

Strong Center, Open Door:

On Doing Liturgy in Postmodern Contextⁱ

In 1985, a tragic church fire in northwestern Wisconsin, in the United States, destroyed an interesting old Danish-American church bell. You might happen to know that this very bell has played an important organizing role in my own work on liturgical theology. But here today, beyond simply my work, we may allow the bell to stand as a kind of metaphor for the doing of liturgy *per se*. Let me tell you what I mean. But, first, let me tell you – or tell you again! – about that bell.

From the middle of the nineteenth century until 1985, first at a Danish church in Hutchinson, Minnesota, and then at the important Grundtvigian congregation, West Denmark Lutheran Church, in Luck, Wisconsin, the sound of the bell called together people of the surrounding communities. In the manner of much classic practice, however, the bell was *inscribed*, as if the first person voice of the bell itself could be written down. In this case, the makers of the bell seem to have intended the inscription to articulate the meaning of the sounded invitation by expressing what was about to happen in the meeting to which the bell was making its summons. They made of the inscription a memorable little poem:

*To the bath and the table,
To the prayer and the word,
I call every seeking soul.*

This bell inscription has sometimes been taken as a more general symbol for the central matters of Christian worship. Certainly it has been taken so by me. But you will also find this kind of language – “bath” and “table,” for example – in current worship handbooks and introductions to Christian worship throughout the ecumenical world. Also today and here, not only in nineteenth century Immigrant communities, the current use of language like that of the bell inscription seems to say, communities of needy people are summoned to participate in what Lutherans and Anglicans call the word and the sacraments, themselves singing their way through that participation like a bell.ⁱⁱ Also today, I say, the very matters listed on the bell are the most important things we have when we gather as Christians. They are best set out with the centrality,

the open clarity, the generosity of practice, and the absence of ecclesiastical pretension implied by the use of words like “bath” and “table.”

The order of these things, as that order is written out upon the bell, is a *theological* not a liturgical order. Reflected there is the conviction of Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig that the “word” — that center of most nineteenth century protestant worship — is best understood through the meanings of baptism, holy communion and the Lord’s Prayer. For Grundtvig, as for many other sacramentally formed Christians, these things function as the necessarily presupposed hermeneutical key for the existential meaning of the scriptures. The holy communion is itself a hermeneutic. The liturgical assembly, its communal practices, and its encounters with Jesus Christ and so with the triune God all *matter* for an understanding of the Bible as Christians use it. The water and word of the bath, the “given for you” of the table, and the bread and forgiveness of the prayer all get us to the heart of the scriptures. Or, as Grundtvig wrote, in one of his hymns, expressing perhaps a slightly overstated polemical reaction to nineteenth century biblicism and fundamentalism: “Only at the bath and at the table do we hear God’s word to us.”ⁱⁱⁱ

But the simple and humanly accessible names for these central things of the Christian assembly and of Christian liturgical theology — bath, table, prayer, word — also reflect reformed liturgical practice, the kind of practice that has been discussed widely in the late twentieth century ecumenical liturgical movement: real water and a lot of it, welcoming us to life in the assembly of Christ – a real *bath*, thus, with the baptismal font become a bathing pool for adults as well as for children; a shared meal, held every Sunday, rather than an irregular and minimized memorial or a merely clerical event, – a *table*, thus, feeding us with God’s astonishing mercy now and welcoming us into the care of the earth and into a just economy for the marginalized; then, genuinely participatory *prayer* in beautiful thanksgiving and especially in urgent intercession for all the needy world, rather than recited texts that talk only about us; beautiful and inclusive speech that accords with all of this and music that sings us through it – a *word* that arises from the meaning of the bath and stands clearly next to the meaning of the supper; and the whole event as intended for and available to questioning and suffering humanity.

