

# *The Augustana Liturgy: Its Significance for Shaping a Community of Faith*

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When persons with memories of the Augustana Lutheran Church are asked what to them is most memorable about it, they often give in quick reply, “The liturgy.” Testimonies to that are abundant, and some examples are worth noting. Peter Beckman tells of an occasion when he and other retired pastors in his synod were asked concerning the most significant change in the life of the church that they had experienced. He replied, “The most significant change” was “the loss of the Augustana liturgy with its thoroughgoing emphasis on the merciful and loving character of God.”<sup>1</sup> Herbert Chilstrom has written that “for those of us who grew up with that liturgy the memory of those opening intonations still lingers.”<sup>2</sup> Conrad Bergendoff wrote in an inter-Lutheran journal concerning the “sense of order and beauty in worship” that the Augustana liturgy offered.<sup>3</sup> And the statement has been attributed to G. Everett Arden that “to share in the Augustana liturgy is to experience a little bit of heaven.”<sup>4</sup> In addition to these and other possible statements, the most explicit testimonial to the importance of the Augustana liturgy in the memory of so many—decades after the Augustana Church ceased to exist—is that it has been used at every Gathering of the Augustana Heritage Association since 1998 and at other church events. The publication and use of *Songs of Two Homelands* in recent years has supported the use of the Augustana liturgy for all those occasions.<sup>5</sup>

The Augustana liturgy has been remembered and praised for its beauty, but it should be remembered too that it was not a liturgy created by the people of Augustana. It was inherited from Sweden. To put it another way, and to sharpen the point as much as possible, one can say that the people of Augustana did not shape the liturgy; it shaped them. It is the purpose of this essay to explore ways that the liturgy was a major factor in giving shape to a community’s understanding and even experience of the Christian faith. The essay

is a case study of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (usually translated as “the law of prayer is the law of belief,” meaning more generally: how we worship has a direct bearing on how we believe).

### *The Background and Development of the Liturgy*

During the years of its existence the Augustana Lutheran Church had a succession of liturgical books in Swedish and English that were officially authorized and published by the church, and some that were published privately.<sup>6</sup> The highlights of this succession of worship books shows a consistency in the use of the so-called “Swedish rite” up to the closing years of the Augustana Church’s existence.<sup>7</sup> All through those years there was an eye on developments in Sweden, where there was only one rite in use throughout the land. By way of contrast, various territorial churches in Germany had different liturgies, and those differences were brought to North America. Basic to the liturgical succession of worship resources in Sweden and in the Augustana Church are the following.

(1) The earliest liturgical resource in common use by the immigrants was the Swedish rite approved by the Swedish government in 1809 and published in the *Kyrko-handbok* of 1811.<sup>8</sup> The Swedish handbook contains the Sunday service (*högmässogudstjänsten*) without Holy Communion, the service with Holy Communion, orders for baptism, marriage, burial, and other pastoral acts. One might well question how much this resource was actually used in pioneer conditions. Yet the various sources at hand indicate that it was in fact used. According to pioneer pastor and historian Eric Norelius, ever since the founding of the synod in 1860, the Augustana Church followed “the Church of Sweden handbook as well as its ecclesial ceremonies” (“*den svenska kyrkans kyrkohandbok såväl som dess kyrkoceremonier*”) as much as possible.<sup>9</sup> Even prior to the formation of the Augustana Synod, and before any ordained pastor had come to serve the congregation, the church in New Sweden, Iowa, made use of the Swedish liturgy. Magnus F. Håkanson, a shoemaker whom the congregation prevailed to be their pastor, used that liturgy.<sup>10</sup> Norelius says that when Håkanson began his work there as pastor in 1848:

No formal organization took place, but the members looked on themselves as members of a Lutheran congregation as was the custom in Sweden. The Word of God began to bear fruit, many were awakened to spiritual life, the youth were confirmed, the sacraments administered, the liturgy of the Swedish Church was followed. The religious life was ordered as in Sweden, and with few exceptions everybody was happy and content.<sup>11</sup>

There are other indications of the same. In his report to the clergy of the Uppsala Archdiocese in 1865, Lars Paul Esbjörn indicates that upon his arrival in Andover, Illinois, in 1849, he began worship services “according to the teachings and rites of the Church of Sweden.”<sup>12</sup> At the first meeting of the Mississippi Conference (to which the Swedish pastors and congregations belonged) within the Synod of Northern Illinois, held January 6–9, 1853, it was resolved “That our preachers use the Swedish Manual or Liturgy at the chief public service.”<sup>13</sup> On a visit of Eric Norelius to the church in Andover, Illinois, in 1854, he reports that “The Church Handbook was used, the old gospel and epistle texts were read and expounded.”<sup>14</sup> And in a letter of September 18, 1856, to Jonas Swensson, Erland Carlsson wrote:

