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Item Type	Article
Authors	Ruth, Lester
Publisher	Gannon Murphy
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Download date	2026-11-12 03:46:00
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/236388

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME: ATTEMPTS AT CLASSIFYING NORTH AMERICAN PROTESTANT WORSHIP[109]

Lester Ruth[110]

How would you classify the worship of your church or parish? It is "contemporary" or "traditional"? Are those terms too limited? Would the terms found in some recent youth ministry training materials be more helpful? In that case, would you classify your worship as "linear" or "organic"?[111] Are you still at a loss for the right classification? Would these terms from a recent online worship forum be more accurate: "multi-sensory worship," "indigenous worship," "innovative worship," "transformation worship," "blended worship," "praise services," "spirited traditional," "creative," or "classic worship"?[112] Or would ethnic or racial designators be more descriptive of your service's character? Is it helpful to label your worship service as "African-American," "Hispanic," "Euro-American," or by some other similar designation?[113]

Has the exactly right term not been mentioned yet? If so, then how about "multi-media worship," "authentic worship," "liturgical worship," "praise and worship," or "seeker services"?[114] Perhaps terms rooted in various intended "audiences" would be better: "believer-oriented worship," "believer-oriented worship made visitor-friendly," or "visitor-oriented worship."[115] Some now advocate classifications by generations. And so is your worship service "boomer," "buster," "Gen-X," or "millenials' worship"?

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[109] From chapter 2 of *Conviction of Things Not Seen, The: Worship and Ministry in the 21st Century* (2002), Todd Johnson (ed). Used by kind permission of Baker Publishing Group.

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[111] As found in recent Youth Specialties training material. Cited by permission of Dan Kimball, Santa Cruz Bible Church, Santa Cruz, California in an email to the author, 14 March 2001. The terms refer to the logical sequencing of actions within worship. Organic provides opportunity for multi-layering of actions.

[112] As used in July and August, 2000 on the online forum accessed through <www.easumbandy.com/forums.htm>.

[113] Kathy Black, *Worship Across Cultures: A Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998). Black analyzes worship in Southern California in twenty-one different ethnic groups.

[114] For "multi-media worship," see Paul Franklyn, "Tech-Knowledge for Ministry: Multimedia Worship," *Net Results* (1997): 4; for "authentic worship," Sally Morganthaler, "Out of the Box: Authentic Worship in a Postmodern Culture," *Worship Leader* (May/June 1998): 24-32; for "liturgical," "praise and worship," and "seeker," see Andy Langford, *Transitions in Worship: Moving from Traditional to Contemporary* (Abingdon, 1999), 18.

[115] Timothy Wright, *A Community of Joy: How to Create Contemporary Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 57.

As you can see, there exists a dizzying array of terms and classifications for worship. This diversity of classification schemes reflects the current state of Protestant worship in North America. A cacophony of terms describe the wide range of worship services. Even single resources can contribute to the Babel of classification schemes. In one recent anthology on worship, for example, the titles for the various essays showed designations derived by stylistic, theological, ethnic, and age-specific considerations.[116]

Is it possible to find some resemblance of order within these widely different taxonomies for worship? To do so here, the first step will be to take a look at four current taxonomies, recognizing their strengths and limitations. Then, building on some of these taxonomies and filtering the usable data through some categories derived from Robert Webber, I hope to suggest some ways of classifying North American Protestant approaches to worship that are true to their breadth. While the new schemes do not exhaust all possible taxonomies, hopefully they will offer some helpful designations. The suggested taxonomy will use classifications based on the nature of liturgical commemoration (what is remembered over time from worship service to service?), the dominant sacramental principle in a congregation's worship (what is the primary way worshipers assess God's presence in worship?), and liturgical polity (what is the method by which worship is planned in individual congregations?). These taxonomical categories are suggested because they are broad enough to be able to be applied to all North American Protestant worship and yet are important enough to show true differences among these Christians' worship today.

A Popular Scheme: The Traditional/Contemporary/Blended Worship Taxonomy

One of the most used classification schemes today is this set of terms: "traditional," "contemporary," and "blended worship." Among American Protestants, these terms are pervasive in conversations, in popular literature, and, unfortunately, in "worship wars." A sizable number of Protestant churches have moved to offering multiple worship services every week, distinguishing between services by these labels.

Despite their pervasiveness and some kind of assumption about general meaning, the terms' specific meanings are unclear. Very often they are code words. "Traditional" designates "what we have been doing," usually meaning a way of mainstream Protestant worship reflecting practices of the mid-twentieth century with roots in the Victorian Era. "Contemporary" typically designates "what we could or should be doing." Often what is in mind is worship with some combination of these "contemporary" characteristics: worship attuned to popular culture, particularly in entertainment forms; use of music which is highly repetitive, syncopated, and reflective of pop music; a reliance upon electronic technology; a quick pace and rhythm in the service; minimal ceremonial; an informal style of leadership; and the use of worship leaders to demonstrate the physical and emotional dimensions of

[116] *Experience God in Worship* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, Inc., 2000). The categories used included "convergence," "liturgical," "contemporary," "evangelical," "African-American," "Charismatic," and "Gen-X."

worship.[117] In popular usage "blended worship" tends to refer to worship using a variety of types of music, that is, both "traditional" hymnody and "contemporary" choruses.[118] While some—most notably theologian Robert Webber[119]—have a more sophisticated, nuanced use of the term, the term frequently amounts to little more than an quota system for music and dramatic skits.

All these terms, "traditional," "contemporary," and "blended worship," have severe limitations and should be rejected in any serious taxonomy of worship. Simply put, as commonly used, they are too general of terms for too limited a phenomenon.

For one thing, their limited usefulness is seen in that many of the works that seek to explore how to do contemporary worship sometimes include within "contemporary" what might be popularly designated as "traditional." For example, one recent writer includes as one of the types of contemporary worship what he calls "liturgical."[120] What he describes as "liturgical worship," however, others would label as "traditional." If the terms are that fluid, what real meaning do they have?

The traditional/contemporary taxonomy suffers other serious limitations. Given worship's inherent conservatism (over time congregations tend to stabilize and maintain patterns, even if newly created), eventually the term "contemporary" must fall out of usage or churches will end up with the oxymoron of "traditional contemporary" worship in a few generations.