These accessible names also imply a simple *liturgical* order. That order is the great outline of the ancient “mass” or divine liturgy or service of the Lord’s Day. We gather, through the bath or its remembrance, to word and prayer set next to the table. If we add to this outline

the current awareness that the open doors to “every seeking soul” at the beginning implies also a sending out through those doors at the end of the service – “open doors for going out as well as for coming in,” as Grundtvig himself wrote in 1863^{iv} – we have this resultant liturgical *ordo*, widespread in current ecumenical discussion and encouraged in and between many churches:^v every Sunday, the gathering through the bath; then the word and the prayer; then the meal; then the sending. We may call this simple and widely affirmed pattern “the ecumenical *ordo*.” Such an *ordo* may be used as a tool to discover deep convergences and basic similarities between otherwise differing communities of Christians. Furthermore, granted some agreement in its simple list of central matters, this *ordo* may be used by us, in mutual affirmation and admonition, to encourage each other toward the clarity and largeness of bath and table, prayer and word in our communal ritual practice.

But in 1985 the parish church at Luck burned. In the fire, that bell was destroyed.

Shall we also take the destruction of the bell as a currently useful symbol? Even symbolically, does the Luck bell still ring? The understanding of Christian worship implicit in that old, now destroyed, inscription may be interesting historically. It may even be moving for us to notice, beyond the bell, the various nineteenth- and twentieth-century attempts of protestant communities to balance their long-winded words with the renewed importance of ritual actions as well as the various attempts of catholic communities to let their arcane ritual actions stand out in greater and more generous clarity, giving resonance to a newly important word. But are the matters set out as central by the Luck inscription, the *ordo* implied by that centrality and the theology that reflects upon it still relevant? Shall we still encourage each other in their use? Can this simple list still function to teach the meaning of worship and to establish an agenda for its reform, especially in a time marked by burgeoning diversity and by suspicion of anything that seems to pretend to universal validity, a time frequently called “postmodern”? Perhaps the very insistence on these things as *central* signals their immanent demise. Perhaps the ecumenical books and the denominational orders protest too much.

There are, after all, significant challenges to the idea of “central matters” in Christian worship, organized into an essential *ordo*, an idea for which my beloved Danish-American bell may stand as symbol. Those challenges may finally be even more serious than a church fire in reorganizing the thought about and the practice of Christian worship. Any liturgical reflection, undertaken in the twenty-first century, intending to enable an ecumenical and catholic

discussion, has to take those challenges seriously in order to make clear what “liturgical *ordo*” ought and ought not mean.

For one thing, there is the question, “Whose *ordo*?”^{vi} That is, what communities in fact follow this pattern and use these things? The bell could not ring at every door, could it? But also, who gains power by the privileging of this pattern? These are significant questions. A phenomenological account of what actually occurs on Sunday morning in the diverse Christian gatherings in the world must grant the point that they do not all, by any means, easily fit into this description. Moreover, the description may be painted with too large a brush, leaving out too much that is actually and locally important, actually and locally owned. More detailed consideration of the way patterns of worship are actually lived out may lead us to see that worship also divides as well as unites. Furthermore, even if one granted the usefulness of such a broad and simple outline, at least one other broad-brushed pattern could also be found. Many churches — in North America, but also around the world in places influenced by American evangelical practice — follow the so-called “frontier *ordo*”: preliminary songs and readings and dramas prepare a gathering for a message and the message leads individuals in the community to decisions or conversions or opportunities for personal growth. So is the talk of the *ordo* intended to be a sort of liturgical imperialism? Does it privilege the Lutherans, the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics? Or does it empower especially a certain kind of clergy who share a love of a certain kind of tradition? Such is the postmodern critique of the hidden dynamics of power — the power of the leader or the power of the supposedly objective scholar.

Perhaps yet more important is the challenge that can be made to the very idea of *ordo* by insisting that such an idea is a structuralist mistake. The *ordo* may not be merely a generally useful outline that is nonetheless painted with too broad a brush and applicable only in some places. It may be a mental construct forced upon the actual facts. Much more useful for the study of worship, by this conception, would be attention to local detail, to the many things that people really do when they gather for worship, to their own ideas of what they are doing, and to the local peculiarities and the locally thick and thin moments. “*Ordo*” may then be an unwarranted “meta-narrative,” intending to indicate a widespread similarity of practice where none exists, ignoring local realities and actual communities, and hoping to impose a supposed universal agenda on this local reality. So, does talk about *ordo* ignore or mask what actually is going on in worshipping communities? Does it mask the dynamics of power and its exercise? Is

such talk trying to force alien meanings and a standard practice on quite diverse local phenomena? Such is the postmodern critique of overarching generalizations and “essentials.”