All of us use the Church Handbook of 1811, but we have no scruples about an occasional divergence. For example, I usually close with the benediction in the pulpit. The psalmbook of 1819 is used everywhere.<sup>15</sup>

To be sure, there were variations made by pastors and appeals to freedom made by parishioners in matters of worship. In 1855, for example, which was only a year after the visit by Norelius to Andover, the congregation passed a resolution saying that it did not desire “to be bound entirely by the present Swedish ritual.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, there was little desire within the congregations of the synod to change liturgical usages, “and Augustana for a number of years was content to follow the lead of the Swedish Church, making only such changes as were first made and approved in the homeland.”<sup>17</sup>

(2) The “psalmbook” mentioned by Erland Carlsson was *Den svenska psalmboken af år 1819*. This book was published in two editions. The first was known popularly as *Wallins Psalmbok* or “the Wallin Hymnal,” since its primary editor was Johan Olof Wallin.<sup>18</sup> As early as 1848 people coming from Sweden were asked to bring copies with

them.<sup>19</sup> The second was a revised version edited by Johann H. Thomander and Peter Wieselgren and published in 1849.<sup>20</sup> The latter edition came to be much more popular and in high demand among the immigrants; in his guide of 1854 for immigrants Carlsson urged those who planned to come to America to bring that edition with them.<sup>21</sup> In due course it was published in the U.S. by private publishers as early as 1877,<sup>22</sup> and in 1879 an emended version of the Thomander-Wieselgren edition was adopted by the synod for use in its congregations.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently it was published in 1884 by (what became) the church press,<sup>24</sup> a major achievement, and remained in use into the twentieth century. The book contains 530 hymns, the Sunday services (with and without Holy Communion), the assigned collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the church year, services for baptism, confirmation, weddings, burials, and other occasions, and a collection of prayers for various occasions and concerns.

(3) In 1895 the Augustana Lutheran Church published its own liturgical handbook, the *Kyrko-handbok för Augustana-Synoden*.<sup>25</sup> This was based on the 1894 *Kyrko-handbok* of the Church of Sweden.<sup>26</sup> The book contains the Sunday service (*högmässogudstjänsten*) without Holy Communion, the service with Holy Communion (both with and without the full service), orders for baptism, marriage, burial, and other pastoral acts. With the publication of this volume, it could be said that “the Church had for the first time a Church Book of its own.”<sup>27</sup>

It should be noted that by this time the collection of spiritual songs known as *Hemlandssånger* had also been published (1891; the music edition was published in 1892).<sup>28</sup> That book, containing 500 songs, was not intended for use as a liturgical book (it does not contain the liturgy), nor was it intended for use in Sunday morning worship. But there are indications that it was used quite widely for Sunday worship,<sup>29</sup> and it had a broad and popular appeal for use on other occasions.

(4) The first English-version worship book produced by the Augustana Church was published under the name of *The Hymnal and Order for Service for Churches and Sunday Schools* in 1899 (without music) and in 1901 (the music edition).<sup>30</sup> Since the latter was much more widely used, the edition is usually referred to as the 1901 hymnal. It contains orders for worship (with and without Holy Communion) translated from the 1895 *Kyrko-handbok*; orders for baptism,

confirmation, marriage, and burial; Gospel and Epistle texts for the church year (with the traditional lections and a series of two more for preaching); and 355 hymns.

Prior to the publication of its own worship book in English—as far back as 1871—the synod had recommended that if congregations are to use English in worship, they should make use of the *Church Book* of the General Council, published in 1868.<sup>31</sup> But that was a very early date in the history of the synod's eventual transition to English. It is impossible to know how often the book of the General Council was actually used.<sup>32</sup>

(5) The well-known book known as *The Hymnal and Order of Service*, published in 1925, is the worship book that most persons of Augustana heritage recall.<sup>33</sup> It must have been one of the most highly successful publishing ventures of the church press, for it was the standard worship book of the church, printed and reprinted from 1925 to as late as 1956. Known commonly to this day as the old “black hymnal,” it contains 682 hymns (including “Sentences and Responses”), orders for the Sunday service without Holy Communion, the Sunday service with Holy Communion (with and without the full service), orders for baptism, confirmation, marriage, burial, and more, the lectionary (with full texts printed, including both the traditional lectionary and two sets of preaching texts, using the American Standard Version), and the Common Service. This volume was soon accompanied by a new minister's edition in 1928, the *Church Service Book*, which contained the services of *The Hymnal* and a plethora of liturgical materials for pastoral, occasional services.<sup>34</sup>

It should at least be mentioned that the year after the publication of *The Hymnal* of 1925, a final Swedish version was published.<sup>35</sup> It contained both liturgy and hymns. The book is a rare find, indicating that it must not have been used very widely, supplanted soon by the highly successful English version.

