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The Mercersburg Society has been formed to uphold the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, Evangelical, Reformed, Catholic, Apostolic, organic, developmental and connectional. It affirms the ecumenical Creeds as witnesses to its faith and the Eucharist as the liturgical act from which all other acts of worship and service emanate.

The Society pursues contemporary theology in the Church and the world within the context of Mercersburg Theology. In effecting its purpose the Society provides opportunities for fellowship and study for persons interested in Mercersburg Theology, sponsors and annual convocation, engages in the publication of articles and books, stimulates research and correspondence among scholars on topics of theology, liturgy, the Sacraments and ecumenism.
The **New Mercersburg Review** is designed to publish the proceedings of the annual convocation as well as other articles on the subjects pertinent to the aims and interests of the Society.

From the Editor

F. Christopher Anderson

I have discovered a very interesting fact. There are people who actually read this journal!

This fact made itself known when certain readers contacted me in order to request the NMR to publish William McKinney's second lecture on Mainline Protestantism. The first lecture was published in the Spring 2012 issue. It was titled: *"Where is Mainline Protestantism Today?"* This issue includes the second lecture, *"Mainline Protestantism in a Post-Protestant Time."* William McKinney is the former President of Pacific School of Religion.

The second essay is designed to prepare us for our Annual Convocation. This year we are to have a joint convocation with the A.R. & L.W., The Association for Reformed and Liturgical Worship. The author, Christopher Dorn, has recently returned from Geneva, Switzerland, where he served the World Communion of Reformed Churches in its Office of Theology and Communion. He currently resides in Holland, Michigan.

We have also included a review of a book that discusses the ecclesiology of The United Church of Christ. The book is titled *United and Uniting: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology for a Church in Crisis.* The author is the long time pastor of Heidelberg United Church of Christ in Hatfield, PA. Walsh brings up issues that are often talked about but not often published. His book deserves discussion.

I want to apologize for the fact that this 2012 Fall issue is appearing in the Spring of 2013 but I hope to soon get the Review back on schedule. Thank you for your patience.

Mainline Protestantism in a Post-Protestant Time.

William McKinney

Delivered at the 29th Craigville Theological Colloquy, July 17th, 2012 @ 7:30 PM.
Craigville Retreat Center, Cape Cod, MA
(This lecture is the second of two lectures on this subject. The first was "Where is Mainline Protestantism Today?" It was published in the Spring 2012 issue of the NMR.)

From time to time a new interpretation of historical events comes along that can change one's thinking about one's view of the world. I think that may be the case with David Hollinger's 2011 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians. Hollinger's essay is entitled "After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Ecumenical Protestantism and the Modern American Encounter with Diversity."(2011)

Hollinger is an intellectual historian at Berkeley who writes "from a secular perspective that has a lot of respect for religious believers." (2012) He has had along standing interest in the contest between evangelical and what he calls ecumenical Protestantism. That distinction, he says, "hardened" in the 1940's and afterward "as a result of the discomfort felt especially by fundamentalists with how far the 'mainstream liberals' had pushed their program of cooperation across denominational lines and of alliances with non-Protestant, non-Christian,and eventually secular parties." It led to the beginnings of the "commodious religious expanse known since the 1940s as 'Evangelical Protestantism.'"

Note, here, a couple of things: First, Hollinger chooses to focus on "ecumenical" and "evangelical" Protestantism. Both are social constructs. In other words,someone has assigned names to two "commodious religious expanses" in order to sort social and religious impulses into manageable categories. This is not an

insignificant point. A few weeks ago a Facebook "friend" reported confusion that in the early phase of her UCC new church project in Silicon Valley(one that is clearly pitched to a progressive "seeker" community) many of those most interested in the project were Bible-believing evangelicals. The usual categories no longer seemed to apply. I responded that when our attempts to sort social reality no longer work, it is time to replace them.

Naming does not create reality but it can shape and distort reality. In his recent biography of Steve Jobs, Walter Isaacson (2011) describes Jobs' creative use of "reality distortion fields" that made it possible to create the possibility of break throughs that were not achievable without redefining people's current definitions of reality. It's also what management guru Peter Drucker had in mind when he argued the first task of leadership is to "describe reality." The poet Wallace Stevens was making a similar point when he said we live in our description of a place and not in the place itself.

So in his address David Hollinger is tracing the relationship between evangelical and ecumenical Protestantism. He prefers "ecumenical" to "mainline," "liberal"or other labels. "Mainline," he explains in a Christian Century interview, "is too general and can cover almost anything." "Liberal" can apply to culture and politics and not just theology. I think he is correct, though after 30 years of tracking this particular "commodious religious expanse" I'm not sure the mainline language can be avoided!

In looking at evangelical and ecumenical Protestantism beginning in the 1940sHollinger focuses on their relationship to the wider culture, arguing that while ecumenicals were "increasingly defining themselves through a sympathetic exploration of wider worlds, evangelicals consolidated 'home truths' and sought to spread them throughout the world." The ecumenical Protestants' encounter with diversity followed from a renewed appreciation of the story of Pentecost. They were asking, in effect, "what happens next" after cloven tongues of fire?

What came next for ecumenical Protestants, says Hollinger, was a preoccupation with mobilizing constituencies to address social evils. They were more concerned about social welfare than with the state of individual souls. This was not exactly new, of course. Gary Dorrien (2001-2003) has pointed out that from the early eighteenth though the 19th century Liberal Christian theology had a reformist, activist bent. What was new, in Hollinger's view was a positive encounter with diversity on the part of religious elites who remained at the center of American culture.

> If you were in charge of anything big before 1960, chances are you grew up in a white Protestant milieu. Until the 1970's, moreover, the public face of Protestantism itself remained that of the politically and theologically liberal ecumenists of the National Council of Churches and its pre1950 predecessor, the Federal Council of Churches. Only later did the more conservative Protestants of the National Association of Evangelicals an organization founded in 1942 in explicit opposition to the ecumenists – gain the public standing it enjoys today. The evangelical gradually became the dominant public face of Protestantism, partly because these evangelicals continued to espouse a number of diversity-resisting perspectives that remained popular with the white public even as these perspectives were being renounced by self-interrogating ecumenist intellectuals such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

Hollinger points to the importance of self-interrogation on the part of ecumenical Protestant churches and their leaders as one of the distinguishing features of this era.

> One of the most neglected features of twentieth-century American history is the intensity and range of the self-critique carried out by the intellectual leadership of mainstream liberal Protestantism during the1940s, 1950s

and 1960s. The critical revision of inherited traditions was no monopoly of such people, to be sure, but they made a great production of attacking the ethnocentrism and sectarianism they professed to find all around them, I ncluding in their own churches.