In addition, those who use traditional/contemporary language usually have too limited a historical horizon. From one angle, "contemporary worship" really is not. When I reviewed the multiple orders of worship for so-called "contemporary worship" on an online forum, for instance, all the orders reflected a very "traditional" order of worship featuring proclamation as the climatic act. Such an order of worship with a different stylistic veneer has been the mainstay of much American Protestant worship for a couple of centuries. Other than a change in the stylistic veneer, what is truly contemporary about that? Similarly, using a longer historical horizon, "traditional worship" really is not. By "traditional" most do

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[117] Compare the characterization in Daniel T. Benedict and Craig Kennet Miller, *Contemporary Worship for the 21st Century: Worship or Evangelism?* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1994), 10-16 and 120.

[118] See, for example, Eva Stimson, "Praise God with Guitars and Organ?" *Presbyterians Today* (September 1998): 12.

[119] See Robert Webber, *Signs of Wonder: The Phenomenon of Convergence in Modern Liturgical and Charismatic Church* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1992); republished as *The Worship Phenomenon: A Dynamic New Awakening in Worship is Reviving the Body of Christ* (Nashville: Star Song, 1994); republished as *Blended Worship: Achieving Substance and Relevance in Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994). See also Webber's *Renew Your Worship: A Study in the Blending of Traditional and Contemporary Worship* (Hendrickson, 1997), *Planning Blended Worship: The Creative Mixture of Old & New* (Abingdon, 1998), and Robert Webber et al., *Renew! Songs & Hymns for Blended Worship* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1995).

[120] Langford, *Transitions in Worship*, 18. See also Benedict and Miller, *Contemporary Worship for the 21st Century*.

not have in mind deep worship traditions, whether those of the early church or of originators of various Protestant movements like Luther or Wesley.

Consequently, the traditional/contemporary taxonomy is inadequate for describing certain whole approaches to worship, whether denominationally or congregationally. For example, how should we classify a vibrant congregation of Quakers worshiping in complete silence until they receive the Holy Spirit's unction to leave. Is this "traditional" because it follows a classic Quaker approach having a long history back to the seventeenth century? Or it is "contemporary" because the worshipers might be wearing casual clothing? Since there is no music at all, musical style cannot be the key to classifying this service. And what about an African-American congregation using a Black Gospel setting for a classically structured eucharistic service? Is it "contemporary" because the music has been composed recently and has a beat? Or is it "traditional" because many of the texts can be traced back to the patristic era as can the basic order of worship? Similarly, what about the two Episcopal churches close to my home using their Book of Common Prayer eucharistic services albeit with a praise team leading the music while the congregation follows the service on PowerPoint projections? Is this "traditional" or "contemporary"? Is it "blended" even though there is only one style of music and leadership?

Seeing the limitations in the terminology, some scholars show signs of moving away from the traditional/contemporary taxonomy. Leonard Sweet is one. Seeking a term that speaks more of worship emerging from a worshiping people rather than merely being imitated from elsewhere, he prefers the term "indigenous" over "contemporary."[121] Others reject the all-too-often antagonistic positioning of the terms (traditional vs. contemporary), noting that each speaks of qualities desirable for all worship services:

> Attempts to reform worship that rely exclusively on either traditional or contemporary models are not adequate solutions to our longing for more faithful worship. This is actually a false dichotomy since authentic Christian worship is by necessity both contemporary and traditional. It is traditional because it must continue the story of Jesus Christ in the world in history, and it is contemporary because it must be engaged with the present, with actual people who live in particular cultures.[122]

Even the "blended worship" term is too limited for serious use since too often it just describes a kind of quota system to worship. As one scholar recently lampooned: "[In] many congregations…we'll do a traditional hymn, then we'll do a praise song. We'll have the classic structure, but we'll spice it up with skits. A little of this and a little of that, and

[121]Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 390-1.

[122] L. Edward Phillips and Sara Webb Phillips, *In Spirit & Truth: United Methodist Worship for the Emerging Church* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 30. See also Thomas G. Long, *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship* (The Alban Institute, 2001), 3 and Marianne Sawicki, "How Can Christian Worship Be Contemporary?" in *What is "Contemporary" Worship?*, ed. Gordon Lathrop (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 27.

everyone will be happy."[123] Such an approach to blended worship tends to deal only with the surface of worship performance without dealing with more substantial issues of worship's structure, content, and purpose.[124]

Given that these terms—"traditional/contemporary/blended"—are too ill-defined and are likely to pass away from usage, a comprehensive taxonomy for North American worship must be found elsewhere.

A Polemical, Apologetic Scheme: The Taxonomy of William Easum and Thomas Bandy

Well-known church consultants William (Bill) Easum and Thomas (Tom) Bandy provide an example of a liturgical taxonomy shaped by a polemic that seeks to promote a certain evangelistic agenda. Easum and Bandy work together as Easum, Bandy & Associates, an organization that provides a range of church educational and consulting services. They publish both individually and collectively. According to its web-posted "approach to ministry," this organization "helps leaders organize priorities, identify goals, innovate new strategies, and motivate congregations to address the spiritually yearning, institutionally alienated seekers of today." They claim to have prepared more than 75,000 church leaders in the United States and Canada since 1988.[125]

It is somewhat inaccurate to speak of a single taxonomy by Easum and Bandy. Their writings reflect related but ever shifting sets of terms to classify worship. In an short 1997 essay, Easum lays out an early two-term taxonomy: "traditional" and "contemporary."[126] According to Easum, the former is a form of worship that uses the printed page, a sixteenth century of music and "linear, somber, slow forms of printed liturgy." Creeds and quiet are important, too. "Contemporary" worship, in contrast, does not have much quiet time; it produces a visual experience and uses "indigenous" music that is "plugged-in and turned up."

In their joint book published that same year, Easum and Bandy offer several taxonomies for classifying worship. The most fundamental in the book is a variation of the traditional/contemporary scheme. Seeking to define "basic categories" to begin worship planning, the two describe three possibilities: "traditional," "praise," and "sensory" worship.[127] In "traditional" worship, "participants give thanks in formal, historically grounded, rational ways." This "track" is for those who prefer "robes, hymnals, creeds, quiet

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[123] Long, *Beyond the Worship Wars*, 12.

[124] Constance Cherry, "Blended Worship: What It Is, What It Isn't," *Reformed Worship* 55 (March 2000), 6-8.

[125] "About Us. Easum, Bandy, & Associates Organizational Assumptions," 12 July 2001 <http://www.easumbandy.com/about.htm#Mission>.