(6) Near the very end of the existence of the Augustana Lutheran Church as a separate Lutheran body, the *Service Book and Hymnal* was published in 1958 under the sponsorship of the eight Lutheran denominations making up the National Lutheran Council,<sup>36</sup> and it came rapidly into use within Augustana congregations.<sup>37</sup> Various persons within the synod were involved in its design and editing, and

one of its delightful features was the use of melodies in its second setting of the Sunday service from the 1942 *Mässbok* of the Church of Sweden.<sup>38</sup> These had been set to the English texts by Regina H. Fryxell, an Augustana Lutheran living in Rock Island.

Although the transition from the 1925 *Hymnal* to the *Service Book and Hymnal* was a major step, effectively terminating the beloved and distinctive worship tradition of the Augustana Church, the new “red book” was a major seller. As early as the 1959 convention of the Augustana Lutheran Church, Ernest E. Ryden, a member of the twenty-seven-member Permanent Commission on the Liturgy and the Hymnal of the cooperating churches, reported that demand for the *Service Book and Hymnal* had been “phenomenal.” There had been three printings among the church presses participating within that first year, producing nearly 1,500,000 copies. According to Ryden, “In the Augustana Lutheran Church alone, approximately 175,000 have been distributed to congregations and individuals.”<sup>39</sup> By the time that the *Service Book and Hymnal* was approved and distributed, the *Hymnal* of 1925 had been used for some thirty-three years. It had provided the liturgy for Augustana people during dramatic and changing times in North American history and culture, which affected the church’s self-understanding: the Great Depression, World War II, the boom in church membership in the 1950s, the planting and construction of new churches throughout the land, mobility of members, a diminution of Swedishness in the congregations, and a huge transformation in consciousness of what it meant to be a part of the larger Lutheran family. By 1958 the *Service Book and Hymnal* was a welcome replacement of the old *Hymnal* of 1925.<sup>40</sup> With its collection of 602 hymns of the various ethnic traditions of Lutheranism in America, plus hymns of other origins that had won their way to acceptance among Lutherans, the *Service Book and Hymnal* had a wide appeal among those Lutheran denominations that were soon to form The American Lutheran Church (1960) and the Lutheran Church in America (1962).

### *The Augustana Church at Worship*

With the exception of the liturgical materials used from the *Service Book and Hymnal*, the liturgies in use within the Augustana

church throughout most of its history were modeled explicitly on—and in unbroken succession from—Church of Sweden liturgical handbooks. The basic pattern of the Sunday morning liturgy had been set in the sixteenth century by Olavus Petri.<sup>41</sup> His Swedish mass appeared for the first time in 1531,<sup>42</sup> and its essential features remained until the publication of the new *Mässbok* of 1942.<sup>43</sup> The liturgies used by Augustana pastors and congregations were likewise of the older type.

Distinctive features of the Swedish rite were brought into use in the congregations of the Augustana Church, and they had a formative influence in the development of a distinctive Augustana piety. To be sure, many other worship resources had an effect as well, particularly song books (*Hemlandssånger*, *The Junior Hymnal*, *Youth's Favorite Songs*,<sup>44</sup> etc.). But there is a difference. Those resources were created in America. But the liturgy existed prior to the formation of the Augustana Church. It informed the understanding and experience of the Christian faith (providing what one might call a “liturgical piety”) for the congregations and members of Augustana churches over several generations.

Among the distinctive elements of the Swedish liturgical tradition, there are at least three that stand out as formative for the Augustana understanding and experience of the Christian faith. One has to do with the familiar morning service without Holy Communion, and two others have to do with the service of Holy Communion. Page references that follow are from *The Hymnal* of 1925.

#### *The Service (without Holy Communion)*

Surely one of the most memorable and beloved parts of “The Service” (pp. 561–80) on those Sunday mornings when Holy Communion was not celebrated was the way that it began. Following an opening hymn, the pastor spoke or intoned the words of Isaiah’s vision in the Temple (Isaiah 6:3):

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts!  
The whole earth is full of His glory.

Although the *Hymnal* does not give a name for this portion of the liturgy, it can be called an introit,<sup>45</sup> for on other special occasions it

could be replaced by any of the “Introits” (as they are called) provided on pages 581–603 for the First Sunday in Advent, Christmas Day, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and the Festival of the Reformation. On all other occasions the text from Isaiah 6 was used.

Then in a spoken voice, the pastor continued (regardless of which Introit was used) with the words:

The Lord is in His Holy temple; His throne is in heaven. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of an humble and contrite spirit. He heareth the supplications of the penitent and inclineth to their prayers. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto His throne of grace and confess our sins.

The Confession of Sins that follows makes some affirmations about the nature of God. God is holy and righteous, but God is also a God who receives “with tender mercy all penitent sinners.” On the basis of that, God is addressed directly in prayer as merciful and gracious. If one can take the Common Service as a measure by which to compare the Confession of Sins in the Augustana liturgy, the latter is noticeably both longer and more descriptive of the character of God. God is portrayed as compassionate and merciful, a God who has “promised . . . to receive with tender mercy all penitent sinners” who turn to him and “seek refuge” in his compassion.