In short, says Hollinger, "...many ecumenical leaders were giving themselves hell." He cites many of the figures who participated in this self-interrogation process, highlighting, for example, Episcopal lay theologian William Stringfellow as well as Bishop John A.T. Robinson's Honest to God and Harvey Cox's The Secular City.

By the 1960s, with the struggle for civil rights, the emergence of a reinvigorated evangelicalism, an expanding gap between church leadership and church going laity, the loss of some of the social standing of the old Protestant establishment, the center could no longer hold. Here Hollinger challengers the complacency of the ecumenical elites: [Thinking that the center could hold] was a complacent assumption of ecumenical leaders that rendered them more comfortable with rigorous self-interrogation yet slow to see what now seem, in the perspective of history, to be the risks to their institutional standing this self-interrogation entailed."

Why did ecumenical Protestant leaders not perceive the size of the gap between their own views and those of people in the pews of their churches? Hollinger points to two reasons: First, the 1940s and 1950s were a period of remarkable membership growth across the American Protestant world. Today most scholars see this growth as an exception to the longer-term declines that had begun as early as the 1920s and 1930s. Even in the booming postwar period years the mainline churches' growth had lagged behind the population as a whole, but times seemed good. Second, the Protestant establishment remained popular and influential in Washington, DC and in the national media. I've often thought

an appropriate symbol of that high social standing was the presence of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in October 1958 to lay the cornerstone at 475Riverside Drive for "the national home of the churches."

Hollinger has much more to say, including a fine review of various scholarly attempts to understand the post-1960s developments in evangelical and ecumenical Protestantism and a fascinating comparison of the Democratic Party's loss of the South and the ecumenicals' loss of their hold on American Protestantism.

I do, however, want to outline one of Hollinger's most interesting and pertinent points out of that comparison. Hollinger refers to Lyndon Johnson's comment following the 1964 passage of the first wave of significant Civil Rights legislation that "We [Democrats] have lost the South for a generation." By standing clearly with African Americans,Democrats, in other worlds, Democrats risked their hold on the South. Here's Hollinger on the parallel:

> At issue in the control of American Protestantism was not only race – the critical issue for the Democrats – but also imperialism, feminism,abortion, and sexuality, in addition to the critical perspectives on super naturalism popularized by thinkers such as Harvey Cox and John A.T. Robinson. Ecumenical leaders were not as aware as President Johnson apparently was of the risks he was taking, nor were they as blunt in the moments when the truth dawned upon them. But they, like he, believed that the time had come to redirect the institutions and people they were trying to lead and behaved accordingly. Hence they abandoned to opportunistic evangelicals both the classical foreign missionary project and the powerful proprietary relation to the American nation. In pursuit of causes they believed to be inspired by God, the ecumenical leaders blurred the boundaries of their faith community and risked the loss of their children to secular communities. The ecumenical

> leaders accommodated perspectives on women and the family that diminished their capacity to reproduce themselves exactly as they took positions on empire, race, sex, abortion and divinity that diminished their ability to recruit as new members those Protestants who had been reared in an5evangelical milieu and might otherwise find it congenial to become an Episcopalian. Just as the Democrats had lost most of the South to the Republican Party, the ecumenists yielded more and more of the space of Protestantism to the evangelicals.

But that's not all.

According to Hollinger, "the radical progeny of the ecumenists had less incentive to return to their party in the two-party system of Protestantism." Hollinger contends that an unanticipated result of the ecumenists' accommodations to the 1960s was a serious questioning of the indispensability of Christianity that had still prevailed among the elite proponents of an ecumenical vision. For many, "Christianity became one of a number of useful vehicles for values that transcended that ancestral faith. For such people Christianity of any variety became a strategic and personal option rather than a presumed imperative." He continues, "... thousands of children of the old Protestant establishment found that Christianity was not so indispensable to the advancement of the values most energetically taught to them by their Methodist and Congregational tutors."

The children of the ecumenists did not go away and they did abandon not the values that had been passed on to them. "The post-Protestant endeavors are a major feature of modern American life, yet our recognition of them has been obscured by a survivalist bias, by which I mean a preference for if not a commitment to the survival of Christianity in general and of the institutions of ecumenical Protestantism in particular."

Here I must be very careful for I am one of the first "survivalists" he mentions by name!

> Survivalists treat the decline of ecumenical Protestantism as something to be lamented and who suggest that if only ecumenists had more vigorously acculturated their youth and maintained organizational discipline things might have turned out more favorably for their churches. This survivalist perspective misses a reality to which this essay draws attention: the historic function of self-interrogating ecumenical Protestantism as an environment in which many Americans found themselves able to engage sympathetically a panorama of ethno-racial,sexual, religious, and cultural varieties of humankind....The leadership of6ecumenical Protestantism, as it engaged the diversity of the modern world, enabled its community of faith to serve, among its other roles, as a commodious halfway house to what for lack of a better term we will call post-Protestant secularism.

Hollinger contends that recognizing this religious impulse as a "halfway house"("if not a slippery slope to secularism") is "not invidious. Only Christian survivalists would resist such recognition. A fairer interpretation would be to acknowledge a partial cultural victory on many of the values that gave rise to the evangelical/ecumenical "contest" that began in the 1940s. As he puts it in his Christian Century interview,

> The ecumenical leaders achieved much more than they and their successors game them credit for. They led millions of American Protestants in directions demanded by the changing circumstances of the times and by their own theological tradition. These ecumenical leaders took a series of risks, asking their constituency to follow them in anti-racist, anti-imperialist, feminist and multicultural

directions that were understandably resisted by large segments of the white public, especially in the Protestant-intensive southern states. It is true that the so-called mainstream lost numbers to churches that stood apart from or even opposed these initiatives, and ecumenical leaders simultaneously failed to persuade many of their own progeny that churches remained essential institutions in the advancement of these values. But the fact remains that the public life of the United States moved farther in the directions advocated in the 1960s by the Christian Century than in the directions then advocated by Christianity Today. It might be hyperbolic to say that ecumenists experienced a cultural victory and an organizational defeat, but there is something to that view. Ecumenists yielded much of the symbolic capital of Christianity to evangelicals, which is a significant loss. But ecumenists won much of the U.S. There are trade-offs.

I don't believe I have ever given a lecture that has focused in as great detail on a single author's work. I'm not done with Hollinger, but most of what follows will be in my own voice.

I appreciate several things about Hollinger's analysis.