[126] William M. Easum, "Worship in a Changing Culture," in *Contemporary Worship: A Sourcebook for Spirited-Traditional, Praise and Seeker Services*, ed. Tim and Jan Wright (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 17-8.

[127] William M. Easum and Thomas G. Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 73. A comparative chart is provided on pp. 73-4.

time, and Elizabethan-type music." "Praise" worship "seeks to release the emotions and express the joy many people who were formerly estranged from relationship with Jesus now feel." "Praise" worship is a "celebration" focusing on a certain kind of music. It is a "spectator or entertainment style of worship, with little quiet time and no emphasis on guilt." "Sensory" worship is characterized by a heavy use of other forms of sensory experience other than hearing. It occurs "less in words, and more in the sights and sounds, images an music, that surround the worship experience." It consists of permeating sights and sounds, video and visuals rather than print or verbal speech, and "extra-loud, plugged-in, turned-up music." [128] Easum and Bandy connect this taxonomy to generational appeal: "traditional" worship appeals to those who "by physical age or mental orientation" find "some form of Christendom worship meaningful," "praise" worship to baby boomers, and "sensory" worship to the vast majority of people born after 1965.[129]

This traditional/praise/sensory taxonomy is not the only one in this same book, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*. Elsewhere they speak of "transactive" worship (conveys the gospel across gaps), "interactive" worship (involves participants in a reciprocal or mutually shared thanksgiving), and "actualized" worship (makes faith as realistic and comprehensive as possible).[130] Later in their book, the two men provide a taxonomy based on different ways worship services can respond to human need. This taxonomy offers four options: "healing," "coaching," "cherishing," and 'rejoicing" worship.[131] They provide another taxonomy of a sort later in the book when they describe the characteristics of "indigenous" worship. Such worship makes experience more important than content, is interconnected with everyday life, uses indigenous music, uses video and sound systems as crucial elements, replaces choir practices with technology rehearsal, and has "constant, uninterrupted flow."[132]

In subsequent writings, Easum and Bandy continue to evolve their taxonomies. In a 2000 article on "multi-tracking" worship in a congregation (that is, providing multiple worship opportunities targeted at different groups' spiritual needs), Bandy expands a taxonomy laid out earlier, noting differences in "healing," "coaching," "cherishing," "celebration," and "traditional" worship.[133] Similarly, Easum takes the earlier traditional/contemporary or traditional/praise/sensory categories and adds some qualitative adjectives. According to Easum, he now sees four kinds of worship services: "spiritless traditional," "spirited traditional," "praise," and "postmodern." [134] For Easum, "spiritless traditional" is the most prevalent, found in 80% of churches. It is "slow, linear, and predictable" with people able to sleep through them. The music is slow and played on organs. The service is filled with dead spots. To outsiders these services feel lifeless, dull, and boring. "Spirited traditional" is found in less than 10% of churches according to Easum. It is characterized by passion in the pulpit

[128] Ibid., 74-5.

[129] Ibid., 72.

[130] Ibid., 76-7. These categories are not real clear. They appear to deal with individual types of interactions with the gospel message.

[131] Ibid., 80-3.

[132] Ibid., 94-5.

[133] Thomas G. Bandy, "How Do We Multi-Track Our Worship," *Net Results* 21, 7 (July 2000): 17.

[134] William M. Easum, "What I Now See in Worship," *Net Results* 21, 6 (June 2000): 20-22.

and vitality in the pews. It moves with precision with lots of good music. Despite its current vitality, however, it reflects a "culture whose day has long passed." "Praise" worship is used by 90% of growing churches in Easum's opinion. The most notable element of the service is the music itself. Other common characteristics include solid preaching, drama, informal atmosphere, and no "dead spots." "Postmodern" worship uses a variety of musical styles in an ever changing tide of services. It uses every form of technology, offers a clear and uncompromising message, and develops authenticity, intimacy, and community.

Although the precise terms vary from publication to publication, there are several constants in the Easum's and Bandy's taxonomies. For one thing, their tone does not vary. The taxonomies are polemical and apologetic throughout. The two men bring an iconoclastic tendency to their descriptions. Determined to advocate measures that will achieve evangelistic success, the two consultants attach descriptions to their categories that will make what they are advocating the most attractive and what they consider problematic the least attractive. There is no concern for detached, objective description.

Indeed, there tends to be a certain kind of dualism running throughout their liturgical writings. In their opinion, some ways of worship are bad; others are good. Generally, those they associate with mainstream Protestant forms of the latter half of the twentieth century are bad because they show so little potential for accomplishing Easum's and Bandy's evangelistic goals. In Easum's terminology, these are the "spiritless traditional" services. The men describe these services in very harsh terms. In contrast, the two consultants portray other kinds of worship in glowing terms.

Standing behind this dualism is the two men's fundamental concern: what they perceive as people's experience in worship. Easum's and Bandy's classification schemes are really taxonomies of how they understand people to be responding to the current variety in worship. They root their taxonomical method in a concern for a personal positive experience in worship. Consider the emphasis on personal experience as a fundamental category in Easum's summary of worship: "No matter what type of worship a church uses, one thing is important: People must experience the transforming presence of God. Anything less isn't worship, no matter the style."[135] The two typically see newer forms of mainstream Protestant worship as creating positive experiences.

This concern for experience has two facets within their thought. One is assessing people's immediate reaction to different kinds of worship. The other is an emphasis on communicating in a culturally accessible way as the primary purpose of worship. Thus Bandy can suggest two reasons why people are not attending his reader's worship service. Either "your current worship service does not address their spiritual needs" or "your current worship service does not communicate in their cultural forms."[136] These concerns color their taxonomies thoroughly. Easum and Bandy view a category of worship highly if they see it creating a positive experience of Christ in people.[137] Likewise, since a primary purpose of

[135] Ibid., 22.

[136] Bandy, "How Do We Multi-Track Our Worship," 15.

[137] Only a few statements indicate a concern with the theological content of worship. See Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 51-2.

worship is communication, ways of worshiping that they see using newer communication forms receive a more glowing endorsement.