The combination of those liturgical elements mentioned so far—beginning with the Introit and continuing to the end of the Confession of Sins—creates within the attentive person at worship a sense of both the transcendence and the intimacy of God. God is holy and righteous; but God is also merciful and gracious, and he draws near to hear us and forgive us. In a rather audacious manner, we who share in this liturgy hold God to his promise “to receive” the penitent and “to forgive us all our sins,” and not only *for our sake* but also “to the praise and glory” of God’s holy name. That is as much as to say that if God expects praise and glory, God must remain faithful to his promise and forgive all our sins.

This sense of the transcendence and intimacy of God at the outset of worship on a Sunday morning, combining affirmations about God’s holiness and God’s tender mercy, cannot but affect the rest of what



transpires for the rest of the service. The remainder, as often remarked by observers and participants alike, was formal, dignified, and in keeping with the apostolic injunction that “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

But something else happened. The rest of the service was not formal only because of a theological perspective about God, both transcendent and intimate. For there is another element in the opening of the service, highly significant for the remainder, which goes beyond theological *understanding* to actual *experience*. That is the publicly claimed and very certain sense of the presence of God. One may justly wonder whether any other Lutheran liturgy has ever been so explicit about the presence of God within the community gathered for worship. To be sure, the announcement of God’s presence is done in a way that still preserves the otherness of God, but God’s nearness is declared in such a way that it is not only announced but to be experienced. The pastor declares that “The Lord is in His Holy temple,” and no one can miss the meaning. The temple is the present parish church and its gathering. The Lord “is nigh unto them” who are gathered; “he heareth the supplications of the penitent and inclineth to their prayers”; and so we “draw near with boldness to his throne of grace.” Yes, it is said that “his throne is in heaven,” but it is accessible to those who gather for worship. To gather at the throne of God means that the distance between the heavenly and the earthly has been overcome. We enter into the courts of the Lord.

Any good ecclesiology will affirm that “where two or three are gathered” in Jesus’ name, the risen Lord is among them (Matt. 18:20). But the Augustana liturgy made it explicit, not only by teaching a theological truth, but by exercising it. The presence of God, transcendent and intimate, was experienced by worshipers in a way that could not be experienced elsewhere in the world outside. That meant that Sunday worship was not simply a means of gathering strength and inspiration for one’s relationship with God or Christ during the rest of the week—as though that personal or individualistic relationship was the only relationship that *really* counted—but Sunday worship was itself the highpoint of one’s relationship with God and Christ. All other forms of devotional life were subsidiary to worship on Sunday morning.

One can only speculate what impact this had, in turn, upon relationships among persons within the congregation and their relationship to others outside the congregation. It all took place prior to the introduction of the “passing of the peace,” whereby relating to others is included explicitly and bodily within the liturgy. Yet it is surely the case that how one understands God has a direct bearing on how persons relate to one another. If God is the holy, transcendent God, whom we as broken, sinful persons know intimately as a merciful God, whose love has been demonstrated in the crucified Christ, we understand ourselves in a particular way. We know ourselves as persons dealt with mercifully by a God who is both holy and compassionate, and that has implications for how we look upon and treat others, with whom we have relationships in daily life.

### *The Celebration of Holy Communion*

Among the various features of the celebration of Holy Communion in the Augustana Church, at least two deserve special attention. One of them has to do with a distinctive arrangement of the sequence of the ordinary. That is the placement of the Sanctus within that sequence, as illustrated below.

Generally speaking, the Sanctus comes after the Proper Preface in liturgies of the Western church. But in the Augustana liturgy it comes after the Words of Institution (the Verba) and the Lord’s Prayer. In addition, instead of a Proper Preface at the beginning of the rite for Holy Communion, after the Sursum Corda (“Lift up your hearts”) within the Preface, there comes the Vere Dignum (“It is truly meet, right, and salutary...”) of considerable length. The difference in sequence can be illustrated as follows:

#### *Traditional Liturgical Sequence*

The Preface  
 Proper Preface  
 Sanctus  
 Words of Institution  
 (or Eucharistic Prayer)  
 Lord’s Prayer

#### *Augustana Liturgical Sequence*

The Preface  
 Vere Dignum  
 Words of Institution  
 Lord’s Prayer  
 Sanctus

The Vere Dignum begins with the customary words of the Preface in most liturgies (“It is truly meet, right, and salutary,” etc.), but it continues with a recitation of the redemptive work of Christ in several phrases, proclaims the benefits of the work of Christ for those who put their faith in him, and ends with “And in order that we may keep in remembrance His unspeakable mercy, He hath instituted His Holy Supper.” That is followed immediately by the Words of Institution, the Lord’s Prayer, and then the Sanctus.