First, he challenges the narrative that sees ecumenical Protestantism as the"loser" in the contest with evangelical Protestantism. Recall the famous Fosdick sermon in 1920 that asked "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Sociologists like me have provided lots of reminders that the mainline churches have declined in membership and social power. Hollinger reminds us that other things were going on that render quite a different verdict. He is not the first to make this point. In 1989 the political scientist Robert Booth Fowler published a little-noticed book, Unconventional Partners: Religion and Liberal Culture in the United States. He argues that liberal culture remains strong, even triumphant in the U.S. and wonders why liberal churches seem to

be in such a deep funk. The answer, for Fowler, lies in the fact that religion has come to function as a temporary compensation for the limitations of liberalism: "Religion," Fowler writes, provides a world where people may find some of what contemporary liberalism is so silent about..., operating to fill up some of the empty spaces left by liberal culture without, on the whole, challenging liberalism in theory or in the culture." Liberal religion, he suggests, is not different enough from the culture it helped spawn.

Second, I am impressed by Hollinger's emphasis on self-interrogation on the part of ecumenical leaders in the postwar period. I think we have given too little attention to this legacy of our Reformed heritage. "Many ecumenical leaders were giving themselves hell" is the way Hollinger puts it and I think he's on the mark. Again, he is not the first to call attention to the consequences when self-interrogation turns to self-flagellation. This has been a recurring theme in the work of Peter Berger, who pondered the replacement of what John Murray Cuddihy called the "Protestant smile" with what Berger called the"Protestant scowl." In a 1996 essay Benton Johnson noted that "In the 1960s the major work of trashing bourgeois religion was done by church people themselves."

Third, Hollinger points to the fact that at the heart of ecumenical Protestantism's current struggle is that "[hundreds of] thousands of the children8of the old Protestant establishment found that Christianity was not so indispensable to the advancement of the values most energetically taught to them by their Methodist and Congregationalist tutors."

One of the great myths of our time is that the numerical growth of evangelical Protestantism has come at the expense of the mainline churches. I know of no serious empirical study that suggests this is true. On the contrary, dozens of studies have shown that most

people who leave mainline churches join the ranks of the unaffiliated, including the most recent Pew Religious Landscape study published in 2009.

But Hollinger also misses at least one important thing. I think he downplays the genuinely religious motivation of the ecumenical and even evangelical impulse of religious leaders in the postwar period. He is not alone in noting a new openness to the diverse religious understandings of the modern world. This was one of the important insights of the Hocking Commission or Laymen's Inquiry into foreign missions of the 1930s. It one thing to be in dialogue with persons and groups whose religious understanding are different, even in the process opening oneself to change as a result. That is different from slipping into secularism. I don't think Hollinger gets that difference. As a result, he also misses the fact that religious and cultural values are passed on by institutions. Here I am helped by Hugh Heclo's little book, On Thinking Institutionally. Heclo says we need to help people shift from thinking about institutions to thinking institutionally. He looks carefully at what Hollinger calls self-interrogation (for Heclo, the "critical thinking movement" in higher education). The hermeneutic of suspicion that prevails in many circles today misses important questions and need to be replaced by honing our capacity to think institutionally.

So how are the values lifted up by ecumenists transmitted to future generations? Hollinger seems to think those post-Protestant children once tutored by Methodists and Congregationalists are doing just fine, finding new outlets for the activist impulses outside Christianity and the church. I don't doubt that is true for many. But I'm not willing to trust now-dominant social institutions (public schools, the media, the courts, etc.) to prepare the next generation of ecumenical Protestant Christians. Most of us now active in churches were told about Jesus as youngsters, the Jesus

who loves us and cares for "all the children of the world. We learned about the God who stayed with the people of Israel even when they turned their backs on God." I fear that we are now relying on spiritual capital built provided by previous generations. Can we count on the religious socialization provided by the Willow Creeks of the world or by "A Course on Miracles" to replenish our ranks? I doubt it.

What is needed, I think, is a new public voice on matters of the spirit. Mainline Protestantism's future depends in large part on accepting responsibility for sharing a word of faith in a world that seems to have reduced faith to two choices: aggressive fundamentalisms of various kinds and arid secularism.

In summary, I find Hollinger's key arguments to be consistent with recent research on American religion. That doesn't mean he is correct but I can't point to data that says he is wrong.

I do think he has raised some issues that are worthy of attention by those who claim the ecumenical Protestant legacy as their own and worthy of value. In the spirit of ecumenical generosity I choose to interpret his point about a"survivalist bias" to refer narrowly to scholarship that sees only what it wants to see out of conscious or unconscious "religion-protecting" commitments.

I would mention very briefly three areas that deserve the attention of those who presume to think theologically on behalf of the church.

First, for me, is the question of the role of community in our understanding of what it means for one to think of oneself as a Christian.

This is not a new question but I believe it is a fresh question on which we ought to be engaging current church members and those who live their lives along side our outside our fellowship. It is a

deep theological question to which our traditions and contemporary realities can speak. Asking it in today's context may or may not give us new answers but it is a conversation we need to have.

Second, what is the relationship between self-interrogation and community in the Mainline Protestant tradition? Does our distinctiveness lie in our capacity
for self-criticism? In the ecumenical encounter cited by David Hollinger as one of ecumenical Protestantism's core strengths, do we have anything to say or is its purpose to reinforce or challenge what we already believe?

Third, what comes after "After Cloven Tongues of Fire? If ecumenical Protestantism is simply a halfway house or on a slippery slope to secularism,why do we bother to persist?

Over the years I have often quoted the major league relief pitcher Dan Quisenberry, who was asked after a Kansas City Royals game what the future looks like? He thought for a minute and responded. "The future is a lot like the present, only longer." Sometimes I think he was right but more often I think he was wrong. At the risk of revealing a survivalist bias, I believe Christianity and the institutions have a future but it will need to be different from the present. That future will depend in large part on our willingness to ask the questions invite you to ponder.

Craigville Colloquy July 17, 2012

Notes

Fowler, Robert Booth
1989 *Unconventional Partners: Religion and Liberal Culture in the UnitedStates*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

Heclo, Hugh
2008 *On Thinking Institutionally*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Hollinger, David A.
2011 "After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Ecumenical Protestantism and the Modern American Encounter with Diversity," *The Journal of American History*, June 2011.

2012 "Culture Changers: David Hollinger on What the Mainline Achieved," *Christian Century*, July 2, 2012.

Isaacson, Walter
2011 *Steve Jobs*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

A Liturgical Legacy from the Presbyterians: Introducing The Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship

Christopher Dorn

In preparation for the joint convocation between the Mercersburg Society and the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship (AR&LW) to be held in June 2013, the steering committee of AR&LW expressed to me its desire for a series of essays with the stated purpose of familiarizing members of these two organizations with each another. For the benefit of their own members, two brief articles on the history and current profile of the Mercersburg Society have already appeared in the AR&LW Newsletter ("Introducing Mercersburg: The Movement (Part 1)" (Spring 2012): 3-4; and "Introducing Mercersburg: Mercersburg Society (Part 2)" (Fall 2012): 3-4). In this longer article I propose to do for the members of the Mercersburg Society what I have already done for their counterparts in AR&LW. I begin by sketching a profile of the AR&LW. Then I attempt to identify the sources from which the organization draws its inspiration and direction by recounting the history of liturgical reforms undertaken in American Presbyterianism. This narrative culminates in 1993 with the publication of the *Book of Common Worship* (1993), which liturgical scholar James F. White lauded at the time as the "state of the art in North American liturgical revision."[1] I conclude by showing how the AR&LW was conceived from the desire to preserve and extend the vision of worship embodied in the *Book of Common Worship* for the purpose of strengthening the liturgical life of the wider family of Reformed churches in North America.

