at large that are ready for work to be done as the role of worship in the spiritual formation of the worshiper is considered. The gospel's effect will always contain some mystery. However, there are some aspects of its function that are capable of being identified in theology and practice. When they are, the gospel's return will always be the same—worship! As Peter said before the transfigured Christ—“Lord, it is good that we are here” (Matt 17:4).

APPENDIX  
HISTORIC WORSHIP SERVICE EXAMPLES

1609: General Baptists in Amsterdam (from England), Recorded Order of Worship<sup>1</sup>

Prayer

Prophecying (Read one or two chapters and “give the sense thereof”)

Confer upon the same

(All books are laid aside)

Solemn Prayer by the Speaker

Read Scripture and Prophecy out of the same text (45 minutes to an hour)

A second speaker does the same, then third, fourth, fifth, etc. as time allows

First speaker concludes with prayer

Exhortation to contribute to the poor

Collection

Prayer

Note: This service was reported to have lasted about four hours (eight o’clock until twelve o’clock) in the morning and then a second service in the afternoon lasted about three or four hours (two o’clock until five or six o’clock). The government of the church is handled after the second service. This is believed to be the oldest record of Baptist worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hughe and Ann Bromheade who were evidently part of the John Smyth exodus from England to Amsterdam. See Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in Light of Recent Research, 1550–1641*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 2:172–77. See also H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 22.

17<sup>th</sup> Century: Congregationalists (Puritans) in England, Potential Order of Worship  
(Davies)<sup>2</sup>

Scriptural Call to Worship  
Prayer of Confession  
Metrical Psalm of Praise  
Old Testament Scripture Reading (w/ brief explanation)  
Metrical Psalm or New Testament Lection  
Prayer of Intercession (led by minister and followed by congregational “amen”)<sup>3</sup>  
Sermon  
Metrical Psalm  
Blessing

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Baptist Worship at Providence, Reenactment in 1963  
 (“Forefathers’ Service”)<sup>4</sup>

Organ Call to the Meeting House (Handel, “Concerto in B flat”)  
Entrance of Ministers and Deacons  
Prayer  
Psalm 100 (OLD HUNDREDTH)  
Reading of Scriptures with Comments (Job 7:1–8; Heb 3:7–15)  
Psalm 65 (ST. ANNE)

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<sup>2</sup> Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (1948; repr., Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 246–47.

<sup>3</sup> In a Presbyterian church “this item would be postponed until after the sermon, and it would conclude with all saying the Lord’s Prayer aloud” (Davies, *English Puritans*, 246).

<sup>4</sup> “The First Baptist Church in America, 325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year, May 5, 1963,” *Worship Bulletin* (Providence: First Baptist Church, 1963), 4 O’clock Service. The program notes under the worship service order: “The service today follows the order used in the Meeting Houses in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries” (n.p.).

The Announcement of the Text  
Sermon—"The Weaver's Shuttle"  
Prayer  
The Gathering of the Offering  
Choral Anthem—"Before Jehovah's Awful Throne"  
Psalm 23 (DUNDEE)  
The Blessing  
The Dismissal  
Organ Postlude (Bach, "Fantasie in G minor")

1768: Baptist Worship in Philadelphia, Potential Order of Worship (Morgan Edwards)<sup>5</sup>

Opening Prayer  
Opening Hymn\*  
Scripture Reading\*  
Prayer\*  
Hymn before the sermon  
Sermon closed with prayer  
Lord's Supper (when celebrated)  
Collection for the saints  
Closing Hymn  
Benediction

\*Order of these elements varied.

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<sup>5</sup> Based upon Morgan Edwards, *The Customs of Primitive Churches* (Philadelphia: Andrew Steuart, 1768) and other source material referenced in this study.

Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Baptist Worship in the Charleston Tradition (Furman Pastorate),  
Potential Order of Worship<sup>6</sup>

A short prayer, suitably prefaced  
Reading of Scripture  
A longer prayer  
Singing (congregational)  
Sermon  
A third prayer  
Singing  
The Lord's Supper (on appointed Sundays)  
Collecting for the necessities of saints  
Benediction

Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Baptist Worship in the Sandy Creek Tradition (Shubal Stearns  
Pastorate), Potential Order of Worship<sup>7</sup>

Opening Prayer  
Singing, praying, and exhorting (potentially simultaneous)  
Sermon(s) (unprepared, but reliant upon the Spirit)  
Response to the gospel (“altar call”)  
Closing Prayer

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<sup>6</sup> Edwards, *The Customs of Primitive Churches*, 100. Don Hustad suggested worship at Charleston probably looked like this order from Morgan Edwards (Don Hustad, “Baptist Worship Forms: Uniting the Charleston and Sandy Creek Traditions,” *Review and Expositor* 65 [1988]: 32).