The Augustana liturgy is modeled here on liturgies in the Church of Sweden, which had the same sequence from the mass of Olavus Petri (1531) to the newer liturgy of 1942. The rite of 1942 moves the Sanctus so that it follows the Proper Preface, and that remains the case in the current (1986) Church of Sweden liturgy,<sup>46</sup> as well as in the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958), the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978), and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006). But it is of interest to notice that Olavus Petri was not the first to place the Sanctus where he did. Martin Luther had placed it after the Words of Institution (but prior to the Lord’s Prayer) in his *Formula Missae* of 1523,<sup>47</sup> and there were precedents for that in pre-Reformation times.<sup>48</sup> The reason that Luther moved the Sanctus to that place is not clear. Interpreters have suggested possibilities, but there appear to be no certainties.<sup>49</sup>

Regardless of any reasoning for the placement of the Sanctus after the Words of Institution and Lord’s Prayer, it could well be that the sequence of the Swedish and Augustana rites had an unintended consequence. Placing the Words of Institution within the context of uninterrupted prayer—consisting of the Vere Dignum at the beginning, followed by the Words of Institution, and the Lord’s Prayer at the end, with the pastor facing the altar all the way through—may well have conditioned persons of Augustana heritage to be open, even hospitable, to the use of the “Prayer of Thanksgiving” (i.e., the Eucharistic Prayer) in the service of Holy Communion in the *Service Book and Hymnal* and in subsequent liturgies.

To the present day there are persons of various Lutheran traditions in America who are opposed to the use of a Eucharistic Prayer, insisting that the presiding minister should use the Words of Institution alone. But to my knowledge the objections have not come from

persons of the Augustana tradition. That could be in part not only because of the liturgical sequence discussed here, but also because various Augustana leaders endorsed the use of the Prayer of Thanksgiving at the time that the *Service Book and Hymnal* was published. That year Conrad Bergendoff wrote a series of articles on the new liturgy in the *Lutheran Companion*, and concerning the use of the Prayer of Thanksgiving he wrote:

There is no sacrifice here offered by priest or congregation—that was Luther's objection to the Roman prayers. Instead, it is an offering of prayer and thanks in which we implore Christ that we may worthily receive His body and blood and be blessed by His sacrifice. This prayer is in the best tradition of the Church, and the Lutheran Churches in many countries are restoring this prayer.<sup>50</sup>

In 1961 the Commission on Worship of the Augustana Lutheran Church published a guide to the *Service Book and Hymnal*. In regard to the matter of making the choice between the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Words of Institution, the booklet says simply: "Either form may be used."<sup>51</sup>

The second feature of the celebration of Holy Communion in the Augustana Church that can be mentioned is that, along with every other Lutheran celebration of its era, it was marked by a rather somber mood. In the case of Augustana that was particularly true when the congregation used the service called "Holy Communion without Full Service" (pp. 615-25), a pattern going back to the Church of Sweden during the nineteenth century,<sup>52</sup> and provided in the Augustana *Kyrko-handbok* of 1895, *The Hymnal* of 1901, and *The Hymnal* of 1925. When this particular service was used in Augustana churches, the progression went directly from an Opening Hymn and the Invocation ("In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit") to the Communion Sermon, Confession of Sins, and the Absolution, on to the Offering, and then to the Agnus Dei and other parts of the liturgy for Holy Communion. The result was—to coin a not very complimentary expression—a eucharistic torso.<sup>53</sup> If the Communion Sermon and the hymns emphasized the suffering of Christ and the need for forgiveness of those at worship, the service could be particularly penitential in character. That penitential character was not new of course with the people of Augustana. The celebration

of the Lord's Supper had already become "one-sided" during the nineteenth century in Sweden, mournful in tone, suppressing joy, before the immigrants came to America. Gustaf Aulén sums up the matter this way:

This development, in evidence as early as the seventeenth century, reached a climax in the nineteenth. The Holy Supper was cloaked in mourning. It was perceived as a sorrow-laden ceremony, as though Christ were not the Risen and Living Lord, who through the bread of life and the blessed chalice renews the communion with His Church. That one-sided and distorted interpretation is the innermost and deepest reason for the obscure place to which the Lord's Supper was relegated during the nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, Eric Wahlstrom has written that, on the one hand, the emphasis on the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, so prominent in the liturgy, is not something to which one should object, for words concerning both are in the biblical texts. But, on the other hand, he says:

The criticism we must make is directed against the exclusiveness of this emphasis. The reason for this situation may very well be that the preparatory service, which traditionally was separated from the celebration of the sacrament, has become incorporated into the service itself, and the preparatory address takes the place of the sermon for the day. The preparatory service should deal with the preparation, confession of sin, and absolution. But the service of Holy Communion has other elements which should be given a prominent place. Some of the elements which have been neglected are: the presence of the living Lord, the communion of saints, thanksgiving, and the eschatological hope.<sup>55</sup>

Adding to the mood was the fact that congregations did not celebrate the Lord's Supper very often, apparently because it was considered so special and holy that one should not take it for granted. At least twice in the 1920s it was recommended by the Synod that congregations endeavor to celebrate it at least six times each year.<sup>56</sup> In addition to its celebration on Maundy Thursday, the total would typically then have been seven times per year.