But, even if we grant the importance of the idea of a shared simple outline of worship and shared central things, there might be yet another way to state the challenge. If the way the *ordo* means something at all, the way it creates meaning, has sometimes been explicated with the word “juxtaposition” — one thing next to another yields “meaning” as a third thing^{vii} — then what is the other thing that might be juxtaposed to *ordo* itself? How does *ordo* and reflection upon its meaning – liturgical theology – avoid becoming ideology? As Mark Taylor has written, “What second thing must be set next to the *ordo* as a whole for it, this *ordo*, to be fully what it is precisely in tension with this second thing, in difference from this second thing?”^{viii} Such is the postmodern challenge to ideology, to single and absolute meanings.

It would seem that these challenges are decisive, convincing. The idea of pattern in worship, of certain shared central things, can indeed be used to compel change, insist on “my way” and not “yours,” ignore local cultural realities, mask real and important differences, exclude others, even assert an ideology. “Do these things in this order,” we can seem to be saying, as if liturgy were a matter of the mechanical application of formulae, “and you will have authentic Christian worship.” More: this same assertion can be insisted upon. “You must do these things, in this order,” says the denominational authority, the expert professor, the presiding pastor or priest, the influential lay leader. Then, right away, in current North American context anyway, the conversation becomes a power struggle: “Who says? On what authority? What is your so-called authentic worship anyway?” Even in holy matters, ritual negotiations can wind up being about power, and even “word and sacraments” can be used as weapons in the hands of enforcers.

But does that misuse disqualify the idea of the ecumenical *ordo* altogether? Does it necessarily drive liturgical theology toward the task of simply describing diversity rather than calling for continuing and deepening reform?

Unfortunately, power raises its head also in the insistent application of other patterns than the Gathering-Word-Meal-Sending pattern of the ecumenical *ordo*. Indeed, power — compulsion — seems never far away from the history of Christian ritual practice down through the ages. Liturgical unification, liturgical centralism, authorized liturgical formulae, enforced liturgical books have appeared again and again.

Let us be clear, the so-called frontier *ordo* has also been imposed upon congregations. Furthermore, the evangelical Christianity to which this pattern is so strongly linked, is not a set of struggling marginal groups, in spite of that movement's long self-image of powerlessness, but the dominant religion of North America — and perhaps also of Africa — a religion currently linked to awesome political power. Moreover, this pattern of worship was originally designed to compel, to move the wavering individual toward conversion. This pattern of worship endows the clerical leader with the central power in the room, a power to which the individuals of the assembly are subject.

But compulsion in worship always distorts the thing it seeks to reform. A liturgical movement for the twenty-first century needs to state that clearly. One famous story might be helpful: In 1522, Martin Luther was away from Wittenberg, that university town at the heart of the sixteenth-century Reformation, and he was away from the congregation in that town that he served as pastor. He was resident in the Wartburg Castle, hidden and disguised, using the time to translate the Bible, since he was now excommunicated, under the ban of the emperor, and in mortal danger. His colleague in the university, Professor Andreas Karlstadt, knew that he and Luther and others had taught that the celebration of the mass should be reformed. It should be sung in the vernacular. It should center in the proclamation and praise of the triune God, not be overshadowed by the cult of the saints. The cup should be available to the laity. To us this sounds like a relatively modest list of changed practices. But Karlstadt was deeply disappointed that these reforms had not yet occurred. So he acted. He persuaded the town council to pass laws requiring these changes immediately, as a matter of city law. He encouraged a large group of men — the group should probably be called “a mob” — to enforce these laws violently, to tear down statues in the church and force the use of the chalice. Luther heard, and, at significant risk to his own life, came back to town. As the pastor of the congregation, against these new laws of the town and out of concern for those who were being forced without understanding, he put the statues, the Latin mass, and communion in one kind back in place. He preached a series of seven sermons that called for the harder way of teaching and love, not the easy way of constraint, as the way of liturgical change. He resisted Karlstadt, the town council, and the mob primarily by simply preaching. Karlstadt left town, disappointed. Indeed, constraint is itself finally deeply disappointing, if the thing it wants to force is communally practiced and faithful liturgy. Liturgy is inevitably malformed by constraint, tending then toward legalism and

pretense. To do the right thing for the wrong reason is almost inevitably to do the wrong thing, at least in liturgy.