The AR&LW: A Synopsis

[1] James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America: A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 89.

Founded in 2004, the AR&LW is a voluntary association of institutions and persons dedicated to the understanding and practice of Christian worship that is at once Reformed and liturgical.[2] By the term "Reformed" is understood those churches and traditions that derive their origins from the sixteenth-century Reformation, especially in the movements inspired by John Calvin (1509-1564). Thus it is natural that the association has attracted primarily individuals and congregations belonging to North American churches with membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Among them include the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Christian Church–Disciples of Christ,[3] United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The term "liturgical" implies an affirmation of the historic *ordo*, which includes a commitment to the norm of weekly Lord's Day service of word and sacrament, lifelong formation that leads from and to the baptismal font, observance of the liturgical calendar guided by the lectionary, the practice of daily prayer, and a life patterned on worship.[4] The *raison d'être* of the association finds dynamic expression in the following mission statement:

> The Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship . . . covenants with God's help, to cultivate, practice, and promote worship that offers a foretaste of the fullness of God's Reign. This worship is Trinitarian, ecumenical, incarnational and sacramental; it is both universal and local and sends the church to live its

[2] AR&LW *Constitution* 2.1. Cited in Harold M. Daniels, "The Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship and the Reforming Tradition." http://www.arlw.org/tradition.html. (Accessed November 29, 2012.)

[3] The Disciples of Christ are represented in AR&LW, but this church is not a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

[4] AR&LW *Constitution* 2.1. Cited in Daniels, "The Reforming Tradition."

liturgy, bringing God's justice and grace to all of God's creation.[5]

As an association with duly elected officers, the AR&LW offers its members opportunities for mutual support, intellectual and spiritual growth, and professional development. Consistent with the liturgical ideals articulated in the statement above, it has sought through its annual meetings, publications and website to:

1) Express the Reformed understanding of worship by cultivating, practicing, and promoting worship that is Trinitarian, ecumenical, incarnational and sacramental, in dialogue with ambient and impinging culture(s);
2) Provide a network of communication and support among persons who practice or desire to move toward the practice of such worship;
3) Offer continuing education and facilitate the sharing of resources for such worship;
4) Form a recognizable authority which may advocate such worship in congregations, church governing bodies, seminaries, and denominational worship offices;
5) Encourage the renewal of worship by embodying the historic *ordo* and developing liturgy within its shape, with the goal of revitalizing the spiritual life of churches and the Church;

6) Empower the Church to live its liturgy, giving witness to God's justice and grace for all of God's creation, as well as the unity of Christ's Church.[6]

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[5] AR&LW *Constitution* 3.1. Cited in "Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship, To Strengthen the Church in Forming Leaders for Worhip: A Stategic Three-Year Proposal, November 15, 2007," 4. http://www.arlw.org/3yr-plan.pdf. (Accessed November 29, 2012.)

[6] AR&LW *Constitution* 3.1. Cited in Daniels, "The Reforming Tradition."

Insofar as sound worship practices are universally acknowledged to play a vital role in animating the life and mission of the church, the existence of an organization that serves to promote them needs no explanation. What does need explanation, however, especially in an ecclesial landscape where a bewildering variety of ideas about worship circulates through an endless stream of conferences and publications, is the existence of precisely this one. As we will see, only in properly locating the AR&LW in the context of the liturgical reforms undertaken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessors over the past two centuries is it possible to respond.

In the Liturgical Wilderness

Marsha M. Wilfong has observed that the present Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessors have been the most prolific of the Reformed churches in North America in the production of liturgical resources, and perhaps have been most vocal in advocating for reform in liturgical understanding and practice.[7] In a church whose tradition of worship has been determined by the *Directory for the Worship of God*, the American revision of the *Westminster Directory* (1645), this development is certainly curious enough.[8] Adopted by the colonial Presbyterian General Assembly in 1788, the *Directory* was not a service book in the strict sense; it contained no prescribed forms or texts mandated for use in public worship. Rather it outlined a flexible order of worship with general instructions and summaries of suggested content. Its purpose was to allow ministers maximum freedom to plan their own worship services and to formulate their own prayers from the pulpit within a

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[7] Marsha M. Wilfong, "Reformed Worship in the United States of America," in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 135.

[8] *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: Containing the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Government and Discipline, and the Directory for the Worship of God* (Philadelphia: Robert Aitken, 1797.)

general framework. In a typical service the sermon was central, prayers were mostly or entirely extemporaneous, and corporate participation was limited to psalm or hymn singing and in some places receiving of offerings. While the *Directory* advocated that the Lord's Supper be celebrated frequently, it left it to the discretion of the ministers and elders of each congregation how frequently. In most places the Lord's Supper was probably celebrated only quarterly; although it was observed in a spirit of solemn reverence, it remained peripheral to the conventional worship life of the congregation.

Michael A. Farley has chronicled the difficulties that this style of free worship in Presbyterian congregations encountered on the American frontier in the nineteenth century. Many of the new settlements did not have an adequate supply of ordained clergy, and consequently were deprived of an organized congregational life. The relative scarcity of ministers combined with the isolation of Presbyterian communities, especially in the rural areas, resulted in a tolerance for a wide range of worship practices. Often lacking a minister, Presbyterians had to rely on family devotions or joint worship services with non-Presbyterian groups, which could only weaken ties with prior traditions of Presbyterian worship. The fact that these services were often conducted informally in meeting places other than church buildings contributed further to the fragmentation of these traditions.[9] The revivalism of the Second Great Awakening (ca. 1790-1850) accelerated this process. The elements in a revival service were calculated to induce a conversion experience in individual "sinners" and were subordinated to this end. Members of the Mercersburg Society of course will recall that the pervasive influence these revival services exerted in German Reformed congregations served as a catalyst for the Mercersburg movement, which sought to oppose them through a systematic retrieval of Reformed and patristic liturgical traditions.

9 Michael A. Farley, "Reforming Reformed Worship: Theological Method and Liturgical Catholicity in American Presbyterianism, 1850-2005," (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Louis, 2007), 20.