Over against all this, it should be added that when "Holy Communion with Full Service" (pp. 594-614) was celebrated, the service incorporated more elements of the liturgy, providing for the possibility of a more joyous mood. Moreover, there is evidence that by

the middle of the twentieth century things had begun to change. While some congregations continued the older pattern, others celebrated the sacrament more often, including at least once a month and in some (but very few) cases weekly,<sup>57</sup> and there was a change in mood due to new understandings. In his essay published in 1960, Clifford Ansgar Nelson makes a contrast between the earlier days “when communion was an occasion of penitence and sorrow over sins” and his own time in pastoral ministry, saying that “it may be stated that the joy of the sacrament as a time of thanksgiving and glad meeting with the living Christ in His real presence, a real Eucharist, and a channel of strengthening and refreshing grace, has gained in our consciousness.”<sup>58</sup>

In regard to the way that Holy Communion was celebrated, and in particularly in regard to the mood of the celebration, the understanding and experience of members of Augustana congregations were not unlike those of other Lutheran bodies. The emphasis for most of the history of the Augustana Church was penitential, but over time there were new ways of understanding and experiencing the Lord’s Supper so that there was room for joy and thanksgiving. That transition, shared with persons in other Lutheran bodies, set the stage for wider Lutheran unity and a common rite in the *Service Book and Hymnal*.

### *Concluding Comment*

The Augustana liturgy was not the only factor that gave shape to the understanding of faith and its experience in the Augustana Church. Surely ethnicity, pietistic influences, gospel songs of American Protestant traditions of all kinds, the ways of celebrating festivals, a single theological seminary where most pastors were educated—these and so many other factors were at work. Yet the liturgy was surely a major factor. Whether in Swedish or in English, it had a remarkable consistency in pattern, order, and tone for more than a century. When celebrated at its best, the liturgy could convey an impressive sense of the presence of God within the gathered community, combine elements of formal worship with a warm piety, make a clear presentation of a theology of the cross, declare the forgiveness of sins, and provide inspiration for life in the world.

One need not and should not be nostalgic about the liturgy. It had its limitations, and few would call for its restoration for wide usage. One can list reasons for that. For example, the musical settings used for dialogue between the presiding minister and the congregation, beautiful and appropriate for an earlier time, would be considered too elaborate for many today; for them, liturgical phrases, when sung, need to be more direct, efficient, and less formal.

But all that is beside the point. The Augustana liturgy gave shape to a community of faith that held to the view that inherited forms of worship from historic sources are not to be dismissed by any one parish leader (lay or ordained) or even by a generation lightly. The objective character of worship (centered in God, majestic and merciful) was always an important feature. I still have my class notes from the course on Liturgics that I took at (the former) Augustana Theological Seminary.<sup>59</sup> Several times in those class notes I find that Professor G. Everett Arden made the point that worship must be “objective,” meaning God-centered, not centered on the feelings, piety, or introspection of those at worship. That feature that Arden emphasized, so very present in the Augustana liturgy, needs constantly to be furthered over against recurring trends in Protestant worship in general that emphasize subjective feelings of the individual or the triumphalism of the congregation. That sense of the objective in worship—focusing on the living, redeeming God—combined with rich musical traditions, has not only shaped a community but has contributed generously to the wide array of Lutheran worship in North America.

## NOTES

1. Peter T. Beckman, “The Heart of Augustana,” *The Heritage of Augustana: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Augustana Lutheran Church*, ed. Hartland H. Gifford and Arland J. Hultgren (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2004), 131.

2. Herbert W. Chilstrom, “What Was/Is Augustana?,” *The Augustana Heritage: Recollections, Perspectives, and Prospects*, ed. Arland J. Hultgren and Vance L. Eckstrom (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 1999), 5–6.

3. Conrad Bergendoff, “Singing the Lord’s Song in a New Land,” *Lutheran Forum* 15/3 (Reformation, 1981): 18.

4. Quoted by Harold R. Lohr, “The Liturgical Core: Augustana at Worship,” *The Heritage of Augustana*, 181.

5. *Songs of Two Homelands: Hymns and Liturgy of the Augustana Lutheran Tradition*, ed. Ronald T. Englund, Glenn C. Stone, and John O. Swanson (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2000; 2nd ed. 2002).

6. At least one worship book published privately apparently had some importance. That was *Kyrko-handbok för Sv. ev. luth. kyrkan i Amerika* (Chicago: Engberg-Holmberg Publishing Company, 1885). According to A. D. Mattson, *Polity of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1952), 151, the book was recommended by a group of pastors, but the extent of its use is unknown.