Luther was right. Teach and love, teach and love, and recognize that authentic change takes a long time. Nonetheless, it is important to note: Luther did not leave the congregation unchanged, mired in an incomprehensible rite, celebrated in a church filled with junk and with communion in only one kind. He did strongly lead, he did teach and love, and there was change. This story is not an argument for immobility or indolence, nor for a simply descriptive approach to what people do in liturgy. Luther did believe that there was a theologically anchored agenda for reform, an agenda that could be proposed as a gift, be welcomed in ways fitting with local gifts and local culture, and be accomplished without compulsion. The *ordo* of the Luck bell inscription belongs to that tradition of liturgical change. It invites.

The postmodern challenges help us to see the importance of this assertion. Indeed, the postmodern challenges may help us to treasure the ecumenical *ordo* the more, especially when it is noted that an open meeting around a multivalent pool, around an interesting set of words and around an inviting supper – in communion with other such meetings elsewhere – is not, in the first place, designed to compel. Healthy liturgy, focused on strong central signs and not on individual personal decisions, makes a way of ever deeper significance available to its participants, but it also lets those participants be free. Strong center, open door.

Still, do not the postmodern challenges require of us that we give up altogether the idea of a shared agenda for liturgical renewal? Indeed, do these challenges not suggest that “renewal” itself masks an exercise of power on the part of the “renewers” and imposes a pretended universal ideology on the more primary local details of worship?

On the contrary, the invitation to let the communal practice of bath, word, prayer and table stand out in greater clarity is just that: an invitation. A critical invitation, an invitation with huge import, but still an invitation. Furthermore, its accent falls on matters that are, indeed, always local and ordinary: local waters; local bodies bathed in those waters; local words for telling living stories; local religious longings expressed in prayer; and local meals. While transcultural words can be used for these matters,^{ix} the reality is always concrete, participatory, and locally diverse. The classic Christian use of these matters roots both in their *local availability* and, at the same time, in the association of each of them with *Jesus*: with his reversals of religious meanings and his attack on religious boundaries, with his death and

resurrection, with the Spirit poured out into the world from these events, and with the faith that Jesus Christ remains locally available, locally encounterable.

So, water flows locally. But in the four gospels, water is a sign of the reign of God, now present in the world. Local words tell local stories. But in the four gospels, traditional stories are given surprising, mercy-filled endings. In need, prayers arise from practically every set of local lips, to anything that might be regarded as being able to help. But in the four gospels, the community is invited to pray for others and to pray in Jesus' name. Communal meals are a universally local phenomenon, in which our community assures its own survival and passes on its own culture. But in the four gospels and the letters of Paul, commensality with Jesus is combined with an open door to the outsider and the sending of food to the poor. A liturgy that seeks to allow the centrality of bath, word, prayers and table, is seeking to go the way of the four gospels, risking the way of the four gospels, committing to the way of the four gospels. Such a liturgy means to reorient local practice so as to invite us again and again to walk in the world in the way of faith. Such a liturgy means to care about this world, believing that to stand before the biblical God inevitably means to stand on the ground this God calls holy.^x

Of course a community can choose to follow another *ordo*. In fact, even this “ecumenical *ordo*” can be followed in such a way that the faith-enabling and world-affirming surprises of its central symbols are not manifest. But a community can also be committed to the reception of these central things as gifts — gifts that align that community with the “sarcophilia,” the flesh-loving character, of the gospels.^{xi}

Of course, there are *four* gospels. That very truth tends to the disallowance of ideology, of a single, universal truth, and a disallowance of a single formula in worship. All four give witness to the one God, and finally that one God is also a plural unity, a dance of three. But it is nonetheless astonishing to see how water, story, prayer and table, and the faith that is formed through them, recur in all four of the canonical gospels, in diverse permutations, with diverse accents, but still as the recognizable marks of communal life with Jesus.