<sup>7</sup> This order is based upon the research gathered for this study. Sandy Creek Baptists did not record or plan their services or their sermons. Their services were marked by spontaneity; therefore this is a very loose approximation from the scant service descriptions available.

Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Puritans (Congregationalists) in New England, Potential Order of Worship (Davies)<sup>8</sup>

Opening Prayer of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Reading and exposition of a chapter of the Bible

Psalm singing

Sermon

Psalm singing

Prayer

Blessing

1801: Puritans in Hubbardston, Massachusetts, Recorded Order of Worship<sup>9</sup>

A.M. Service

Short Prayer

Reading the Scriptures

Singing

Long Prayer

Sermon

Prayer and Blessing

P.M. Service

Short Prayer

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<sup>8</sup> Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Publications, 1999), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Believed to be the oldest extant order of worship in North America—handwritten in the front pages of *The Psalms of David, together with Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (Boston, 1801)—pulpit hymnal of the church, reproduced in Ted Rivera, *Jonathan Edwards on Worship* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 9.

Reading the Scriptures

Singing

Long Prayer

Singing

Sermon

Prayer

Singing

Blessing

1801: The Baptist Meeting-House at Charlestown, MA Recorded Order of Worship  
("Building Dedication," May 12, 1801)<sup>10</sup>

I. *By the Rev Jedidiah Morse, D.D.*

Read the 24<sup>th</sup> Psalm—*The earth is the Lord's, etc.*

Address, explanatory of the occasion

Prayer

Read 2 Chronicles 6:12, 14, 18–42

Dedicatory Poem—Sung

II. *By the Rev. Mr. Grafton of Newton*

Dedication Prayer

III. Read and Sung Dedicatory Hymn

IV. *By the Rev. Samuel Stillman, D.D.*

A Sermon on Brotherly Love and Christian Fellowship from 133<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, 1<sup>st</sup> verse—

*Behold. how good, and how pleasant, etc.*

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<sup>10</sup> *Sacred Performances at the Dedication of the Baptist Meeting-House in Charlestown, May 12, 1801* (Boston: Manning and Loring, 1801), accessed August 25, 2014, <https://archive.org/stream/sacredper00firs#page/n3/mode/2up>, 3. Samuel Stillman (1737–1807) was the pastor of First Baptist Church of Boston from 1765 until his death.

V. *By the Rev. Thomas Baldwin, A.M.*

The Recognition of the Church —An Address

—The Fellowship of Sister Churches given.

Concluding Prayer, and singing 132d Psalm—*Arise, O King of grace, arise, etc.*

VI. Sung an Anthem from the 48<sup>th</sup> Psalm

VII. Benediction by the Rev. Dr. Stillman

1849: Siloam Baptist Church (Marion, Alabama), Potential Order of Worship<sup>11</sup>

Call to Worship/Opening Prayer/Opening Song

Congregational Singing/Choir

Prayer

Scripture Reading

Congregational Singing

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon (with gospel invitation)

Song of Response

Closing Prayer

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<sup>11</sup> This order is an estimate based upon brief descriptions of worship at Siloam, but also two descriptions of other Baptist churches of the time that were recorded in the *Alabama Baptist*. See “Dedication of the Tremont Temple” and “Thanksgiving Day in Missouri” in *Alabama Baptist Advocate*, June 6, 1844, microfilm.