The Search for Liturgical Roots

American Presbyterianism did not produce at this time liturgical scholars of the same caliber as a John W. Nevin or a Philip Schaff, but in 1855, two years before their Herculean labors were monumentalized in the *Provisional Liturgy*, a young Presbyterian clergyman named Charles W. Baird published a work that awakened interest in matters liturgical in Presbyterian circles. In his *Eutaxia or the Presbyterian Liturgies: Historical Sketches*, Baird described the development of Reformed worship from John Calvin's liturgies to the American revision of the *Westminster Directory*.[10] In addition, he issued a plea to his contemporaries to incorporate into their worship services various liturgical practices attested in these earlier sources.

The influence of Baird's research can be seen in the stimulus it provided for the compilation and publication of liturgical forms. The evidence is seen as early as 1857 when Baird himself published *A Book of Public Prayer*, which drew upon the liturgies of the Reformers. A very ambitious project was that of Charles W. Shields, who proposed a Presbyterian emendation of the Episcopalian *Book of Common Prayer* under the rather prolix title *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, as Amended by the Westminster Divines in the Royal Commission of 1661, and in Agreement with the Directory for Public Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (1864). Princeton theologian A.A. Hodge provided forms for occasional services (i.e. baptisms, church dedications, marriages, and funerals) in *Manual of Forms* (1877 and 1882). Other examples include Samuel Hopkins' *A General Liturgy and Book of Common Prayer* (1883) and B.B. Comegys' *An Order of Worship with Forms of Prayer for Divine Worship* (1885).

10 (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1855.)

It is apposite to mention here that Scottish Presbyterianism witnessed at this time a similar interest in printed liturgical forms. In 1857 appeared *Presbyterian Liturgies with Specimen Forms for Public Worship*, whose compiler Andrew Bonar referred to the *Provisional Liturgy* just then published by the German Reformed Church in the United States.[11] In 1865, the Church Service Society of the Church of Scotland was founded with the aim of making available liturgical forms that drew on classical and Reformation sources. In 1867, it published an unofficial service book titled *Euchologion.*[12] In the introduction to the communion services appeared outlines of several historic liturgies as well as modern services. Members of the Mercersburg Society will be interested to learn that the eucharistic liturgies of the Catholic Apostolic Church and the German Reformed Church were included among the latter. Later George Sprott, one of the compilers of the *Euchologion*, acknowledged that the eucharistic prayer in the service book derived largely from those of the two American denominations.[13]

The liturgical ferment in American Presbyterianism created a climate favorable for the formation of an American Church Service Society. Founded in 1896, it modeled itself on its Scottish counterpart, advocating for liturgical education and reform in the (northern) Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Pastor and hymnologist Louis Benson organized the society, which boasted among its members the pastor and poet Henry Van Dyke, the previously mentioned liturgical researcher B.B. Henegys, and the Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield. The society must have been successful in its advocacy because in 1903 the General Assembly

11 *Presbyterian Liturgies with Specimens of Forms of Prayer for Worship as Used in the Continental Reformed, and American Churches; with the Directory for Public Worship of God agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster; and Forms of Prayer for Ordinary and Communion Sabbaths, and for other Services of the Church* (Edinburgh: Myles MacPhail, 1858).

12 *Euchologion or Book of Prayers* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1867).

13 George W. Sprott, *The Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London, 1882), 118.

appointed a worship committee to prepare a book of forms and services for corporate worship. Van Dyke served as chair. After some strong opposition, the first U.S. *Book of Common Worship* was published in 1906.[14] Although not endorsed by the General Assembly and only recommended to congregations for voluntary use, the book marked a significant departure in Presbyterian liturgical history. Farley notes that the materials included for the celebration of Advent, Christmas, Good Friday and Easter are remarkable in view of their complete absence from the 1788 *Directory for Worship* and of the general antipathy towards the liturgical calendar in earlier Presbyterian history.[15] He adds, however, that the conception of Lord's Day worship failed to realize a central catholic ideal: the eucharistic liturgy was removed from the ordinary service, which culminated in the sermon. The position of the sermon in the service perhaps suggests that the ghost of revivalism had yet to be exorcised.

Cultivating the Liturgical Soil in the Ecumenical Century

Subsequent revisions of the *Book of Common Worship* appeared in 1932, a joint effort of the (northern) Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the (southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States, and again in 1946.[16] In the latter Horace T. Allen has observed that the five orders for Lord's Day worship were modeled on the "morning prayer and sermon" design found in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer.*[17] To explain in part the

14 *The Book of Common Worship* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1906).

15 Farley, "Reforming Reformed Worship," 26.

16 *The Book of Common Worship* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1946).

17 Horace T. Allen, "*Book of Common Worship* (1993): The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 'Origins and Anticipations'" in *To Glorify God: Essays on Modern Reformed Liturgy*, ed. Bryan D. Spinks and Ian R. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 16. It is interesting also to note that to the five orders for morning worship correspond five orders for evening worship, which resemble an Anglican evensong.

introduction of the liturgical language and structures from this source, Farley cites the ecumenical dialogues in which the northern Presbyterian Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church (USA) were engaged from 1937 to 1948. The two communions were exploring together during this time the possibility of a mutual recognition of orders. Because differences between Presbyterian and Anglican liturgical traditions constituted an obstacle to this process, it certainly made sense for the Presbyterians to incorporate material from the *Book of Common Prayer* into their own service book.[18] Significant also for this revision was the inclusion of a complete two-year lectionary, composed by the Scottish scholar A. Allan McArthur for the 1940 *Scottish Book of Common Prayer*. The lectionary contained readings from the Old Testament, Epistles, and Gospels together with a Psalm designated for each Sunday and festival of the liturgical calendar.[19]

Parenthetically, it is important that these developments be seen against the wider backdrop of the ecumenical and liturgical movements that began to impact the worship life not only of the Presbyterian churches, but also of many churches across the denominational spectrum. Ecumenical dialogue, informed by critical research into the origins and development of the separated communions, prompted many to reconsider the sources of their liturgical traditions. Pastors and scholars in the Reformed churches studied the liturgical principles and forms that came out of the sixteenth century, while members of all participating churches, including Roman Catholic, returned to the New Testament and to the liturgies from the patristic era in a search for authentic worship as it was practiced in the classical periods. Widespread consensus emerged that the churches must listen again to what the fathers in the faith had taught about Christian worship. This historical research and dialogue convinced many churches that their liturgical principles and worship practices were not entirely adequate. In the Reformed churches, many concluded that the privileging of the

18 Farley, "Reforming Reformed Worship," 30.

19 Ibid., 31.

preached word at the expense of the sacrament was unbiblical and therefore sought to reunite word and sacrament in ordinary Lord's Day worship.[20] This conception of a full service of word and sacrament, however, was not yet reflected in the 1946 *Book of Common Worship*. While this revision contained three eucharistic liturgies, in addition to eight proper prefaces for use in connection with as many festivals of the Christian year, the material was relegated to its own section, leaving the impression that the Lord's Supper is an occasional service.