The proposal that bath, word, prayer and table be allowed to be the center of local Christian liturgy, that they be continually refreshed to stand forth in clear and generous ways, is an invitation to let important materials of our local life be broken and ritualized to bear the surprising and life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ. This practice ought not be the importation and imposition of alien materials, but the use of local materials to celebrate and proclaim a more-

than-local meaning. Everyday stuff gets used on Sunday, if the liturgy is renewed. Then, in Christ, our waters, our stories, our prayers, our meals, our spaces, our times, our religious longings themselves must no longer be used only for us, certainly not only for *me*. Time after surprising time, these things can become the materials of a new encounter with the death and resurrection of Jesus here, a new reception of the Spirit here, and so a faithful new reorientation to God's beloved world from here. They can become the means and tools of boundary-crossing communion and world-linking peace.

The invitation to let bath, word, prayer and table be continually refreshed at the heart of our assemblies, then, will be distorted if it is seen as some abstract, universal agenda. In the present time, it ought rather be seen as a thoroughly postmodern commitment to walk a way without assurances or universal meta-narratives, the way of faith.

But then what about the postmodern challenges? They need to be taken seriously. They will continue to be helpful to us in avoiding the misunderstanding and the misuse of the *ordo*. Indeed, if "postmodern" means a suspicion of authority and power and an accent on the local and on the unassured risk of commitment, then a healthy liturgical practice in the present time needs to embrace the postmodern as its own way. But these challenges also require, now, a response.

To the question of "whose *ordo* this is," I answer that the ecumenical *ordo* belongs to anyone who has water, staple food, festive drink and the word of Jesus. Like all Christian worship matters, this *ordo* can be used badly, as a tool for the enhancement of disguised power. But when bath, word, prayer and table are indeed allowed to stand next to each other in strength, mutually reinterpreting each other, bearing witness to the God of the gospels like the beasts around the throne, then what is privileged will not be any clergy or any denomination. What is privileged will be rather the actual locality, the biblical Christ, and the call to faith, to worldly reorientation and to wider communion. The many cultures of humanity are welcome to sing their own songs, use their own local languages and signs, and find their own critical reorientations of this cultural material in doing this local *ordo*. Among those cultures will be the remarkably mixed cultures, the post-colonialist cultures, which mark so many of us in the current world. The Luck bell did not say, ahead of time, *why* every seeking soul was invited to these things. The reason — the new open door to God's beloved world through faith in Jesus Christ — could only be discovered in their actual practice.

To the charge of unwarranted structuralism, I respond that the discovery of these matters as alive in the four gospels and discoverable elsewhere in Christian liturgical history is not a timeless truth. It is indeed an articulation of the present time, arising out of present need, with a real human history. The ecumenical *ordo* is thus not *proven* by history, though it may involve a critical and interpretive re-reading of history, a re-reading claimed by the readers. The ecumenical *ordo* is rather one current, communal and faithful reading of the gospels, and it is a commitment to go the way of those gospels. Such commitment can be one of the great rediscoveries of a postmodern outlook. The invitation to the ecumenical *ordo* is not an invitation to submit to anyone's historical reconstruction. It is an invitation to find bath, word, prayer and table the places of Christ's local presence today and here. It is an invitation to say, with faith, these things are a gift from God.

Finally, to the inquiry about what is to be juxtaposed to the *ordo* itself, I respond that the ecumenical *ordo* of bath, word, prayer and table is, in its very structure, a continual, mutually critical conversation, word with sign, gathering with going away, here with there, inside with outside. Furthermore, every local place that practices the surprising bath of the Spirit, tells the surprising stories of grace, prays the prayer of faith, celebrates the reorienting table of Jesus, in its own local way, will itself be in dialogue with every other place, proposing yet more meaning than we had seen. Moreover, the catholic practice of this *ordo* will be challenged and enriched by its catholic exceptions:^{xii} by the Friends who call every meal the Lord's Supper; by the Salvation Army that estimates self-giving service to be the eucharistic act; by Baptists and Mennonites who invite their children into a long catechumenate; by evangelicals who have made the preparation for the sacrament to be the years-long focus of their meetings.^{xiii} Similarly, these practitioners of the exceptions will be challenged and enriched by the presence of the *ordo* in other places — by the invitation to join, at least sometimes, in the ritual symbol that they want their lives to enact, by making the sacrament meeting, rather than the preparation for the sacrament, to be again the focus of the gathering. Of course, the ecumenical *ordo*, by this interpretation, is a commitment to go the way of the four gospels, including the way of their mutual critical juxtapositions with each other. There are other gospels. Their ritual implications are mostly other than the implications of the canonical four, with an accent on individual salvation and gnostic technique.^{xiv} While they have no claim to be read in the Christian assembly committed to the way of the four gospels, let those gospels, indeed, be set in free

dialogue with the practice of bath and word, prayer and table. The nature of the *ordo*'s commitment to faith amid the conditions of the flesh will only become clearer.