There are several limitations in Easum's and Bandy's taxonomies. The first comes from their writings' polemical nature. They are so eager to advocate a certain approach to be adopted by churches that too often their descriptions fall into caricatures. This is true even for the types of worship that they advocate. Their writings universalize their own experiences and perceptions of the struggles in mainstream Protestantism.[138] Their biases seep through, cutting off consideration of worship's true breadth. Consider, for example, two depictions of "traditional" worship. Traditional worship involves "robes, hymnals, creeds, quiet time, and Elizabethan-type music" and "the linear, somber, slow forms of printed liturgy."[139] Using our recurring touchstones, how would this description apply to a African-American congregation using a Black Gospel musical setting for their weekly eucharistic service or to an Episcopal eucharistic service using so-called "contemporary" music? Consider another caricature: the idea that sensory worship that appeals to younger adults will use "extra-loud, plugged-in, turned-up music."[140] How does this caricature square with the increasingly popular phenomenon of young adults attracted to services using the quiet, contemplative music of Taizé, the ecumenical community of France?[141] Unfortunately, if one does not read carefully, Easum's and Bandy's prescriptions for worship too often verge on being absolute—but inaccurate—descriptions of worship.

Another limitation to the Easum and Bandy writings is their lack of emphasis on the theological content of worship. Given their liturgical method (the use of qualitative categories based on worshipers' positive responses and the presumption that numerical growth validates worship practices), it would be possible to misuse their categories to make legitimate forms of worship which should otherwise be illegitimate for Christians. For example, the shallowness of their categories connecting "inspirational" and "spirited" to "transformative" could be used to affirm classic Shaker worship of the nineteenth century despite its heterodox anti-Trinitarian theology. The Shakers were evangelizing effectively with new forms of worship that moved people (literally) and resulted in transformed lives. Could not Easum's and Bandy's categories be used to affirm this worship although it was clearly unorthodox? Admittedly, the two men do not overtly advocate unorthodox worship but, given the lack of theological concern in their taxonomies, one wonders why Shaker worship would not fall into their "good" categories. That is precisely the problem with an intentionally dualistic, polemical taxonomy like theirs: too little thoughtfulness stands behind the categories.

In addition, their classification schemes are limited in that any taxonomies that roots the classifications in worshiper's reaction tells us more about the worshiper (or classifier) than

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[138] For a similar critique of Easum, see Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 238-42.

[139] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 74 and Easum, "Worship in a Changing Culture," 17.

[140] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 75.

[141] See Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste*, 243.

the worship itself. Using categories based in experience or reaction is too highly subjective since different people could have a completely different reaction to the same worship service. Different theologies, cultural backgrounds, capacities for ritual activity, and spiritualities among worshipers could result in vastly varying interpretations of the same worship service. In that case what does "spirited" or "inspirational" worship mean? One suspects that such terms in Easum's and Bandy's writings always means a kind of worship that they like.

An Evangelical, Pastoral Scheme: The Taxonomy of Paul Basden

Paul Basden provides another recent taxonomy of North American worship[142] Basden, a Baptist pastor, creates his taxonomy for a different purpose and audience. Compiled to provide to help evangelical churches understand to different approaches to worship that they may follow, Basden's taxonomy is instructive in that it shows how a current American evangelical might see the diversity of North American worship. As a comprehensive taxonomy for North American worship, however, it is incomplete.

Basden constructs his taxonomy as a one-dimensional, horizontal spectrum using popular, non-technical labels. The distinct categories assess different kinds of worship "styles," which Basden appears to use as a broad term for a way of worship. The elements which he assesses to determine different styles of worship include the following: attitude, mood, order of worship, "target audience," congregational singing, special music, musical instrumentation, amount of Scripture, offering, manner of preaching, manner of "invitation," and approach to ordinances/sacraments.[143] He develops his five point spectrum in order to go beyond simple "traditional /non-traditional" or "traditional/contemporary/blended" categories often used today.[144]

With the goal of discerning distinct styles of worship, Basden identifies five main styles placed along a spectrum where the left-hand side is the most "traditional" and the right, the least.[145] When charted, Basden's spectrum looks like this:

Liturgical Traditional Revivalist Praise & Worship Seeker

Basden's main concern is to describe the nature of each of these styles. Identification of each category with a particular denomination, ethnic group, or historical figure is offered, but is a secondary concern. When such are identified specifically, Basden's spectrum could look like this:

Liturgical	Traditional	Revivalist	Praise & Worship	Seeker
Lutheran	Reformed	Zwingli	Black worship	Willow Creek
Anglican	Separatist	Quaker	Pentecostal	Saddleback
	Puritan	Wesleyan		

[142] Paul Basden, *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

[143] Ibid., 101-3.

[144] Ibid., 36.

[145] Ibid.

Basden details what he means by each category. Generally, "liturgical" worship has the strongest historical roots and is worship whose goal is "to bow before the holiness of God in structured reverence."[146] It is the worship of most mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. "Traditional" worship is a hybrid of its two neighbors, "liturgical" and "revivalist."[147] From its "liturgical" roots comes a sense of dignity and reverence; from its revivalist connection comes a concern with moving the hearts of the worshipers. "Revivalist" worship derives from American frontier roots. It is characterized by "informality, exuberance, zeal and aggressive preaching," all aimed to convert sinners.[148] Basden identifies "praise and worship" mainly with Pentecostal worship. It is music-organized worship aimed at bringing believers into an intimate sense of God's presence through music.[149] The "seeker" approach is a rehash of the "revivalist" goal, albeit in a toned down format. "Seeker" worship attempts to present the gospel to unbelievers.[150]

Basden's taxonomy has some strengths. It focuses on congregational phenomenon and thus offers itself as a possible taxonomy for assessing what is happening currently. It recognizes diversity within denominations. It is concerned with God's presence in worship, which as I will argue, is an important way to distinguish among approaches to worship. And, importantly, Basden attempts to be open-minded as he tries to provide a fair, attractive description of each worship style.

Basden's taxonomy does have some flaws, however. Because he does not limit himself to current expressions of worship, Basden at times makes historical overstatements. For example, it is quite surprising to find the sixteenth century Reformer Ulrich Zwingli, the seventeenth century Quaker founder George Fox, and the Anglican priest John Wesley, a founder of the Methodist movement in the eighteenth century, grouped together as examples of the "revivalist" category.[151] Those preferring a history-based taxonomy would do better with James White's more historically accurate one described below.