7. The term “Swedish rite” is not being coined here, for it is used in the literature. See Eric E. Yelverton, *The Swedish Rite* (New York: Macmillan, 1921); Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 260; G. Everett Arden, *Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1963), 25, 200.

8. *Kyrko-handbok, hvaruti stadgas, huru gudstjensten i svenska församlingar skall behandlas. Öfversedd, förbättrad och tillökt, samt med kongl. maj:ts nådiga bifall af rikets ständer antagen vid riksdagen i Stockholm år 1809* (Stockholm: Henrik And. Nordström, 1811). This edition of the 1809 handbook and editions from other publishers were available though most of the nineteenth century.

9. Eric Norelius, *De Svenska Lutherska församlingarnas och svenskarnas historia i Amerika*, 2 vols. (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1890-1916), 2:249.

10. In due course (1853) Magnus F. Håkanson was ordained by the Synod of Northern Illinois. See Conrad Bergendoff, *The Augustana Ministerium*, Augustana Historical Society Publications 28 (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1980), 14.

11. Eric Norelius, *The Pioneer Swedish Settlements and Swedish Lutheran Churches in America, 1845-1860*, Augustana Historical Society Publications 31 (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1984), 46. A discussion of life in the community is provided by Kevin Proescholdt, “Religious Life and Controversy in New Sweden, Iowa, 1845-1860,” *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 47/2 (April 1996): 84-97.

12. Lars Paul Esbjörn, *Report on the Development and Current State of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations in North America, Presented at the Clergy Meeting of the Upsala Archbishopal See, 14 June 1865*, trans. John E. Norton (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 2009), 2. Esbjörn also describes some minor adjustments that had to be made in the liturgy (pp. 4-5).

13. Quoted from Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period 1846-1860* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), 362.

14. *Ibid.*, 363.

15. *Ibid.*, 365.

16. Quoted from Hugo Söderström, *Confession and Cooperation: The Policy of the Augustana Synod in Confessional Matters and the Synod's Relations with other Churches up to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup bokförlag, 1973), 168.

17. G. E. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 199.

18. This was published by various publishing houses. An early edition is *Den svenska psalmboken af konungen gillad och stadfästad år 1819* (Stockholm: Central förlag, 1819).

19. O. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America*, 94, 365.

20. An early edition is *Den Svenska Psalmboken af år 1819, Öfversedd af J. H. Thomander, P. Wieselgren* (Malmö: B. Gronholm, 1849).

21. H. Söderström, *Confession and Cooperation*, 169.



22. *Den svenska psalm-boken af år 1819: Öfversedd af J. H. Thomander och P. Wieselgren* (Chicago: Engberg and Homlbergs förlag, 1877; Chicago: Enander and Bohman, 1885). Concerning these, see John Wright, *Early Prayer Books of America* (St. Paul: Privately Published, 1896), 267-69.
23. G. E. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 201.
24. *Den svenska Psalm-boken af år 1819, öfversedd af J. H. Thomander & P. Wieselgren* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1884). The origins of the publishing house can be traced back to 1877 when members of the Augustana Church formed a publication society; this was incorporated as the Augustana Book Concern in 1884 (still a private company); and it became the official publishing house of the church in 1889, although private companies continued to publish for the church. The history is surveyed by Daniel Nystrom, *A Ministry of Printing: History of the Publication House of Augustana Lutheran Church, 1889-1962* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1962).
25. *Kyrko-handbok för Augustana-Synoden* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1895).
26. *Svensk kyrkohandbok: I full öfverensstämmelse med den af konungen år 1894* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1904). Although it is referred to as the handbook of 1894, the year of its approval, it was not actually published until 1904, after some revisions in 1899.
27. A. D. Mattson, *Polity*, 152.
28. *Hemlandssånger* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1891). According to Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: 1860-1910 The Formative Period* (Davenport: Arcade Office and Letter Service, 1956), 73, there was an earlier edition by the same name published privately in 1860 by Jonas Engberg, Chicago, containing 240 songs and a revised edition in 1866 with 413.
29. Maria Erling and Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 106.
30. *Hymnal and Order of Service for Churches and Sunday Schools* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1899 and 1901).
31. A. D. Mattson, *Polity*, 150. The book available was the *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations. By Authority of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1868).
32. According to George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; reprinted, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 474, Grace Lutheran Church, Rock Island, Illinois, “used the Church Book of the General Council, but this book did not meet with favor in the synod at large.” According to Stephenson (p. 467), Grace (founded in 1887) merged in 1928 with Zion (founded in 1891) to form St. John’s Lutheran Church, Rock Island.
33. *The Hymnal and Order of Service* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1925).
34. *Church Service Book and Ministerial Acts of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1928).
35. *Kyrko-handbok för Augustana-Synoden* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1926).
36. These were the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish background), the American Lutheran Church (German background), the Augustana Lutheran Church (Swedish background), the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian background), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (or Suomi Synod, Finnish background), the Lutheran Free Church (Norwegian background), the United Evangelical Lutheran

Church (Danish background), and the United Lutheran Church in America (German and Icelandic background).