December 1860: Old Cane Springs Baptist Church (Madison County, Kentucky),  
Recorded Order of Worship from a historical account of Augustine “Gustin” Hart<sup>12</sup>

Hymns (lined out)

Scripture Reading

Prayer

Hymn

Sermon (Psalm 8)

Hymn (“Amazing Grace”)

1885: Jarvis Street Baptist Church (Toronto, Ontario), Potential Order of Worship<sup>13</sup>

Organ Prelude

Choir Anthem

Scripture Reading

Opening Prayer

Solo

Hymn

Prayer

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<sup>12</sup> John Cable Chenault and Jonathan Truman Dorris, *Old Cane Springs—A Story of the War Between the States in Madison County, Kentucky* (Louisville: Standard Printing Company, 1936), 50–56. Excerpt located online at “Old Cane Springs Baptist Church, Madison County, Kentucky,” *Baptist History Homepage*, accessed December 12, 2014, <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/ky.madison.old.cane.sprng.html>. James Noland, who lined out the hymns, invited worshippers to extend the hand of Christian fellowship to the preacher, Rev. William Rupard, during the final hymn. This opportunity was likely afforded because he had to go on to the next locale for preaching and there would not be time for everyone to greet him after the service.

<sup>13</sup> This order is based on various entries in the minutes of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, a newspaper account of one of their services in 1885, and the work of Michel Belzile. (See Michel R. Belzile, “Canadian Baptists at Worship: A Survey of Congregational Worship within the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec [D.Min. project, McMaster University, 1998], 45.)

Choir Anthem

Offertory

Hymn

1895: James Street Baptist Church (Hamilton, Ontario), Recorded Order of Worship from church bulletin dated April 14, 1895 (“Easter”)<sup>14</sup>

Prelude

Anthem—“Break Forth Into Joy”

Doxology and Invocation

Hymn 182 (words printed in bulletin)

Lesson—Matthew XXVIII, 1–8

Solo—“I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

Lesson—Acts XVIII, 1–8

Anthem—“God Hath Appointed a Day”

Prayer

Offertory

Anthem—“The Lord is King”

Hymn 198 (words printed in bulletin)

Sermon

Quartett—“Christ, Chime Ye Bells”

Hymn 189 (words printed in bulletin)

Benediction

Postlude

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<sup>14</sup> Belzile, “Canadian Baptists at Worship,” 45. Belzile considers this the Formal Evangelical Pattern of worship. “It had risen out of a dissatisfaction among some Baptists with the Post-Revivalist style which they perceived to be too informal, irreverent, and passive. This dissatisfaction was by no means unique to Canadian Baptists, but rather characterized Baptists in both Britain and the United States.”

1902: Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky), Recorded Order (“New Building Dedication Service”)<sup>15</sup>

Organ Prelude  
Choir (at times) or Opening Hymn  
Doxology (if not before the choir/opening hymn)  
Invocation  
Hymn  
Scripture Reading  
Prayer  
Choir (when not at the beginning)  
Hymn  
Sermon  
Offering  
Prayer  
Solo or Quartet  
Hymn  
Baptism (usually practiced in the evening)  
Benediction

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<sup>15</sup> This is order based upon a synthesis of the three building dedication services held on November 16, 1902 for Walnut Street’s new house of worship (The Dedication, *The Western Recorder*, November 20, 1902, microfilm.).

1912: First Baptist Church (Shreveport, Louisiana), Recorded Order of Worship from Church Bulletin dated April 19, 1914<sup>16</sup>

The Organ

Voluntary—Holy! Holy! Holy!

Invocation

Anthem

The Scriptures

Prayer

Hymn

The Lord' Treasury

Sermon

Hymn

Benediction

Doxology

The Organ—Postlude

1913: First Baptist Church (Ottawa, Ontario), Recorded Order of Worship from Church Bulletin dated November 30, 1913<sup>17</sup>

Organ

Doxology

Invocation: "My God I Thank Thee"

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<sup>16</sup> James E. Carter, "What is the Southern Baptist Heritage of Worship?" *Baptist History and Heritage* 31, no. 6 (July 1996): 44.

<sup>17</sup> Belzile, "Canadian Baptists at Worship," 42. Belzile considers this a post-revivalistic pattern of worship. "Actually a moderate form of Revivalist worship, the Post-Revivalist style claimed for itself a less evangelistic and more didactic role, concerning itself with nurturing, equipping, and instructing its worshippers in the fine details of Scripture and doctrine."