A severe flaw occurs in the use of "liturgical" as a taxonomical category. Any such use must be questioned on theological grounds. Basden, following popular evangelical usage, seems to intend this term to mean a certain way of doing worship involving a high level of ceremony, use of historically-grounded texts, and a certain reverential tone. Although this might be a common occurrence among evangelicals, it is poor theology to limit "liturgical" to one "style" of Christian worship because it implies that the rest of Christian worship is not "liturgical." All Christian worship, however, must be "liturgical" in a theological sense if it is truly Christian. In a theological sense, "liturgical" does not refer to a certain style of worshiping—formal with much ceremony—but a church's worship participating in the ongoing ministry of Jesus Christ before God the Father (Hebrews 8: a-b). "Liturgical" refers to worship as a work of the people, a public service. In worship it can refer to both Christ's work on humanity's behalf and the church's participation as the body of Christ in the

[146] Ibid., 54.
[147] Ibid., 55.
[148] Ibid., 66.
[149] Ibid., 77.
[150] Ibid., 89.
[151] Ibid., 67.

ongoing ministry of Christ for all people. In this theological sense all Christian worship must be "liturgical" to be truly Christian. Thus the theological question is not whether any certain kind of Christian worship is liturgical or not but how it is liturgical. "Liturgical" should not be used as a classifying term to distinguish a worship style.

Basden's spectrum literally breaks down at some points, too. Looking at whether the different styles plan worship with Christians or non-Christians primarily in mind, their placement on the spectrum does not indicate a style's approach. Thus "revivalist" (in the center on the spectrum) and "seeker" (on the far right end) aim for non-Christians while "praise and worship," located between these two, is concerned with leading Christians into worship. ("Liturgical" and "traditional" are, too.)

Basden's taxonomy is also limited in that it is not comprehensive enough. Basden is Baptist and that perspective, naturally enough, seems to be the real point of reference. Many of his examples of each kind of worship in the book are Baptist examples. Because his intended audience seems to be evangelical churches trying to find their way through the worship "maze," he tends to underemphasize approaches to worship that are not viable options for mainstream evangelicals.

Basden's taxonomy tends toward caricature at several points. For instance, because he uses classification based on worshiper's elicited, Basden can paint a picture that presumes all Christian approaches to worship have as a primary purpose a desire to elicit responses from the worshiper—possibly a projection of Basden's own experience. That is not necessarily the case for all Protestant approaches to worship.

Likewise, even a strength in his taxonomy, such as assessing the manner of God's presence in worship, can lead to caricature. Basden spends quite a bit of time linking what he sees as different dimensions of God's presence to different types of worship. Thus "liturgical" worship cultivates a sense of God's transcendence but not immanence.[152] "Traditional" worship, in comparison, yields both a sense of God's transcendence and immanence while "praise and worship" focuses on a sense of God's immanence.[153]

While seeing how God is present in worship has potential for a solid taxonomy—and will be revisited below—Basden's use of this aspect of worship is too subjective and can lead to inaccurate caricatures. It would not be too hard to find "liturgical" churches with active, deep fellowship that would speak of a tremendous sense of God's immanence during the exchange of the peace of Christ or reception of the Eucharist. Similarly, one can imagine a Pentecostal church bowed before a sense of God's transcendence after a particularly moving word of prophecy embedded within the time of music. Basden's taxonomy would benefit from looking not at a subjective qualitative sense of God's presence but at the ordinary means by which the worshiping congregation senses God's presence. In other words, not whether the Presence is experienced as transcendent or immanent but whether the people expect to find the Presence in their music, their preaching, or in their sacraments.

[152] Basden, *The Worship Maze*, 42.
[153] Ibid., 60, 85-6.

Finally, Basden's taxonomy suffers from his overstatements. He describes the purpose of Praise and Worship, for example as guiding worshipers "to offer a sacrifice of praise…in a spirit of joyful adoration." Surely, this is such a broad and basic enough statement that one wonders who in Basden's taxonomy would not want to claim it.

A Thorough Historical Scheme: The Taxonomy of James White

Noted liturgical historian James White has created perhaps the most thorough Protestant liturgical taxonomy. This thoughtful scheme reflects the breadth of White's knowledge and is the place to ground any serious study of Protestant liturgical classification. White's evenhanded scholarship shows as he continually developed it into its present, mature form over nearly a fifteen-year period. White began intentionally publishing a comprehensive taxonomy for Protestant worship in 1975. Several revisions followed until he published a final form of the taxonomy in 1989.[154] White's goal is a comprehensive taxonomy to classify the different traditions of Protestant worship from their origins to present expression.

The heart of White's taxonomy is his identification of nine Protestant worship traditions: Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, Puritan, Anabaptist, Quaker, Frontier, and Pentecostal. White identifies these nine traditions based on key enduring characteristics for each. White emphasizes this ethos-of-each-tradition approach rather than the older approach in his discipline that emphasized relationship by liturgical texts. White chooses to emphasize each tradition's ethos rather than its liturgical texts because, as White himself points out, some Protestants do not have liturgical texts, having rejected their use in worship as part of their ethos.

From his first published taxonomy to its mature form in *Protestant Worship*: *Traditions in Transition* (1989), White keeps fairly consistent his list of elements that determine the distinctive ethos of the various Protestant liturgical traditions. These "central elements" that distinguish one Protestant tradition from another include the use of service books or their absence, the importance or unimportance of sacraments, tendencies to uniformity based on codification or lack thereof, congregational autonomy or connectionalism, the varying roles of music and the other arts, ceremonial or its absence, variety and predictability, and various sociological factors.[155] Upon these factors White builds his taxonomy, first identifying a cluster of characteristics that constitute a distinctive ethos, then labeling that ethos as a Protestant worship tradition, and finally describing how those characteristics define that

[154] James White's earliest attempt came in the mid-1970s: "Traditions of Protestant Worship," *Worship* 49, 5 (May, 1975): 272-281. This article was substantially reproduced in *Christian Worship in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 61-75. Refinement continued in the 1980s: *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 1st ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 41-3; "Creativity: The Free Church Tradition," in *Liturgy: a Creative Tradition*, Concilium, vol. 162, ed. Mary Collins and David Power (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 47-52; "The Classification of Protestant Traditions of Worship," *Studia Liturgica* 17 (1987): 264-272. In 1989 a mature form of the taxonomy became the basis for a whole book: *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 21-4.

[155] White, *Protestant Worship*, 22. Compare to White, "Traditions of Protestant Worship," 272 for the earlier version.