This would change soon enough. But a problem was becoming apparent. As mentioned earlier, the tradition of American Presbyterian worship was shaped by the *Directory for Worship*. But the liturgical revisions described above appeared to subvert this tradition by commending the use of service books. The members of the committee appointed in 1955 to prepare another revision therefore sought to resolve this contradiction in the most straightforward manner by preparing a new *Directory for Worship*.[21] In 1961, the new directory was adopted by the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (the 1958 union of the former (northern) Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the United Presbyterian Church in North America). [22] Farley observes in this directory several interesting features that served to bring it into line with the liturgical direction in which the worship committees had been seeking to guide the church since the turn of

20 For the impact of the liturgical and ecumenical movements on the Reformed churches in the middle twentieth century, see my *The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Church in America: Tradition in Transformation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 83-107.

21 Allen, "Origins and Anticipations," 16-17.

22 United Presbyterian Church USA, "Directory for Worship," in *The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly of the UPC USA, 1963). See Wilfong, "Reformed Worship in the United States of America," 136. The southern Presbyterian Church in the United States adopted in 1963 its own directory, which followed more closely the 1788 *Directory for Worship* and thus was a more conservative revision.

the century.[23] First, it stressed full, active participation of the congregation in the act of worship. Suggestions included spoken confession of sin and recitation of the Creed, the giving of offerings, and joining in the intercessory prayers.[24] Second, it commended the observance of the liturgical year and approved the use of a lectionary. Finally, it affirmed the celebration of word and sacrament as the norm of Lord's Day worship.

Growth in Liturgical Catholicity

The path was now clear for the introduction of a new service book. In 1970, a joint publication of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the (southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church appeared under the title *The Worshipbook: Services*.[25] The contents reveal the deeper penetration of the liturgical and ecumenical movements into the minds of those who prepared the revision. Instead of the Anglican orders of "morning prayer and sermon" *The Worshipbook* provided a service for the Lord's Day that succeeded in integrating word and sacrament in an order modeled on the classic eucharistic liturgies of the patristic era. New texts of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, the introductory dialogue of the eucharistic prayer, etc. were drawn from the International Consultation on English Texts, an ecumenical body composed of members representing Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in twenty countries. These linguistic changes were part of a larger project to replace Elizabethan English with the "straightforward use of [English] words and language in current, contemporary use in the

23 Farley, "Reforming Reformed Worship," 32.

24 See also Julius Melton, *Presbyterian Worship in America: Changing Patterns since 1787* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), 140-141.

25 The United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America participated at the beginning, but did not continue in the process. The final stage of the project was the 1972 *Worshipbook,* which contained both the service book and a new hymnal. See Wilfong, "Reformed Worship in the United States of America," 137.

last third of the twentieth century."[26] Finally, *The Worshipbook* also included a three-year lectionary, adapted from the Roman Catholic *Ordo Lectionum Missæ* (1969), which came out of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

For those who championed the ideals promoted by the liturgical movement, *The Worshipbook* was a signal achievement in the history of American Presbyterianism. Allen, however, notes that many found the new service book to be defective. First, there was the problem of language. On the one hand, there remained those committed to Elizabethan English as the language of public prayer. On the other, in a milieu of an incipient but already robust feminism, others objected to the use of gender exclusive language. Second, because pastors had been trained at the seminaries to lead worship according to the rejected "morning prayer and sermon" pattern, they were uncomfortable in using the new catholic rite of word and sacrament. Finally, in the final edition the service book and hymnal were combined in one volume, to which neither the pastors nor the people were accustomed. Moreover, due to miscommunication between the worship and music committees during the preparation of this volume, *The Worshipbook* contained no Psalter, either for singing or for responsive reading.[27]

Despite these problems, *The Worshipbook* was not without effect. The pattern of worship embodied in the service for the Lord's Day began to habituate congregations to a weekly rhythm of word and sacrament (if only through an ante-communion on most Sundays). Standardized forms for use in public worship found increasing acceptance, as did a liturgical calendar with seasonal emphases governed by a lectionary. And the need for a more useful service book in contemporary English was recognized if not satisfied.[28]

26 *The Worshipbook: Services and Hymns* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970, 1972), 6.

27 Allen, "Origins and Anticipations," 18-19.

28 Ibid., 20.

These factors, both negative and positive, stimulated the continued production of Presbyterian liturgical resources. The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the (southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church again collaborated to follow up the publication of *The Worshipbook* with a new and more comprehensive project. This project was organized and facilitated by the Joint Office of Worship of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, of which Harold Daniels was appointed director in 1978. These two denominations were at this time engaged in reunion negotiations that led to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1983. Daniels and others would thus have the added responsibility of ensuring that the liturgical resources that were being developed would cohere with a new *Directory for Worship* necessitated by the reunion.

The process used to present the new resources was modeled on that of the United Methodist Church, which introduced its own Supplemental Worship Resources in 1970. Task forces were appointed to draft services to be sent out to participating congregations for trial use and criticism prior to publication as Supplemental Liturgical Resources. Once these had been published and in use in the congregations for an extended period, an editorial team of liturgically competent and pastorally sensitive members would further refine and make them suitable for publication in a bound volume.[29] Seven of these Supplemental Liturgical Resources circulated in the new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in as many years, beginning with the *Service for the Lord's Day* in 1984.[30]

[29] Fred R. Anderson, "*Book of Common Worship* (1993): A Pastoral Overview," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* XVI:2 (1995), 125-126.

[30] For a detailed discussion of the work the task forces did to prepare the *Service for the Lord's Day*, see Arlo D. Duba, "Presbyterian Eucharistic Prayers," in *New Eucharistic Prayers: An Ecumenical Study of their Development and Structure*, ed. Frank C. Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 96-103. After *the Service for the Lord's Day*, there followed *Holy Baptism* (1985), *Christian Marriage* (1986), *The Funeral* (1986), *Daily Prayer* (1987), *Services for Occasions of Pastoral Care* (1990) and *Liturgical Year* (1992)

[31] (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

[32] For an overview of the welter of material contained in the voluminous *Book of Common Worship* (1993), which totals over 1100 pages (!), see Harold M. Daniels, "The Making of the *Book of Common Worship* (1993)" in *To Glorify God*, 31-53.

These later comprised the materials that formed the core contents of the *Book of Common Worship*, which was published in 1993.[31] This latest version of the *Book of Common Worship* was preceded by *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990), which featured a broad repertoire of church music including Native American, African-American, Latin American, and Asian hymns, in addition to a Psalter, as well as by a new *Directory for Worship* (1989).