In 1949, the American poet Robert Frost set a lucid, generous little work called “The Pasture” at the head of his collected poems. It read, in part:

I am going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long. — You come too.^{xv}

The invitation of the ecumenical *ordo* ought to be as simple as the invitation of the pasture spring. It is a gift. It flows with the living water of God. We did not make the water. But it does, periodically, need clearing out.

You come too, as Frost says. I invite you, too, dear liturgists of Canada, to find in bath and table, prayer and word, set out locally for every seeking soul and for our seeking communities, the ongoing source for a liturgical movement that – with Luther and Grundtvig – teaches and teaches in the present time, a liturgical practice that responds faithfully to our postmodern context.

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ⁱ This lecture is an altered version of “Bath, Word, Prayer, and Table: Reflections on Doing the Liturgical *Ordo* in a Postmodern Time,” in Dirk G. Lange and Dwight W. Vogel, Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table (Akron:OSL, 2005), 216-228.

ⁱⁱ For an account of the bell, see Gordon Lathrop, “Strong Center, Open Door: A Vision of Continuing Liturgical Renewal,” Worship 75:1 (January 2001), 37-38. In my further writing, the bell occurs in Holy Things (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 89, 91, 103, 104, 110, 113, 122; Holy Ground (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 224-225; Central Things: Worship in Word and Sacrament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005) 20-22; and, with Timothy J. Wengert, in Christian Assembly (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 46-50.

ⁱⁱⁱ See further Christian Assembly, 43-44.

^{iv} Skal den Lutherske Reformation virkelig fortsættes? (Copenhagen: Schauberg, 1863), 116.

^v See, for example, Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller, eds., So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1995), 6-7; Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller, eds., Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998), 29-35; United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 15; Book of Common Worship (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 33; Common Worship (London: Church House, 2000), 166, 228; and, in Scandinavia, Karl-Gunnar Ellverson, Handbok I Liturgik (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003), 16.

^{vi} Some of the following questions have been asked by Michael Aune, “Ritual Practice: Into the world, into each human heart,” in Thomas H. Schattauer, ed., Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 153; by James White, “How do we know it is us?” in E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill, eds., Liturgy and the Moral Self (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 56-57; and by Chris Ellis, “Reflections on James White, the Ordo, and ‘Authentic Christian Worship,’” unpublished paper and personal communication. See also, especially, Maxwell Johnson, “Can We Avoid Relativism in Worship? Liturgical norms in the light of contemporary liturgical scholarship,” Worship 74:2 (March 2000), 135-155.

^{vii} Holy Things, 82; Holy Ground, 127.

^{viii} Mark Lloyd Taylor, “A Response to Gordon Lathrop, ‘Treasure in Earthen Vessels: On Liturgical Disappointment,’” unpublished paper from Summer Institute on Liturgy and Worship, Seattle University (July 6, 2004), 9.

^{ix} We call very diverse local practices by the word “meal” (or by similar words in other languages), for example. Nonetheless, the use of that word to link these diverse practices is not entirely without grounds. Otherwise we must despair of human language itself.

^x See Holy Ground, 4.

^{xi} See Holy Ground, 129-135; and John Dominic Crossan, The Birth of Christianity (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998), 36-38.

^{xii} See Holy Things, 157-158, and Holy Ground, 225-226.

^{xiii} One can argue that the “revival” is an American development of the preparatory time of the old sacrament meeting. For this argument and its implications, see Christian Assembly, 121-131.

^{xiv} See Holy Ground, 130.

^{xv} Complete Poems of Robert Frost (New York: Henry Holt, 1949). For the interesting application of this little poem to the theological and ecclesial tasks of the present time, I am especially indebted to John Vannorsdall.