Protestant tradition. Thus the Lutheran tradition shows a basic conservatism, a love of music, a concern for preaching, and a toleration of indifferent matters (for example, robes) as long as they do not suggest works righteousness. The Methodist tradition is a hybrid tradition mixing certain Anglican roots with a Free Church attitude. Added to this mix are both a good dose of pragmatism and, at least originally, an interest in examples from the early church. The Quaker tradition, in comparison, emphasizes direct access to the Holy Spirit and a reliance upon the Spirit to move before any action is taken in worship. As such it is a form of corporate mysticism as a classic Quaker approach abolishes all presupposed outward forms of worship. White's earlier works describe each tradition in an abbreviated form. His 1989 book, *Protestant Worship*, gives a chapter-length examination to each.

Differences in essential character or ethos is how White distinguishes between the various Protestant traditions. Having established a distinctive identify for each, White places the nine traditions under three broad classifications: left-wing, central, and right-wing. While acknowledging that these are terms pulled from the political arena, White does not mean them in a literal political sense.[156] Instead, White intends to show in these broad political terms a tradition's relative position to late medieval Western liturgical roots, one of his main criteria for distinguishing among Protestant worship traditions. White labels two of the Protestant traditions (Lutheran and Anglican) as "right-wing," meaning that, with respect to late Medieval liturgical forms, their worship practices have reflected a more restrained revision. In contrast, the centrist groups (Reformed and Methodist) reflect a more remote attachment to the ways of worship of the late Middle Ages. The left-wing groups (Anabaptist, Quaker, Puritan, Frontier, and Pentecostal) show the least connection to Medieval roots.[157]

In addition to these two bases for distinction—a tradition's enduring characteristics of ethos and its relative position to the medieval past—White also notes each tradition's time of origin to develop his full taxonomy. The result is a two-dimensional spectrum that visually represents the relative position of each Protestant tradition to each other and to its Medieval roots. The horizontal access in this spectrum represents the relative connection to medieval roots with the "right-wing" traditions, as might be guessed, on the right hand side of the spectrum and vice versa. The vertical access represents the passage of centuries. Thus locating each tradition on this axis represents its point of origin in history. The older Protestant traditions appear at the top of the vertical axis and the younger, toward the bottom. This mature taxonomical chart first appeared in 1989 and is reproduced below.

[156] White, *Protestant Worship*, 22.

[157] One of the major changes in earlier forms of the taxonomy to the latest is the elimination of the "Free Church" terminology to define certain Protestant traditions. Earlier forms of the taxonomy speak of three different historic manifestations of a Free Church approach to worship. Later forms of the taxonomy use other terms: Anabaptist, Puritan/Separatist, and Frontier.

White's Chart of the Protestant Traditions of Worship[158]

Origins	Left Wing	Central	Right Wing
16th century	Anabaptist	Reformed	Anglican, Lutheran
17th century	Quaker	Puritan	
18th century		Methodist	
19th century	Frontier		
20th century	Pentecostal		

A subsequent version included lines to show shifts and developments. In another adaptation, White has also produced a version of the taxonomy that links the different traditions to European regions when appropriate. [159]

White's taxonomy has both strengths and limitations. It is strongest when used for describing the origins of historically distinct approaches. White's tremendous grasp of liturgical history is shown in the taxonomy. Not surprisingly, his taxonomy—based on this grasp of history—is a good tool for showing the nature of distinct approaches to Protestant worship when they started. In addition, the characteristics he identifies for assessing the traditions' different ethos are very perceptive and remain useful.

The taxonomy is less useful for showing the actual types of Protestant worship *now*. [160] White himself hints at this limitation in his classification scheme when he notes that it is easier to define the center of a tradition than its periphery.[161] In addition, White recognizes how cultural and ethnic differences can deeply affect the expression of a tradition in any context. Moreover, White recognizes a degree of blurring among the traditions as certain cultural shifts (for example, the Enlightenment) can cause similar fallout among the traditions.[162] Similarly, White recognizes that ecumenical sharing also causes the blurring of lines between traditions.[163]

Failure to recognize these limitations could lead to a false picture of the current state of Protestant worship in North America. If a reader failed to see the factors that lead to blurring over time and now, it would be possible to overemphasize a distinction between, for example, Methodist and Reformed worship. In actuality, due to a variety of factors, many

[158] White, *Protestant Worship*, 23.

[159] James White, *Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretive Sources* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 7, 9.

[160] See the similar critique in Keith Watkins, "Protestant Worship: Many Traditions or One?" *Worship* 64, 4 (July 1990): 309. Another critique of white's taxonomy is given by Frank C. Senn in "Protestant Worship: Does It Exist?" *Worship* 64, 4 (July 1990): 322-330. Both scholars argue, not persuasively I believe, that Protestantism properly defined constitutes a single worship tradition.

[161] White, *Protestant Worship*, 22. White, "The Classification of Protestant Traditions of Worship," 266. White also notes an awkwardness in his taxonomy in that certain groups (Moravians, Shakers, Brethren) do not easily fit within his tradition labels. See White, *Protestant Worship*, 23.

[162] White, "The Classification of Protestant Traditions of Worship," 267.

[163] Ibid., 272; White, "Traditions of Protestant Worship," 282. White has primarily in mind the sharing within the Liturgy Movement but the same point could be made about more popular influences like certain mega-churches such as Willow Creek and Saddleback Community Churches.

of the traditions named by White can now represent a rather wide spectrum of worship practices. Put more simply, can anyone really say what it means to worship according to the Methodist or the Reformed tradition right now in North America? Churches belonging to a tradition identified by White—even to the same denomination within that tradition—can vary widely in worship practices today even though they are just down the street from each other in the same city. White's own prophecy, spoken at the beginning of publishing his taxonomy, seems to have come true: "It is quite possible that the greatest differences will soon be discernible within groups that previously would have been reckoned distinct traditions."[164] That would suggest that a different set of labels other than the ones suggested by White, which tend to be historically based labels, would be helpful for describing the actual current diversity of Protestant worship in North American.

Suggestions For A New Taxonomy

Where does that leave us? If we desire a taxonomy that is simple enough to distinguish basic differences among Protestant churches yet broad enough to cover the full range of current North American practices, whose taxonomy offers the most guidance? The popular traditional/contemporary/blended taxonomy is hopelessly simplistic. Easum's and Bandy's taxonomies are too polemical; they provide more information about the agenda of these two men than they do about the true range of Christian liturgical practices. Basden's taxonomy has some helpful points but is too narrow and, at times, inaccurate. James White's taxonomy is the most thorough, well-developed, and historically sound. It is strongest, however, as a *historical* taxonomy for Protestant worship. Its categories are not as helpful in distinguishing the variety of approaches to Christian worship at the present time.