The *Book of Common Worship* (1993) maintained as the norm for each Lord's Day and festival a full service of word and sacrament. The outline for the Service for the Lord's Day was divided into four sections with as many headings: Gathering, Word, Eucharist, and Sending. This outline was modified to accommodate those churches that did not celebrate the Supper weekly. In this case, title of the third section was omitted. But the offering, prayer of thanksgiving, and Lord's Prayer under the heading of "Word" was designed to give the impression that the service was normally to be completed by the Lord's Supper.

In magnitude and scope the *Book of Common Worship* (1993) far surpassed any of its predecessors.[32] This can be explained in part by the demand on the part of congregations for a richer variety of liturgical resources than *The Worshipbook* contained. Multiple liturgical texts for the opening prayer and confession of sins, appropriate to the occasion or season in the liturgical calendar, were provided. Eleven options for the prayer for illumination, eight for the prayers of the people were offered. Perhaps in accord with the sixteenth-century ideal of "one fixed canon" for the celebration of

the Lord's Supper, *The Worshipbook* had provided only one eucharistic prayer.[33] Twenty-four now appeared in its successor, with a broad variety of complete prayers for each season in the liturgical calendar. Newer and more expansive materials were included for each festival and season of the liturgical calendar, to which was added Christ the King (Reign of Christ), the Baptism of the Lord, and the Transfiguration of the Lord. A liturgy for the Easter Vigil was provided. Palm Sunday was renamed Palm/Passion Sunday to reflect ecumenical consensus. Extensive resources for morning and evening prayer comprised a separate section. To the three-year lectionary for Sundays and festivals was added a two-year daily lectionary.

In our own era, which is witnessing in many Reformed churches a retreat from liturgical worship, the demand for such resources may seem curious. But it must be borne in mind that the period in which the *Book of Common Worship* (1993) was prepared saw the consolidation of the gains achieved by the liturgical and ecumenical movements. These are summed up in the document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM), which the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order approved at Lima, Peru in 1982 for transmission to member churches.[34] The product of careful scholarship and decades of patient dialogue, BEM represented many promising convergences on the meaning of these practices. Daniels notes the influence of its baptismal theology on the task force appointed to prepare the baptismal rite.[35] In addition, the doctrine of the eucharist was elaborated in terms according to which the classic eucharistic liturgies increasingly favored by the churches throughout the ecumenical century appear as the privileged form for its expression: the eucharist involves thanksgiving to the Father, memorial of Christ, invocation of the Spirit, communion of the faithful, and anticipation of the kingdom.

33 Duba, "Presbyterian Eucharistic Prayers," 99.

34 Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

35 Daniels, "The Making of the *Book of Common Worship* (1993)," 41.

Translated into forty languages, BEM remains the most influential text of the modern ecumenical movement. Responses to BEM from more than 190 churches eventually filled six volumes, indicating the high level of interest in the liturgical subjects that it treated. It is no surprise then that in the same decade there emerged a profusion of service books. Among the Reformed churches, The United Church of Christ published the *Book of Worship* in 1986. The Reformed Church in America published *Worship the Lord* in 1987 and *Liturgy and Confessions* in 1990. In 1988 The Christian Reformed Church in North America published the *Psalter Hymnal*, which included a directory for worship and forms for the sacraments and occasional services. Outside of the United States, the United Reformed Church in England (1989) and the Presbyterian Church of Canada (1991) also produced new or revised service books during this period.

The Formation of AR&LW

Did the twentieth-century liturgical renewal which culminated in the publication of the *Book of Common Worship* (1993) represent the end of an era? In retrospect, it seems the case can be made. But the principal architects of the new Presbyterian service book were intent on ensuring that the Reformed churches enjoy the ripened fruit of the liturgical harvest. Already in 1980 Daniels and his colleagues were deliberating on how to promote the vision of worship that would inform the *Book of Common Worship* (1993).[36] Daniels conceived the idea of reviving the Church Service Society. It had proved effective in supporting the revisions in 1906 as well as in 1970, but when its agenda was absorbed into the new Joint Office for Worship and Music created in the same year, it dissolved. Nevertheless, Daniels was convinced that a supportive network of pastors and congregations could serve to facilitate the reception of the liturgical resources which the Joint Office of Worship would be

36 For the following, I am relying almost entirely on Harold Daniels unpublished paper, "In God's Own Time—The Birthing of the AR&LW." This paper is available for download at the AR&LW website (ARLW.org).

introducing into the churches during the 1980s. This period of liturgical experimentation in the churches coincided with a growing Reformed and Presbyterian presence at the annual meetings of the North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL), with which the Joint Office of Worship began also to hold its gatherings for Presbyterian participants. At these meetings informal discussions throughout the 1990s about a new incarnation of the Church Service Society indicated interest, but nothing was done until the NAAL meeting at San Antonio in 1998. There plans to organize a membership association and develop a website began to take shape, but personal circumstances in the lives of the key organizers prevented those plans from materializing.

In 2000 and 2001, Daniels received distressing phone calls from frustrated pastors seeking advice on how to implement in their congregations the liturgical scheme of worship set forth in the *Book of Common Worship (*1993). Apparently, this was becoming a critical issue at that time due to conditions in Presbyterian congregations. In an attempt to increase membership one pastor was adopting a style of worship prevalent in the megachurches, which were growing numerically. Another congregation was actively resisting the use of the liturgical forms contained in the *Book of Common Worship* (1993), alienating its pastor who was committed to perpetuating the liturgical heritage mediated through this service book.

Concerned to address the problems shared in these phone calls in a more systematic manner, Daniels sent an email message to friend and colleague Arlo Duba in April 2002. In it he declared his intention to continue the cause of liturgical reform and renewal to which he had already dedicated his life over a long and productive career. He then proceeded to draw up "A Proposal for Structuring Advocacy of Service Book Use in Reformed Churches." It called for "an informal network of Reformed pastors and congregations committed to implementing and preserving the historic shape of Christian worship preserved in the churches' service books." The

principal aim of the network would be advocacy and support. By means of previously published materials downloadable from a website and mentoring programs that offered counsel and support to pastors and congregations requesting it, such a network might serve to promote liturgical reform and renewal in the Reformed churches. After he had developed the proposal, Daniels sought input from friends Duba, Dennis Hughes and Gláucia Vasconcélos-Wilkey, who at that time was Director of Ecumenical Liturgical Life at the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University.

In Vasconcélos-Wilkey, Daniels had certainly enlisted an able ally for the cause. A dedicated liturgical scholar and church musician, Vasconcélos-Wilkey had played the leading role in the formation of the Summer Institute of Liturgy & Worship, which was holding its annual conference at Seattle University later in 2002. In preparation for the event, she organized a dinner meeting at a local Presbyterian church at which she had invited Daniels to speak. Daniels addressed the group on the topic "Ecumenism and the Rule of Prayer." Conversation after dinner afforded Daniels the occasion to share with the larger group the ideas he had developed in his proposal for the network.