37. *Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1958).

38. *Den svenska mässboken* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1942).

39. *Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church: Report of the One-Hundredth Synod, June 15-21, 1959*, ed. D. Verner Swanson (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1959), 376. Augustana representatives on the Commission on the Liturgy and Hymnal were G. Everett Arden, Conrad Bergendoff, Clifford A. Nelson, and Ernest E. Ryden.

40. Throughout 1958 a series of articles appeared in the *Lutheran Companion* that not only introduced the book but praised it.

41. For a discussion of his liturgical works, see chapter 5 (“The Liturgical Works”) in Conrad Bergendoff, *Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 147-77.

42. An English translation of the Mass of Olavus Petri (1531) is provided in an appendix to the work of Eric E. Yelverton, *An Archbishop of the Reformation: Laurentius Petri Nericisu Archbishop of Uppsala, 1531-73* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), 97-102.

43. Developments from Petri to the changes of 1942 are traced in the essay by Gustaf Aulén, “The Renaissance of Liturgy and Music in the Sunday Service,” *The Church of Sweden: Past and Present*, ed. Robert Murray (Malmö: Allhem, 1960), 239-58.

44. *The Junior Hymnal* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1928, and later editions); *Youth’s Favorite Songs* (Minneapolis: Augustana Luther League, n.d.).

45. The obscure term “allocution” is applied to it by Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 121. The term *Trisagion* is used by Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), 122. But normally that term applies to a specific hymn in Eastern liturgies (“Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal, have mercy upon us”) sung prior to the readings. See Gregory Woolfenden, “Trisagion,” *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Paul Bradshaw (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 459. It is used in the service of Corporate Confession and Forgiveness in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 240.

46. *Den Svenska Psalmboken* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1986), 1737.

47. Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523,” *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958-86), 53:28. The Sanctus is to be sung by the choir, and during the singing of the Benedictus (“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”) the bread and cup are to be elevated. The Lord’s Prayer follows.

48. References are provided by Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 409-10.

49. Y. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, 117: “Two reasons are conceivable: either, because he was accustomed to attach the real presence to the words of institution, he felt an impropriety in singing the *Benedictus qui venit* at an earlier point; or it may be simply that he found this to be a simple way of making a grammatical connection with the words of institution.” E. Yelverton, *The Swedish Rite*, xiii: “The words of Institution are linked up

with the Preface, while the Sanctus is given a position immediately before the administration of the Sacrament, in accordance with the Lutheran doctrine that the Presence of Christ at the Sacrament takes effect in the distribution and reception thereof." Similarly, L. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 113: "Placing the Sanctus after the Verba...emphasizes the Lutheran doctrine that the presence of Christ is effected by the consecration and reception."

50. Conrad Bergendoff, "How New Is the New Liturgy?" *Lutheran Companion* 104/18 (April 30, 1958): 14-15. Among the Lutheran churches that had introduced a Eucharistic Prayer was the Church of Sweden in its *Mässbok* of 1942. G. Everett Arden, who taught Liturgics at Augustana Seminary, commended use of the Prayer of Thanksgiving, saying that it is "more catholic" and "goes back prior to the 1054 split"; quoted from class notes from April 23, 1964. In a hand-out list of "Recommendations for Shortening the Communion Service" he says: "Instead of the Prayer of Thanksgiving...the minister may say the Words of Institution."

51. *A Rubrical Outline of the Service from the Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Commission on Worship, 1961), 8.

52. Y. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, 263-64. Both he and L. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 122, attribute this to a "Reformed influence" of German origin.

53. Perhaps this was no worse than the practice in some other churches of the same era in which the congregation was dismissed prior to the celebration of holy communion, and only those who wished to remain for holy communion were invited to do so, which took place after a brief interval.

54. G. Aulén, "The Renaissance of Liturgy and Music in the Sunday Service," 244.

55. Eric H. Wahlstrom, "The Means of Grace," *Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church 1860-1960*, ed. Emmer Engberg et al. (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 61-62.

56. A. D. Mattson, *Polity*, 156, cites synodical reports for 1921 and 1928.

57. Clifford Ansgar Nelson, "Pulpit and Altar," *Centennial Essays*, 188-89.

58. *Ibid.*, 189.

59. I was a member of the last class to enter and be matriculated at Augustana Theological Seminary (autumn, 1961). By the end of that school year, and when we graduated, the institution was named the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago—Rock Island Campus. The transition to Hyde Park, Chicago, was in the autumn of 1967, which was after my classmates and I had graduated (1965).