All is not lost with these taxonomies. I believe it is possible to take the root information behind White's taxonomy—his notion of various liturgical ethos—and combine it with some insights from Robert Webber in order to achieve the goal of a simple, accurate, yet broad set of classifying terms for Christian worship in North America today.[165] First, the insights of Webber.

In speaking about the planning of worship, Robert Webber often makes a distinction between content, structure, and style in worship.[166] This framework is itself a helpful step in that it takes us beyond just looking at stylistic issues, which is where some popular taxonomies stop. In fact, I suggest that it is the two other elements (content and structure) that offer the most help areas for developing categories to classify worship. This takes Webber's terms beyond what he himself does with them. For Webber, who tends to advocate a certain approach to worship in his publications, the content and structure of worship should remain fairly steady. The content and structure he suggests is derived from the Bible and based on deep historical norms.[167] The fact that he must *advocate* certain

[164] White, "Traditions of Protestant Worship," 282.

[165] To a lesser degree Basden's analysis of the inner character of different liturgical approaches is also helpful.

[166] Robert Webber, *Planning Blended Worship*, 20. See also Robert Webber, *Worship Old & New*, Rev. Ed. (Zondervan, 1994); 149-51 and *Renew Your Worship*, 32.

[167] See, for example, Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 149-50.

classic content and structure in worship highlights the fact, I believe, that it is precisely here on these crucial matters that diversity abounds in Christian worship.

And so, taking White's notion that different liturgical approaches can be defined by ethos differences and Webber's distinctions between content and structure, I suggest two initial ways for classifying worship today. One deals with the question of content. Specifically, what is the content of a church's worship in terms of whose story is told. No one service or Sunday is likely to disclose fully how to classify a congregation. This must be assessed over a longer period of time, evaluating the worship from week to week. In terms of classifying by content, I suggest two categories: personal-story churches and cosmic-story churches. There are churches whose worship over time is most focused on the personal stories of the worshipers and how God interacts with their stories. In contrast there are churches whose worship over time unfolds a more cosmic remembrance of the grand sweep of God's saving activity. The goal here will be to show how worshipers have a share in salvation history.

Personal-story churches and cosmic-story churches can be distinguished by how their worship answers this question: what needs to be remembered corporately in worship? The different answers may not be readily identifiable in a single element in a single congregation. Rather, over time, one must assess how a church selects the Scripture it will read, what the normal purpose of the sermon is, the regular content of prayers and music, the nature of any dramatic presentations, and what special holidays are observed. Evaluate, for example, the content of a church's worship music. Over time, are the main metaphors and content relational, emphasizing our relationship to a wonderful God? Are there few references to a historical man Jesus or to biblical stories of God acting within human history? In comparison, is the content mainly historical, using this remembrance to make statements about a saving God? One could look at even how the congregation primarily explains the meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Are these about each one's personal experience of a gracious God who has given us life abundant or are they signs by which, to use the language of the newest United Methodist baptismal service, we are "incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation"?[168]

A few examples may clarify the difference in personal-story and cosmic-story churches. An example of the former is a church that plans its worship on themes of particular interest to the worshipers. This approach usually creates personal-story based worship, particularly if the church is intentional about identifying its participants' "felt needs." Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church in Ohio represents this approach. Worship planning begins with naming a felt need as perceived in the church's target audience. From that worship planners develop a theme and a metaphor that serves as the root visual image for the service. Everything else is selected on that basis.[169] In contrast, the worship of a Methodist church strictly following the Revised Common Lectionary operates on a much different basis. If all the musical texts, prayers, readings, and sermon content were connected to the lectionary texts, the result would be a telling of a very different story than Ginghamburg's.

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[168] *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 87.

[169]Kim Miller et al., *Handbook for Multi-Sensory Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 9.

Another way for classifying worship deals with different structures for worship services. When Webber discusses the structure, he usually is advocating a four-fold order rooted in the services of the early church.[170] I do not intend such a narrow focus here in using different structures as a key to classifying different kinds of worship. I intend structure in a broader sense to designate the organizing principle in a congregation's worship. Put more specifically, where is the most time and energy spent within a service and what gets the most prominent space and most expensive furnishings and equipment? When these questions are answered I believe that most North American worship services can fall into one of three categories: music-organized, Word/preaching-organized, or Sacrament-organized (meaning the Lord's Supper). In other words, one of these usually serves as the dominant aspect of worship around which other things orbit.

I also suggest that these three categories—music, Word/preaching, and Sacrament—are not just the main organizing principles in what gets the most time, energy, and dominant position in the order of worship. These three, I believe, also serve as the primary sacramental principles at work in different approaches to North American worship today. In other words, one of these three is usually the normal means by which a congregation assesses God's presence in worship or believes that God is made present in worship. This assessment or belief does not have to be at the level of formal theology. It can be at the level of popular piety. The point is the same. A congregation will devote time, energy, attention, and money to the worship activity where the people find God present.

I am not the first to suggest this three-fold approach to different sacramental principles. Reformed liturgical scholar John Witvliet has suggested a similar thing:

> Worshipers in nearly every Christian tradition experience some of what happens in worship as divine encounter. Differences in Christian worship arise not so much whether or not God is understood to be present, but rather in what sense. Those who mock supposedly simplistic theories of sacramental realism at the Lord's Supper wind up preserving sacramental language for preaching or for music. Speaking only somewhat simplistically: the Roman Catholics reserve their sacramental language for the Eucharist, Presbyterians reserve theirs for preaching, and the charismatics save theirs for music. In a recent pastors' conference, one evangelical pastor solicited applications for a music director/worship leader position by calling for someone who could 'make God present through music.' No medieval sacramental theologian could have said it more strongly."[171]

I suggest that Witvliet's description of different approaches to sacramentality is accurate enough that it can form the basis for a new kind of liturgical taxonomy, although Witvliet

[170]For an example, see Webber, *Signs of Wonder*, 37.