Daniels found a receptive audience. He later discovered that many in it were members of a study group called Pastors as Liturgical Theologians (PALT), which Vasconcélos-Wilkey had organized when she was a staff person at the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The members engaged in the study and discussion of the pastoral and theological implications of the liturgy and actively sought to recruit pastors in their own regions to form local expressions of their group. Members of PALT constituted the majority of those who embraced Daniels' proposal that evening. They eagerly looked forward to continuing the conversation.

A medical emergency prevented Daniels from following up. But no momentum was lost since Arlo Duba, also present at the dinner,

took the initiative to organize discussions about the proposal with interested persons. The process of discussing and refining the proposal in the following months culminated in July 2003 at the next meeting of the Summer Institute, where those involved discussed the mission the prospective organization might have with the help of a paper prepared by Duba.[37] At the same meeting an ad hoc Steering Committee was formed with Fritz West, a United Church of Christ pastor and liturgical scholar, elected as its convener. The first planning meeting was held, the name "Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship" was chosen, and a Constitution Drafting Committee was formed.

Thus this narrative concludes at the point where it began. Space does not permit me here to extend it to comment on the themes of the annual convocations from 2005 to the present, to describe the numerous initiatives launched during this period, or to reflect on the various challenges it has had to meet to faithfully carry out the mission with which it has been entrusted. Interested Mercersburg Society members will have the opportunity to learn more about the AR&LW in the mutual encounter that will happen in June at the Joint Convocation.

37 "The *Ordo*—The Center of Liturgical Reform" in *Liturgy: A Journal of the Liturgical Conference* 20:2 (2005), 9-22. The longer subtitle reads: "Toward the Establishment of the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship A July 2004 Expansion of Material Presented to a Meeting in Seattle, Washington July 5, 2003." This is one of several foundational documents of the AR&LW contained in this special issue dedicated to the formation of the AR&LW. Together with the others, it is available for download at ARLW.org.

BOOK REVIEW

Albert J. D. Walsh, *United and Uniting: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology for a Church in Crisis.* Eugene, Oregon, Wipf & Stock Publishing Co., 2011. 100 pages.

F. Christopher Anderson

Albert J. D. Walsh does not beat around the bush in stating his perspective: "I am absolutely convinced that we will never achieve the purposes for which Christ brought *this* confessional community (i.e., UCC) into historical existence until we return to the fundamental faith of our founders, which was and remains essentially *ecumenical*." (xv) He writes: "The founders of the UCC never intended the ecumenical agenda to be optional for members..." (5)

Walsh realizes that for at least three decades "...most mainline churches have been hemorrhaging members at an alarming rate..." (xx) He states that neither outreaching via the "God Is Still Speaking"campaign nor advocating the "Biblical Witness" route is the solution to our problem. (xvi) He also has no problem with "...the church tackling some of the most controversial social and political issues of our time." (xvi)

His point is that we must return to our original vision, that of being a 'united and uniting church.' He upholds the "...breathtaking task of ecumenicity; this was her God-given vision and vocation." (xvii) He writes "The ontological reality of the Church catholic is, in fact, a *given.*" (xviii)

Walsh worries that the church's symbol of the Cross of victory is being replaced by a comma (xx) and the "...creedal affirmation of the church as *one, holy, catholic and apostolic*" is being replaced by "a contemporary identity of the church deemed more suitable to the tastes of seekers." (xxi) He states: "Cultural accommodation has not proven to be a successful methodology." (xxi)

There will be those who immediately dismiss Walsh's views and especially his use of the phrase "confessional community" to describe the United Church of Christ. There are UCC churches that advertise themselves as not being tied down to creeds and confessions. Yet Walsh is right. The Preamble to the UCC Constitution states: "It (the UCC) claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic teachings of the Protestant Reformers."

It must be made clear that Walsh believes that: "The UCC is not the only mainline denomination in the United States to have all but abandoned the theological traditions of Western Christianity..." (xi) His point is that this has been his community for over 30 years. He loves the church and desires that it live up to its wonderful mandate.

He points out that the original vision of the UCC is clearly counter-cultural. It stands against "...the cultural tendency toward separatism, exclusivism, individualism, and isolationism." (footnote on page 20)

If you are still not sure whether you want to read this book I would recommend that you check out chapter 4, *"Autonomy in the Polity of the UCC."* In this chapter Walsh touches on what may be the most important question in the UCC. What does autonomy mean? The word comes from *"auto-nomos"* or self-law. (25) Does this mean that churches are independent of Christ? He writes "The church is not *church* so long as she functions under the illusion that she is democratically constituted and capable of discharging her several responsibilities, and even restructuring her identity, without reference to him who is both Head and Lord." (29) Mercersburgers will be happy to see Nevin's theology brought to bare on this point.

Walsh takes time to credit the UCC on our ecumenical work that have resulted in our Adoption of a Covenant of Mission and Faith with the Evangelical Church of the Union in Germany, our partnership with the Disciples of Christ, the Full Communion with

the ELCA, the PCUSA and the RCA. and, our membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the NCC in the USA etc. (35) Since the book was published we have more to get excited about. We have agreed to the *"Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism" along* with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the PCUSA, the RCA and the CRC. Walsh upholds the UCC's work in such agreements. His worry is about the misunderstanding that we have concerning such issues as "autonomy" and how the local church has forgotten our 1957 desire to fulfill the prayer of Christ "that they all may be one."

Walsh brings up another issue that is very close to my heart. He writes: "L. Gregory Jones critiques mainline churches in North America for their failure to maintain the necessary practice of 'catechesis,' more broadly understood as education in the essential beliefs of the Christian tradition." (83) This year, 2013, we celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. We need to take this message to heart.

The book is less than 100 pages. I hope this review encourages you to at least read the book and publicly discuss the issues even if you end up disagreeing with his perspective. These issues are being discussed privately. Now is the time to bring the discussion move out into the open.

A Very Brief Bibliography on the Heidelberg Catechism

1563-2013 The 450th Anniversary of the Catechism

If you have never studied this wonderful catechism pick one of these books to read this year. (Note that Ursinus is free online!)

Barrett, Lee. *The Heidelberg Catechism: A New translation for the 21st Century*. Pilgrim Press. Great translation and it includes the best essay on why we need catechisms and doctrines.

Barth, Karl, T*he Heidelberg Catechism for Today.* A brief but wonderful way to read Barth and the catechism.

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Van Halsema, Thea B. *Three Men Came to Heidelberg*. Baker Books. The very brief story of the catechism.

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Working, Randal. *From Rebellion to Redemption: A Journey Through the Great Themes of Christian Faith.* Navpress 2001. If you want to have devotions while learning the catechism this is the book for you..

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