Hymn  
Scripture Reading  
Prayer  
Offertory Anthem  
Children's Talk  
Sermon  
Hymn No. 416  
Benediction

1949: Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky), Recorded Order of Worship from Church Bulletin dated October 9, 1949<sup>18</sup>

Sunday School Convocation  
Hymn—"Jesus Saves"  
Prayer  
Peaks of Progress  
Hymn 74—"Holy, Holy, Holy"  
Announcements  
Centennial Hymn<sup>19</sup>  
Scripture  
Prayer (Emeritus Pastor Dr. Finley F Gibson)  
Hymn 67—"For All the Saints"  
Offertory Anthem—"Psalm 100"

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<sup>18</sup> Walnut Street Baptist Church, "Centennial Celebration, October 9, 1949" (Louisville: Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1949), [p. ii]. This is a special service celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Walnut Street Baptist Church from the merging of First and Second Baptist Churches.

<sup>19</sup> This was written for this occasion by Mrs. W. O. Carver and Dr. Claude Almand.

Sermon—“Why Baptists?” (Dr. Ellis A. Fuller)

Hymn 361—“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

Benediction

1949: First Baptist Church (West Palm Beach, Florida), Recorded Order of Worship  
from Church Bulletin dated March 27, 1949<sup>20</sup>

Call to Worship

Doxology, Invocation and Response

Hymn 10—“Safely Through Another Week”

Solo—“The Lord is My Light” (Allitsen)

Scripture Reading

Prayer

Offertory—Litany

Hymn 24—“How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours”

Sermon—“The Secret of His Life”

Hymn of Invitation 417—“Holy Spirit, Breathe on Me”  
(Sung by Choir while Christians Pray)

Reception of New Members

Benediction 480—“God Be With You”

Postlude—“Marche Militaire” (Clark)

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<sup>20</sup> First Baptist Church, “Church Bulletin, March 27, 1949” (West Palm Beach, FL: First Baptist Church, 1949), [p. iv].

1950: First Baptist Church (Shreveport, Louisiana), Recorded Order of Worship from Church Bulletin dated June 4, 1950<sup>21</sup>

The Organ—(Raff, “Andantino”)

Call to Worship and Hymn No. 4 (“Come, Thou Almighty King”)

Pastoral Prayer, ending in Lord’s Prayer

Recognition of Nursery and Cradle Roll Department Workers

Call for Nursery and Cradle Roll Members

Prayer of Dedication

The Scriptures

Solo—The Twenty-Third Psalm (Malotte)

Welcome to Visitors, Announcements, Doxology, Prayer, Tithes and Offerings

“Offertory in G”

Anthem (Wagner, “O Sing to Thee”)

Sermon—“The Motherhood of God”

Invitation Hymn No. 209 (“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”)

Benediction—Choral and Pastoral

1950s: Unidentified Rural Church (Baptist), Recorded Order of Worship (from the Pastor’s recollection)<sup>22</sup>

Hymn

Prayer

Welcome to Visitors and Announcements

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<sup>21</sup> Carter, “Southern Baptist Heritage of Worship,” 44–45. This service included a special recognition for Nursery and Cradle Roll Department Workers.

<sup>22</sup> Carter, “Southern Baptist Heritage of Worship,” 45. Carter explains that this was the worship order for every Sunday of the church he pastored for many years and while rural churches did not have worship bulletins, a similar order was followed in most rural Baptist churches of that time.

Hymn  
Hymn  
Offertory  
Special Music, either a solo or another hymn  
Sermon  
Invitation Hymn  
Benediction

1955: Canadian Baptist Minister's Handbook, Suggested Order of Worship ("Formal Evangelical Pattern")<sup>23</sup>

An Organ Prelude  
The Doxology or Sanctus  
The Lord's Prayer  
A Responsive Reading  
A Hymn  
The Scripture Lesson  
An Anthem  
The Pastoral Prayer  
The Presentation and Dedication of Tithes and Offerings  
An Anthem  
The Announcements  
A Hymn  
The Sermon

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<sup>23</sup> *Canadian Baptist Ministers' Handbook* (Toronto: The Baptist Federation of Canada, 1955), 70. Belzile cites this example as representative of the Formal Evangelical Pattern found in Baptist worship in Canada (Belzile, "Canadian Baptists at Worship," 47).