[171] John D. Witvliet, "At Play in the House of the Lord: Why Worship Matters," *Books & Culture* 4, 6 (November/December 1998), 23. For a popular description of the same thing, against which Robert Webber reacted negatively, see Robert Webber, "Reducing God to Music?" *Leadership* (Spring 1999): 35.

himself does not take it that far. Everyone speaks of encounter with God's presence in worship. The difference, which can offer categories for a liturgical taxonomy, is how and where they expect to have that encounter in worship.[172]

Some may be surprised by attaching a notion of God's presence to music itself although they understanding doing so to the Word of God or the Lord's Supper. Such a connection to music, however, is quite prevalent in some current approaches to worship. It is the basic premise, for example, in any praise and worship service based upon a typology of the Old Testament temple. In that case, music is the vehicle which moves worshipers into the holy of holies of God's presence.[173] One book based on this approach states the matter bluntly in its title: *God's Presence Through Music*.[174] Even the very recent sociological study from the Hartford Institute for Religion Research suggests a connection between a stronger sense of the "immediacy of the Holy Spirit" and those churches using newer musical styles and electronic instrumentation.[175] These are often the churches having a central role for extended music in their services.

The categories in this taxonomy can be overlaid on White's chart in order to update it. One could place the music-organized, Word/preaching-organized, and Sacrament-organized categories on top of his chart. The result would show tendencies in North American worship today. Traditions on the right-hand side of the chart tend to have worship which is Sacrament-organized. Centrist traditions' worship tend to be Word/preaching-organized. Left-hand traditions is where one tends to find music-organized services and the emphasis on music-as-sacrament.

Such a scheme is too simple, however, in two respects. For a more accurate picture, this kind of taxonomy must take into account the diversity whether within denominations or White's traditions. Yet even then this classification scheme can be helpful. For one thing, I suggest that churches at either end of an expanded version of White's chart are more likely to be in line with the tendency for that end of the sacramental-principle spectrum. Thus Pentecostal churches currently are more likely to have music-organized services but not exclusively so. Lutheran and Anglican churches, in contrast, are more likely to have Sacrament-organized services but not exclusively so. This sacramental-principle spectrum can suggest what is likely to be the second most likely kind of service. In other words, a Pentecostal church is more likely to have a Word/preaching-organized service than it is a Sacrament-organized one. Similarly, one is more likely to find a Word/preaching-organized service in a Lutheran or Anglican setting than a music-organized one. An example would be

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[172] Could the internal fights many congregations have over worship style actually be disputes about different approaches to liturgical sacramentality, not about the styles themselves?

[173]John D. Witvliet, "The Blessing and Bane of the North American Mega-Church," *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* (1998): 201-2. Witvliet provides an extensive bibliography in note 15 of the same article.

[174] Ruth Ann Ashton, *God's Presence Through Music* (South Bend, IN: Lesea Publishing Co., 1993).

[175] Carl S. Dudley and David A. Roozen, *Faith Communities Today: A Report on Religion in the United States Today* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary, March 2001), 12 July 2001 <http://fact.hartsem.edu/Final%20FACTrpt.pdf>, p. 40.

an Episcopal church I once attended whose services had no music at all. For White's centrist traditions, particularly Methodist and Reformed, this sacramental-principle spectrum suggests the true diversity—and fights—which now takes place within these traditions. Within these centrist traditions some forces are pulling churches toward a music-sacramentality while some pull toward a sacramentality finding God's presence most acutely in the Lord's Supper. Thus it is currently possible to find services within these centrist traditions anyplace within the spectrum of sacramentalities.

In addition, to show the true diversity within Christianity, this scheme must take into account combinations of sacramental principles.[176] In other words, there are churches whose services balance a music-organized and Word-organized sacramentalities and churches whose services balance a Word-organized and Sacrament-organized sacramentalities. Less likely are churches who combine music-organized and Sacrament-organized sacramentality. Less likely, too, are churches who combine all three. These combinations suggest a difference meaning for the term "blended worship." Rather than referring to a blending of music or even worship style, perhaps it is a term better used to describe congregations which sense God's presence in worship in a variety of means.

Finally, I would like to suggest another set of classifying labels for North American worship today that are rooted in White's assessment of different ethos but are not connected to Webber's. I believe that one of the aspects White identifies as distinguishing different ethos still serves as a clear and crucial element in classifying worship today. The particular element in question is whether a church in its liturgical planning operates as an independent congregation or starts with the assumption that it will use resources common to its tradition or denomination.[177] The first approach I call "congregational" and the second "connectional." (Non-Methodists must excuse my selecting a term with long roots in my Methodist heritage for the second term.) Of course, there is a third option: churches that are officially connectional but actually operate as autonomous congregations. (I could point to my own my Methodist church.)

This classification is a useful one for understanding how it is that single congregations are likely to make worship decisions. I believe, for example, that the literature on liturgical inculturation can be separated along this congregational/connectional divide. There is one set of writings on how we should adapt worship to fit different cultures that presumes a connectional method. In this perspective, the goal is to take a common resource, whether created by the denomination or derived from history, and then adapt is to different cultural groups. Most of the literature from Anglican, and Lutheran sources fits this approach. In contrast, literature on culturally-adapted worship from Church Growth experts, including Easum and Bandy, emphasize the absolute autonomy of local congregations in creating new worship forms.

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[176] To be truly accurate two other possibilities for different kinds of sacramentality must be included: fellowship-organized and aesthetics-organized. In the former the emphasis is placed on the community by itself as the locus of God's presence. This is how classic Quaker worship might be identified. In aesthetics-organized sacramentality, the worship environment itself is how the worshipers sense God's presence.

[177] White, *Traditions in Transition*, 22.

This classification scheme can line up generally with White's chart, too. Churches on the left-hand side of his chart will tend to have a congregational liturgical method whereas churches on the right will have a connectional one. As before, the centrist traditions will be split. Individual denominations there might officially be connectional but truly act congregationally.

Conclusion

And so, back to the original question. How would you classify your church's worship? Using these new classifying terms I have suggested, does it usually tell a personal-story or a cosmic-story? How do people organize the worship service and assess God's presence? Is your service music-organized, Word-organized, or Sacrament-organized? How do people expect to encounter God in worship? Is it in the music, in the preaching, or in the Lord's Supper? And, finally, was your church's worship planned using a method that is congregational or connectional in its approach?

Given the variety of liturgical taxonomies now in use, it is a daunting task to suggest another scheme. Hopefully, the categories given in this new taxonomy can provide some real insight about the substance and diversity of North American worship today.