A Hymn  
The Benediction  
An Organ Postlude

1963: Pennepek Baptist Church (Lower Dublin Baptist Church, Pennsylvania), Recorded Order of Worship (“275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service”)<sup>24</sup>

Organ Prelude  
Hymn (“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”)  
Call to Worship  
Gloria Patri/Invocation/The Lord’s Prayer  
Responsive Reading, New Testament  
Presentation and Dedication of Flags  
Morning Prayer and Choral Response  
Hymn (“Lead on, O King Eternal”)  
Announcements and Offertory Prayer  
Offertory (“Tis the Blessed Hour of Prayer”)  
The Doxology  
Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:7–17  
Anthem (“Battle Hymn of the Republic”)  
Sermon (“Look to the Galleries”)  
Hymn (“We Would Be Building”)  
Benediction  
Meditation  
Organ Postlude (“America the Beautiful”)

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<sup>24</sup> *Pennepack Baptist Church 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program: Forward Through the Ages* (Philadelphia: Lower Dublin Baptist Church, 1963), n.p.

1963: First Baptist Church (Providence, Rhode Island), Recorded Order of Worship  
("325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service")<sup>25</sup>

Organ Prelude (Franck, "Prelude, Fugue & Variation")

Choral Call to Worship

Sentences

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Hymn ("We Gather Together")

Responsive Lesson

Gloria Patri

Anthem (Gibbons, "Almighty and Everlasting God")

Scripture Lesson—Hebrews 11

Sermon ("Roger Williams—Though Silent, Still He Speaks")

Hymn ("Now Thank We All Our God")

Call to Prayer

Prayer and Choral Response

Registration of Attendance

Sentences

Gathering of the Offering

Anthem (Handel, "How Excellent Thy Name, O Lord")

Doxology

Prayer of Consecration

Hymn ("I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art")

The Lord's Supper

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<sup>25</sup> "The First Baptist Church in America, 325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year, May 5, 1963," *Worship Bulletin* (Providence: First Baptist Church, 1963), 11:00 O'clock service. This service was a part of the 325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Musical selections were intended to be from the founding period, but the *ordo* is reflective of the mid-twentieth century practice of the church.

Prayer and Blessing

Hymn (“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”)

Organ Postlude (Marcello, “The Heavens Declare”)

1977: Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky), Recorded Order of Worship from Bulletin dated January 9, 1977<sup>26</sup>

Call to Worship—“All Praise to Thee” (Vaughan Williams)

Doxology and Invocation

Hymn 419—“Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken”

Church Announcements

Hymn 344—“Blessed Assurance”

Morning Prayer

Choir Hymn—“The Banner of the Cross” (McGranahan)

Message in Music (solo)

Hymn 192—“Nail-Scarred Hand”

Recognition of Visitors

Anthem—“Sanctus”

Choral Meditation—“Break Thou the Bread of Life”

The Reading of the Scripture (Pastor)

Hymn 255—There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in this Place

Offertory Prayer

God’s Tithes and Our Offerings

Hymn 71—“His Name is Wonderful”

Message in Music (solo)

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<sup>26</sup> Walnut Street Baptist Church, “Church Chimes, January 9, 1977” (Louisville: Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1977), [p. ii].

Sermon  
Invitation Hymn 190—"Softly and Tenderly"  
Benediction  
Choral Response—"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

1979: I. Judson Levy, *Come, Let Us Worship*, Suggested Order of Worship, Liturgical Pattern<sup>27</sup>

Music  
Call to Worship  
Prayer of Invocation and/or Adoration  
Hymn  
Prayer of Confession  
Words of Assurance  
Scripture: Old Testament  
Response Reading (Psalm)  
Gloria Patri  
Scripture: New Testament  
Affirmation of Faith (optional)  
Hymn  
Prayer  
Sermon  
Prayer  
Offertory and Offering

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<sup>27</sup> I. Judson Levy, *Come, Let Us Worship: A Guide for Public Worship* (St. Stephen, New Brunswick: Print 'N Press, 1979), 106–107. Belzile cites this example as representative of the Liturgical Pattern among Canadian Baptists (Belzile, "Canadian Baptists at Worship," 54).

Announcements

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Hymn

Blessing (Benediction)

Music & Quiet Meditation

1995: First Baptist Church (West Palm Beach, Florida), Recorded Order of Worship  
from Church Bulletin dated April 9, 1995<sup>28</sup>

Call to Prayer

Prelude

Baptism

Praises to the Triumphant King—"He is Jehovah" (Choir and Orchestra)

"Blessed Be Your Name"

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

Hymn 234—"Crown Him with many Crowns"

Welcome of Visitors

Welcome Hymn—"In One Accord"

Offertory Prayer

"The Trial of Jesus" [drama] (First Act)

Offertory Praise—"The Way of Sorrows" (Choir and Orchestra)

Sermon

Invitation Hymn 342—"Just As I Am"

Benediction

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<sup>28</sup> First Baptist Church, "First Day, April 9, 1995" [Worship Bulletin] (West Palm Beach, FL: First Baptist Church, 1995), [p. iv].

2001: Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky), Recorded Order of Worship from Church Bulletin dated September 9, 2001 (“Celebrate a New Beginning”)<sup>29</sup>

Processional Hymn—“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

Invocation

Choral Call to Worship—“Then Will the Very Rocks Cry Out” (Hayes)

Recognition of Special Guests

Songs of Praise—Shout to the Lord, Lord I Lift Your Name on High, Sanctuary

Children’s Sermon

Scripture Reading (Isaiah 60:1–5) and Pastoral Prayer

Choral Anthem—“God so Love the World” (Stainer)

New Testament Reading (Matthew 16:13–19)

Prayer of Dedication

Old Testament Reading (Psalm 150)

Congregational Hymn—“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

Message—“Reflections in Stained Glass”

Invitation Hymn—“Amazing Grace”

Offertory—“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” (Bach)/”My Beloved Father” (Puccini)

Closing Comments

Prayer of Dedication and Benediction

Choral Benediction—“Hallelujah!” from *Messiah* (Handel)

Postlude

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<sup>29</sup> Walnut Street Baptist Church, “Celebrate a New Beginning, September 9, 2001” (Louisville: Walnut Street Baptist Church, 2001), 6. This was a special service celebrating the dedication and completion of renovations to the sanctuary one hundred years after the building had been opened.

2010: Sojourn Community Church (Louisville, Kentucky), Recorded Order of Worship<sup>30</sup>

Band Prelude

Call to Worship (Reading)

Song(s)

Prayer of Confession/Lament

Song(s)

Assurance of Peace (Reading)

Giving

Sermon

Communion

Song

Reading

Songs

Benediction (including the “Passing of the Peace”)

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<sup>30</sup> This order is based upon the assimilation of five different Sunday liturgies provided by Sojourn Community Church for this project. The “passing of the peace” occurs at the beginning of the liturgy in other examples.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE IMPACT OF GOSPEL CONTENT ON THE SHAPE OF CORPORATE WORSHIP IN SELECT BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA CIRCA 1650–1910

Richard Scott Connell, Ph.D.  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015  
Chair: Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin

Recent trends in Baptist worship have revealed an interest in Liturgical forms and some movement toward more thoughtful worship content and order in what has historically been a free church worship tradition. The fields of liturgical theology and liturgical anthropology have produced research that indicates that there is validity to this interest and that the order of worship elements can be instructive as is the content of worship. When both are oriented around the gospel's shape and truth (e.g., the gospel of the glory of Christ), the worshiper is pointed to Christ who is the object of faith and the facilitator of spiritual formation through the Holy Spirit. The result is a worshiper who becomes like the one he holds in view in worship.

This survey of representative churches in North American Baptist history (ca. 1650–1910) reveals that there has always been some evidence regarding the gospel's presence in Baptist worship. This has not always been due to deliberate thought and planning, but because the gospel controls its forms. Where a church has held the gospel, its worship has reflected that conviction. Where the gospel has been lost, worship is at least reflective of that, if not partially the precipitator. These churches reflect varying degrees of gospel-content and form. The historical trend demonstrates that overall, Baptists have held the gospel, often in the face of stiff opposition. This grip on grace has been reflected consistently in their worship and likely is at least one of the reasons that

they have continued to grow. Their growth is at least partially, in direct correlation to their worshiping in light of the cross. They have not just sung of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, but they have engaged it in corporate worship and reflected the effects of this encounter with Christlikeness in their daily lives of worship.

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The Hymn Society  
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Associate Pastor, New Covenant Church, Arnold, Maryland, 1999–2004  
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